

TWOS LEADER'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION TO *THE STORY*

Your church is embarking on a wonderful adventure. Children, youth, and adults will enter into God's story, the Bible, in new and life-changing ways. The Bible is, after all, a book of stories. The Bible is a book of stories where God is the main character. The Bible is a book of stories given to us by that same God in order to transform our lives.

As you move chronologically through the Bible children, youth, and adults will engage creatively and interactively with each story walking away with one point to remember from each story. Families will have the opportunity to talk around the same Bible story each week and everyone in your church who participates will have a basis of discussion with other members of your church. Each week a different Bible story will come alive for all ages in your congregation.

This twos curriculum was developed to allow for maximum flexibility. You can use it for mid-week programming or Sunday programming but it is not necessarily limited to use at those times. The curriculum will work in a variety of teaching/learning formats and time frames.

This guide will introduce you to tips for using the children's curriculum in a variety of educational formats and help you to use the parts and pieces of the curriculum to their best advantage for your particular setting and group.

Entering into God's story in creative and meaningful ways is an important piece of the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults. This curriculum is a wonderful tool for introducing your church members to the amazing stories of God's entry into the lives of men and women and reminding them that God is in the midst of their lives, too. Godspeed on this adventure.

THE STORY AND TWO-YEAR OLDS

Each lesson for twos includes several components. Some of these parts are essential for the efficacy of each lesson and the use of other parts of the curriculum is at your discretion which may be dependent upon your time frame and teaching/learning format.

The Bible Story

The stories for twos are designed to engage the young child in the story through movement, simple songs, and other uses of the five senses. It is important to use these activities in the stories because they will help the young children enter into a Bible in a way that will engage their attention and aid in retention of the story.

The Teaching/Learning Activities

Each twos lesson includes two teaching/learning activities other than the Bible story. The first is called "Come Together." Each of these activities is designed to capture and focus the child's attention on the theme and the Bible story of the day. No matter what your time frame, it is important to use the "Come Together" activities. They help the children to ease into the lesson time and separate from what they were doing prior to the class beginning. These activities require little or no supplies.

Each lesson includes four "Explore More" activities. These are to be used after the Bible story has been told. These activities are designed to help the young children enter into a part of the Bible story in an active and creative way. You do not need to do all of these activities. You may choose to do one that is most appropriate to your group, meeting space, and volunteer's abilities. If you have time and space to engage the children in more activities you are certainly free to do so.

Please be aware that many of the "Explore More" activities require supplies and/or advance preparation. Be sure to plan accordingly.

USING THE STORY IN DIFFERENT TEACHING/LEARNING FORMATS

We realize that churches use a variety of classroom teaching/learning formats. *The Story* curriculum is designed with enough flexibility to be able to work in most of those formats.

All Age Preschoolers Together

Your church may not have enough preschoolers to create separate age-level groups. For groups ranging in age from two to five, it is recommended that you use *The Story for Little Ones: Preschool* curriculum as long as you remember a few things. There is a world of difference between the abilities of a two year old and a five year old, so as you look over the learning activities you may need to pick and choose according to the average age in your group from both the preschool and the twos curriculum. You also might want to allow some free playtime with a group of very young children. Feel free to experiment as you try to discover the right mix of activities for your particular group. That's OK. You'll get it right.

Even if your group of preschoolers is small you should always plan to have two teachers or a teacher and a helper with your group each week. If you have teachers and helpers who job share, make sure they know each other and talk with each other about issues of classroom management. This consistency in the classroom is important for all preschoolers' sense of safety and trust and will ensure an environment that is conducive to their spiritual development.

Age-level GRADED PRESCHOOL CLASSES

Your church might have enough preschoolers to divide them into age-level groups: 2's & 3's; 4's & 5's or even classes for 2's, 3's, 4's, and 5's. *The Story for Little Ones: Twos* curriculum may be used in classes comprised of 2's only, or in a 2's and 3's classroom.

Learning Center Model

In this model your volunteers have different kinds of responsibilities in the classroom. Each volunteer has only one job to do during the lesson. This model will work with the two formats discussed above. You may have volunteers who have the responsibility of being shepherds or guides with the two-year olds. Their major responsibility is to be with the children—talking with them, playing with them, and helping them with their learning activities. The shepherds would also be responsible for the “Come Together” part of each lesson. Your other volunteers have the responsibilities of storyteller and “Explore More” activity leader. So the storyteller tells the story each week and the “Explore More” activity center leader leads one or all of the “Explore More” activities each week.

If you have all your preschoolers together in one group as described above, volunteers might double up on some of the jobs. For example, your storyteller might also be the person who or leads the “Explore More” activity. One of your shepherds or guides might also be the “Explore More” activity center leader.

If you have age-level graded preschool classes this model will work differently. Each age level group will have its own shepherds or guides who stay with the young children for the whole meeting time. They are there to greet the children as they arrive and see that they are properly picked up when it is time to go home. They sit with the children during story and skits, helping to keep order and the children's attention focused on the activity. They are also available to remove a child from the group if that should become necessary. Your activity center leaders move from group to group leading them in their particular learning activity on a particular schedule. This may mean that some children do the “Explore More” activities before they hear the story. Young children do not think and learn in a linear way so as long as connection is made to the point of this lesson you can involve them in activities in any particular order. However, if you really feel they need the story before they are involved in any of the other activities simply start your time together with all your preschoolers in one room so they all hear the story at the same time. Then rotate your activity leaders through the various age levels. The other option is to recruit more than one storyteller for each week.

Large Group/Small Group

This is a teaching/learning format that involves the young children in both large group and small group activities. Your volunteers either help lead the group in large group activities or are responsible for leading a small group of two-year olds in other activities. As the children enter your meeting space they immediately sit down with their small group leader. It is at this point the small group leader leads them in the “Come Together” time as a way of focusing the children on the point of the lesson. Then the large group leaders might take over. It is time for “Hear the Story.” The storyteller leads the large group in the day's Bible story. After the Bible story, the children return to their small groups where their small group leader leads them in one or all of the “Explore More” activities.

LESSON PLANNING

Be prepared before your class begins! That is a very important rule for any teacher of any subject, but teaching faith can be extra challenging. There are questions that can be asked that do not have easy or immediate answers, but children, especially young ones, demand answers. Formulating a lesson plan can help in this.

Seasoned teachers as well as new ones can find a plan very helpful. Information from the lesson pages can be summarized into keywords and a glance at the plan will help if you get distracted. A lesson plan is also helpful for the volunteers or helpers in your classroom, so they are as aware as you are what the intentions are for the day's lesson.

As a teacher of preschoolers, you already know this ... young children are very literal and they want answers!

- Be sure to stick to facts. Ask questions that are about the facts and details of the story you are teaching on a given day.
- Relate things right back to them; children are naturally egocentric and love it when things are related back to them.
- Take into consideration that there are many learning styles. Some children love to listen to stories being read, others love moving around and participating in the telling. Still others want to be creative and draw or sculpt Bible characters or ideas. Make use of the variety of options that are provided in the lesson pages. And be sure to add your ideas onto your lesson plan template.
- Review, review, review. Go over the Bible Point and verse many times. Dance, sing, clap, shout, and whisper the words and ideas so that your class can more easily remember the details.

IN THE BEGINNING

Bible Basis: Genesis 12

Bible Verse: Adapted from Genesis 5:1: "God made me."

Bible Point: God made everything.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: animal story pictures, printed and cut apart (included at the end of this lesson)

- Say, **Let's listen to some animal sounds and see if you can guess the animal.** Call up one volunteer and show an animal picture card. Instruct the child to make that animal's sound. Allow the other children to call out that animal's name. Repeat with different volunteers until all cards have been used.
- Say, **God made all these animals, and he made you too. Today we'll hear a Bible story that tells how God made everything.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: six pieces of construction paper labeled with large outlined numbers, markers, glue stick, cotton balls, blue tissue paper, leaves (real or artificial), star stickers, fish-shaped crackers, feathers, animal stickers, ink pad, baby wipes

- Display the numbers 1–6. Have the children count aloud with you as you point to each paper. Say, **When God made everything in the world, it took him six days. Let's see what God did on each day.**
- Say, **On the first day, God made light. He called the light day and the darkness night.** Color the top half of the number 1 yellow and the bottom half black. Say, **Show me what you do at night.** Children should pretend to sleep.
- Say, **On the second day, God made air and water.** Glue cotton balls to the top of the number 2 and crumpled tissue paper to the bottom to represent air and water. Say, **Show me how you breathe air.** Children should inhale and exhale deeply.
- Say, **On the third day, God made land, plants, and trees.** Add leaves to the number 3. Say, **Stretch your arms up in the air like the branches of a tree.**
- Say, **On the fourth day, God made the sun, moon, and stars.** Add star stickers to the number 4. Lead children in singing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" while you add stickers.
- Say, **On the fifth day, God made fish and birds.** Add fish-shaped crackers and feathers to the number 5. Ask, **Who owns fish as pets? Who owns a bird?**

- Say, **On the sixth day, God made all the land animals. Then he made people.** Add a few animal stickers to the bottom of the number 6.
- Say, **On the seventh day, God rested. He was happy with all he created.**
- Say, **God made the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. He also made every person on earth. He made you, and you are special to God.**
- Pray, **Thank you, God, for making the whole world. Thank you for making each one of us special. Amen.**
- Call children up one at a time to touch one finger to the ink pad and press a fingerprint onto the number 6. As they do so, have them repeat today's verse: "God made me." Immediately wipe each child's finger with a baby wipe.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD MADE EVERYTHING

Stuff you need: blue construction paper, glue sticks, items from "Hear the Story," "God made everything" strips (one per child)

Preparation: photocopy the "God made everything" strips, cut them apart

- Point to the six numbers you decorated during "Hear the Story." Say, **God made everything in the world, including you! Let's make our own pictures of God's creation.**
- Help children glue a "God made everything" strip to the top of their paper. Help children decorate their papers by adding stickers and gluing cotton balls, tissue paper, leaves, feathers, and fish.

OPTION 2: GOD MADE ME

Lead the song (sung to the tune of "A-Hunting We Will Go") and demonstrate the actions.

God made the sun,	<i>(hold hands overhead in a circle)</i>
And God made the sea,	<i>(mime swimming)</i>
God made all the animals,	<i>(flap arms at sides)</i>
And God made me!	<i>(point with two thumbs to chest)</i>
Thank you for the sun,	<i>(hold hands overhead in a circle)</i>
Thank you for the sea,	<i>(mime swimming)</i>
Thank you for the animals,	<i>(flap arms at sides)</i>
And thank you for me!	<i>(point with two thumbs to chest)</i>

OPTION 3: THANK YOU, GOD!

Stuff you need: items you can thank God for (e.g., piece of clothing, box of cereal, picture of family, Bible, etc.)

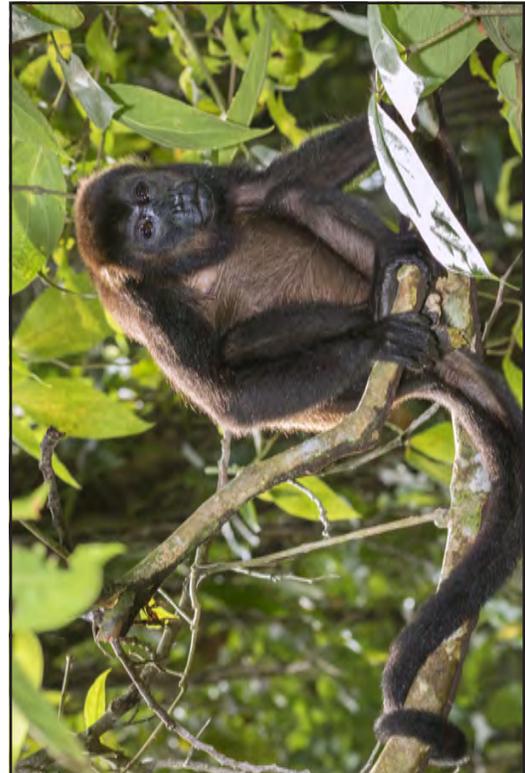
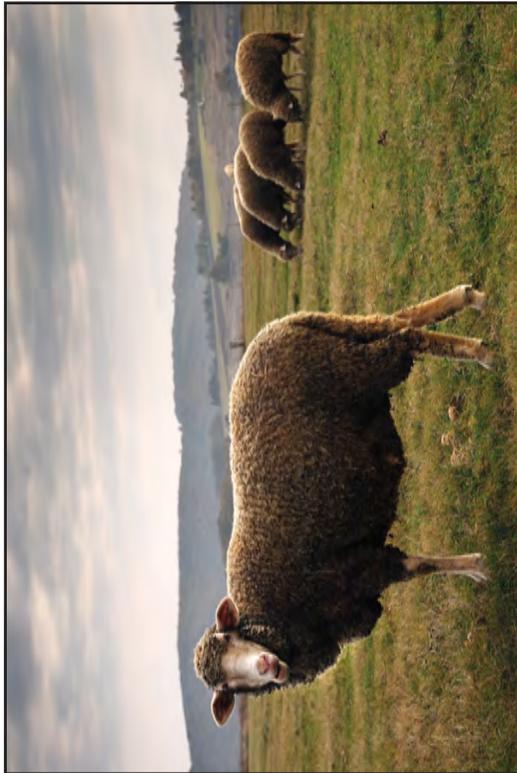
- Say, **God created so many good things! Let's thank God for all he created.**
- Sit in a circle. Have a volunteer hold up the first item. Explain, **God made food. Let's thank God for giving us food.** Lead all children in repeating with you, "Thank you, God!"
- Continue with each item, choosing a different volunteer each time.

OPTION 4: COPY CATS

Stuff you need: animal story pictures from "Come Together"

- Say, **God created every animal on land, in the sky, and in the water. Let's pretend to be some different animals that God created.**
- Show the first volunteer an animal card (or have the volunteer think of his or her own animal), and have the child act it out. Instruct the other children to copy the leader's sounds and actions. Ask, **What animal was that?** Allow the children to answer.
- Continue until every child has had a turn as leader.

STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



God made everything.

ABRAHAM FOLLOWS GOD

Bible Basis: Genesis 12–15

Bible Verse: Adapted from Genesis 15:6: “Abraham believed in God.”

Bible Point: I can follow God.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: box of candy, piece of fruit (real or plastic), small tub of blocks, stuffed dog or cat

- Ask, **What does it mean to obey?** It means if God, or your parents, or your teacher tells you what to do, you do it. You choose to obey. Let’s see what choosing to obey looks like.
- Display the candy and the fruit. Say, **What if your daddy told you to eat some healthy fruit? What would it look like to obey?** Choose a volunteer to demonstrate the correct choice.
- Dump out the tub of blocks. Say, **What if your teacher told you to clean up this mess? What would it look like to obey?** Choose a volunteer to demonstrate the correct choice.
- Show the stuffed animal. Say, **What if God tells us to care for our animals? What would it look like to obey?** Choose a volunteer to demonstrate the correct choice.
- Say, **In today’s story, God tells Abraham to go to a new home. Will Abraham obey God? Let’s see if he chooses to go to the new home.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Abraham’s home story picture, a baby doll

Preparation: Hide the picture and the baby in different parts of the room.

- Ask, **What are some things you want when you grow up?** Take responses.
- Say, **The Bible tells us about Abraham. He wanted things too. Abraham wanted a home for his family and his animals. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, wanted a baby.**
- Ask, **What did Abraham want?** (a home and a baby)
- Say, **God wanted to give Abraham a home, but Abraham had to obey God. Obey means doing what you’re told. God told Abraham to move to a new home. Let’s see if you can obey my directions, just like Abraham chose to obey God.** Give the children directions, one step at a time, which lead to the hidden picture. For example, you might have them crawl to the door, hop to the bookcase, and reach up on top to find the picture.
- Say, **Great job! You chose to obey my directions, and you found the picture of the home, just like Abraham.**

- Say, **God also wanted to give Abraham a baby. But Abraham and Sarah were very old. Abraham had to believe God. Let's see if you believe me, just like Abraham chose to believe God.** Ask the children to stand if they believe you have hidden a baby doll under your chair. Repeat for other obviously unlikely locations (such as a tissue box). Then name the actual hiding spot (children should stand up). Say, **Okay, you believe that the baby is there. Go and check.** Allow the children to retrieve the baby doll.
- Say, **Abraham followed God. He chose to believe in God and obey him. You can follow God too.**
- Ask, **How can you follow God like Abraham did?** (believe in God and obey him)
- Pray, **Dear God, we believe in you. Please help us to obey you, just like Abraham did. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: FOLLOW GOD

Stuff you need: construction paper (one piece per child), marker, crayons

- Trace each child's feet (shoes on) on his or her construction paper. Have the children color their footprints. Meanwhile, write "[Name] can follow God" across the top of each paper with the marker.
- Say, **Abraham chose to follow God. You can follow God too.**

OPTION 2: TRUST AND OBEY

- Sing the chorus of "Trust and Obey" while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times.

Trust and obey,	(hold hands in prayer, then salute)
For there's no other way,	(shake head and finger in "no" gesture)
To be happy in Jesus,	(trace smile with two fingers)
But to trust and obey.	(hold hands in prayer, then salute)

OPTION 3: I CAN OBEY

Stuff you need: a variety of stuffed animals (one per child)

- Say, **I will tell you how to take good care of your pet. You listen and obey, just like Abraham obeyed.**

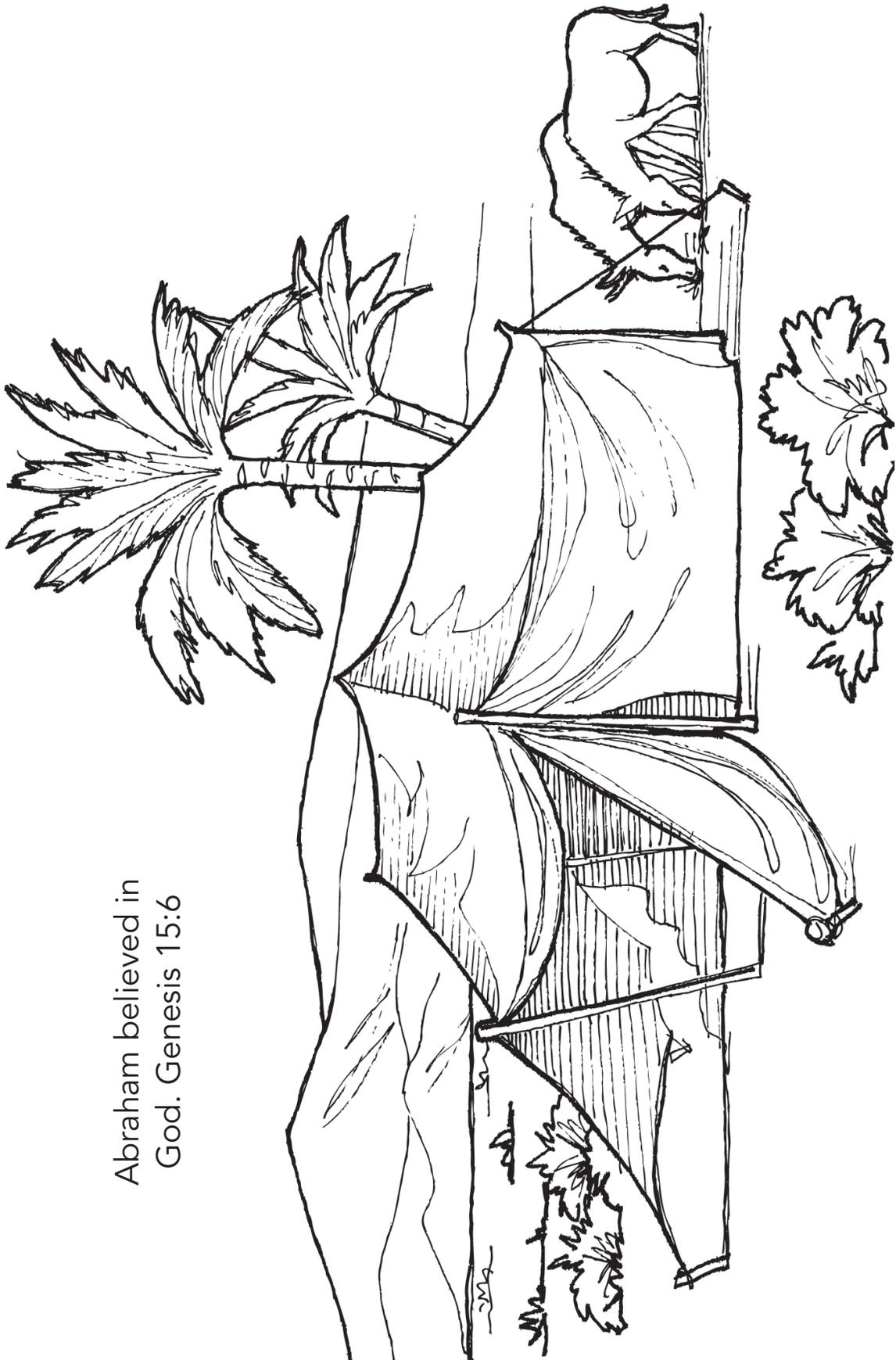
- Give the children simple directions, one at a time. Demonstrate as needed with your own stuffed animal.
 - Pet your animal gently.
 - Walk your pet to the door (or other location).
 - Lay your pet down to sleep.
 - Walk your pet back to our reading rug.
 - Pretend to give your pet a bath.
 - Give your pet some pretend food.
- Be sure to praise the children for their ability to obey.

OPTION 4: Be a GOD FOLLOWER

- Have the children sit in a circle. Choose a volunteer to stand outside the circle, and say that child's name aloud. Have the children all cheer, "[Name] can follow God!" once as you lead the volunteer around the outside of the circle. That child chooses another to switch spots (similar to Duck, Duck, Goose).
- Repeat until all children have had a turn.

STORY PICTURE

Abraham believed in
God. Genesis 15:6



JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

Bible Basis: Genesis 37; 39; 41:1; 45:8

Bible Verse: Adapted from Genesis 50:20: "God planned for my good."

Bible Point: God takes care of me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: stuffed animal (familiar pet), baby doll

- Show the stuffed animal. Ask:
 - **Does anyone have a pet like this?**
 - **How do you take care of this kind of pet?**
- Show the baby doll. Ask:
 - **Does anyone have a baby brother or sister?**
 - **How do parents take care of a baby?**
- Have a volunteer stand up. Ask:
 - **How do parents take care of a kid like you?**
- Say, **God cares about babies and kids and grown-ups. He made us, and he will take care of us. Today, we'll hear about how God took care of a man named Joseph.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: two construction paper signs—a smiley face and a frown face

- Hang the two signs on opposite sides of your meeting area. Ask, **What face do you make when something good happens to you? Move to that side.** Children should move to the side near the smiley face. Ask, **What face do you make when something bad happens to you? Move to that side.** Children should move to the side near the frown face.
- As you tell the story of Joseph, have children move from one side to the other whenever you see (*).
- Say, **Joseph had lots of brothers, but his father loved him the most. One day, Joseph's father gave him a beautiful, fancy coat (*). It had many different colors. Joseph loved his coat, but his brothers didn't. It made them feel angry at Joseph (*).**
- **Joseph had a dream. He dreamed his brothers and even his father would bow down to him. The dream made Joseph feel important (*). But it made Joseph's brothers angry (*). They**

threw Joseph in a deep hole. Then they stole his coat and sold him as a slave. Joseph was taken to Egypt, far from his family.

- Joseph worked hard as a slave. His master liked him (*). But his master's wife played a mean trick on Joseph. Joseph ended up in jail (*). He stayed in jail for a long time.
- One day, the king had a dream. He called for Joseph. "Tell me what this dream means," he said. God helped Joseph understand the dream. The king was happy with Joseph (*). He put Joseph in charge of all the food in Egypt. Joseph helped feed many hungry people.
- Even Joseph's brothers came to him for food. They were surprised to see him in charge! They were afraid (*). Would Joseph throw them in jail? No, Joseph forgave his brothers. He said, "You wanted to do something bad to me, but God turned it into good" (*).
- God took care of Joseph. God will take care of you too.
- Pray, Dear God, we believe you will take care of us. You can turn bad times into good. Amen.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: JOSEPH'S COAT

Stuff you need: coffee filters (one per child), colored markers (not permanent ink), spray bottle and water, hair dryer, scissors, glue sticks, picture of Joseph (included with this lesson)

Preparation: Before the lesson, scribble on the coffee filters with a variety of colored markers (not permanent ink).

- Give each child a turn spraying a coffee filter with water. Watch the colors run. Then give each child a turn using the hair dryer (on low heat) to blow on the filter to dry it.
- Stack the coffee filters and cut them out in a rectangle shape. Help the children glue a filter to their picture of Joseph.

OPTION 2: PRACTICE FORGIVENESS

Stuff you need: silly costume props (hats, glasses, mustache)

- Say, **When Joseph's brothers did something bad to him, Joseph said, "I forgive you." We can say "I forgive you" too.**
- Continue, **Let's practice saying "I forgive you." I'll pretend to be someone who made a mistake.** Put on a hat. Say, **I took a toy away from you. I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?** Prompt the children to say, "I forgive you." Repeat with different props and different mistakes, such as, I hurt you, I pushed you, I ate your treat, etc.

- Have a child volunteer put on a costume piece. Explain, **[Name] didn't share his book. Now he feels sorry.** Prompt the volunteer to ask, **"Will you forgive me?"** and the others to respond, **"I forgive you."** Repeat with volunteers who are able.

OPTION 3: FOOD IN EGYPT

Stuff you need: beanbags (one per child), laundry basket

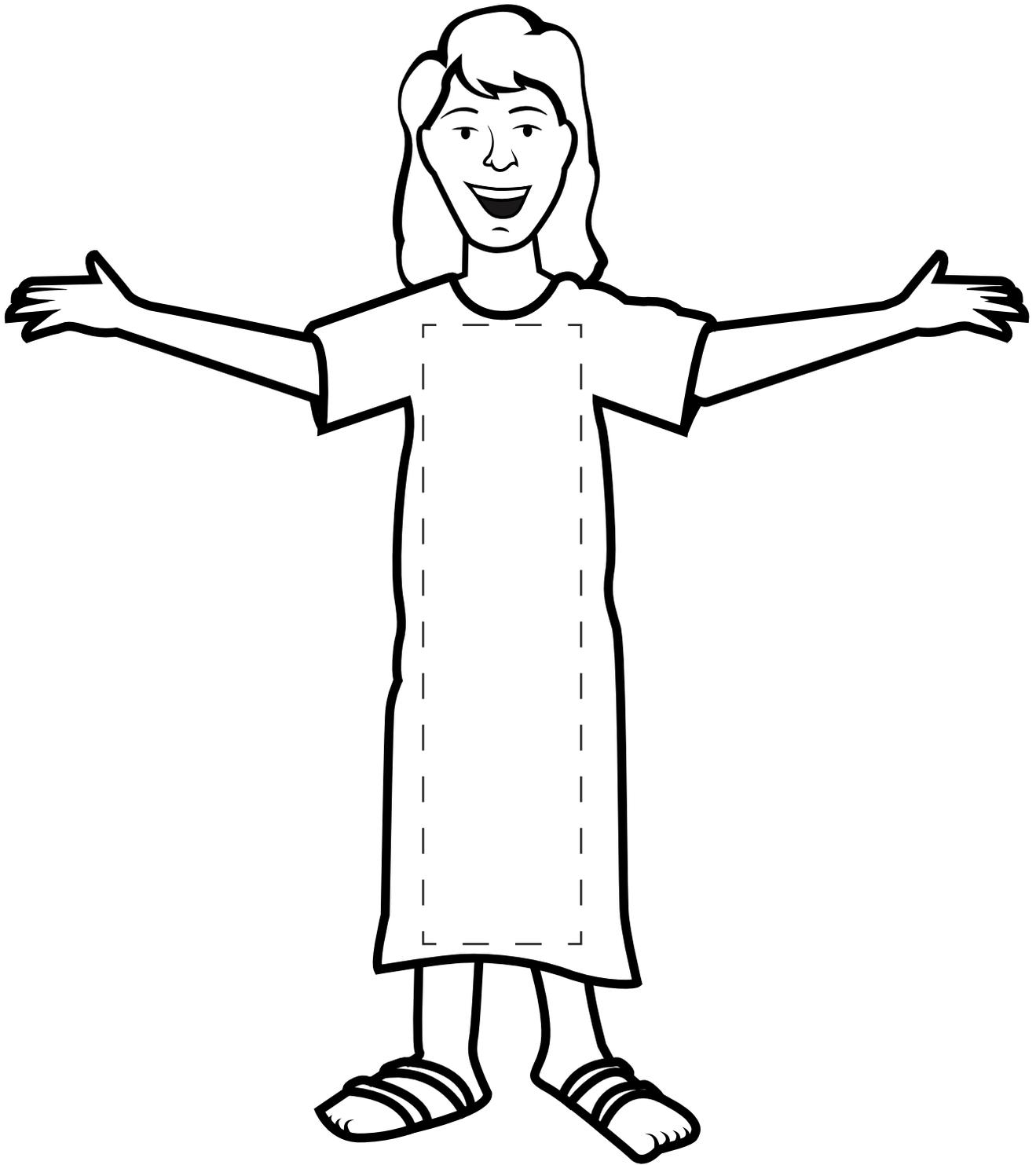
- Spread out the beanbags on the floor around the laundry basket. Have every child stand by a beanbag.
- Say, **God helped Joseph feed all the people. Joseph had to collect the food. Let's see how much we can collect in this basket.**
- Call children one by one to toss their beanbag from where they're standing. If they miss, have them pick up their beanbag and toss it from that spot.

OPTION 4: GOD CARES FOR ME

- Stand in a circle and hold hands. Choose children, one at a time, to stand in the center of the circle. Sing the song (to the tune of "Mary Wore Her Red Dress") about the child in the center.

*God cares for [name, name, name],
God cares for [name] all day long.*

JOSEPH'S COAT



God takes care of me!

Name: _____

GOD PROTECTS MOSES

Bible Basis: Exodus 1:14

Bible Verse: Adapted from Exodus 14:13: "God helps his people."

Bible Point: God watches over me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: helmet, kid's flotation device

- Show the helmet. Ask:
 - **What is this? What is it used for?**
- Say, **Falling can be dangerous, so parents put a helmet on you to keep you safe.**
- Show the flotation device. Ask:
 - **What is this? What is it used for?**
- Say, **Deep water can be dangerous, so parents put swimmies or floaties (or whatever you might call inflatable armbands) on you to keep you safe.**
- Ask:
 - **How do parents keep you safe from cars in the street?** (They hold your hand.)
 - **How do parents keep you safe from touching a hot stove?** (They tell you to stay back.)
- Say, **God helps his people and keeps them safe from danger. One way he watches over you to make sure you're safe is by giving you parents. Today, we'll learn about how God took care of a man named Moses.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

- Say, **In today's story, God watches over Moses to keep him safe. Let's practice saying that together.** Have children stand and cup their hands around their eyes (like binoculars). Say, **God watches over Moses** together. Have the children sit down.
- As you tell the story of Moses, have the children stand and repeat, **God watches over Moses**, with their hands cupped around their eyes whenever you see (*).
- Say, **When Moses was a baby, a bad king was in charge. He did not like baby boys. So Moses' mommy kept him hidden (*). When Moses was still a baby, his mommy put him in a basket in the river, like in a little boat. He floated right to the princess, who picked him up. She loved Moses and kept him as her own son (*).**

- Moses grew up. He wanted the king to be nice to God's people. Moses got in trouble with the king. He had to run away. For years and years, Moses lived in the desert (*). Then one day, God spoke to Moses from a bush that was burning with fire. He told Moses to go back to the bad king. God said, "Go help my people get away from the bad king. I will be with you" (*).
- Moses obeyed God. But the bad king didn't want to let God's people get away. God had to show the bad king that God is in charge. Finally, the bad king let God's people go with Moses.
- Moses led all God's people to a new home where they were safe and free (*).
- God watched over Moses. God used Moses to watch over his people. God will watch over you too.
- Pray, Dear God, thank you for watching over us. Thank you for giving us parents who help keep us safe. Amen.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: THE BURNING BUSH

Stuff you need: Burning Bush activity sheet (one per child), brown or black marker, red finger paint, sponges, wet wipes

Preparation: Before the lesson, pour a little red finger paint on a few sponges.

- Say, **God watched over Moses by talking to him through a burning bush. We are going to make our own burning bush.**
- Allow children to press a finger into the sponge and make fingerprints on the bush to make a burning bush. Use the wet wipes to clean hands when finished.

OPTION 2: BABY MOSES IN A BASKET

Stuff you need: modeling clay or craft dough, small toy babies (the kind used for baby shower favors, one per child), small scraps of cloth (one per child), wet wipes

Preparation: Before the lesson, roll the clay into oval balls (one ball per child).

- Say, **God watched over Moses by giving him a smart mommy. She put baby Moses in a basket in the river so he would be safe.**
- Give each child a ball of clay. Demonstrate how to press your thumb down in the center of the ball to mold it into a basket shape. After students have made their clay baskets, give each of them a baby and a scrap of cloth.

- Say, **Wrap your baby in a blanket. Put the baby in the basket. Take the baby and the basket home to remind you that God watches over us.**
- Use the wet wipes to clean hands when finished.

OPTION 3: LET MY PEOPLE GO

- Say, **Moses asked the bad king many times to let God's people go. The bad king said no many times.**
- Choose one child to play the part of the bad king. Line the others up several paces away. Have them run to the king one at a time (relay style) and say, "Let my people go." Prompt the king to respond, "No!" and the child to then run back to the line.
- Once all children have had a turn to run, select a different king and repeat.

OPTION 4: MOSES! MOSES!

- Sit in a circle. Ask the children each question. Have them answer in unison, saying, "Moses! Moses!" and clapping on each syllable.

Who floated down the river in a basket? *Moses! Moses!*

Who ran away from the bad king? *Moses! Moses!*

Who heard God speak from a burning bush? *Moses! Moses!*

Who helped set God's people free? *Moses! Moses!*

BURNING BUSH



God helps his people. Exodus 14:13

Name: _____

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Bible Basis: Exodus 19:18; 20:1–17

Bible Verse: Adapted from Exodus 19:8: “We will obey God’s rules.”

Bible Point: I can obey God.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: construction paper (one piece per child)

- Ask, **What does it mean to obey a rule or obey your parents?** Take responses and clear up any misunderstandings if necessary.
- Have children stand. Place a piece of construction paper on the floor in front of each child.
- Say, **Let’s play a game. I will say a rule out loud. If it is a rule you can obey, jump onto your paper spot. If it is a rule you can’t obey, jump off your spot.**
- Read the list of “rules” and give children a moment to jump onto or off their paper after each one.
 - Brush your teeth before bed.
 - Flap your arms and fly into space.
 - Clean up your toys when you’re done playing.
 - Eat 25 giant pizzas.
 - No pushing or hitting.
 - Hold your breath for a whole day.
 - Share your toys with others.
- Say, **Some of those rules were silly, but some were important. God gave us some important rules to follow. We can obey God by following his rules.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

- Say, **Last week, we learned about Moses. He helped set God’s people free from the bad king. He led the people to a new home out in the desert. There, the people had some problems.**
- **They did not know how to obey God. They did not know how to get along with one another. So God gave them rules to help them have good lives. He called Moses up to the top of a large mountain. In a thick cloud filled with lightning and thunder, God gave Moses 10 rules.**

- **You can count with me as I share the rules God gave Moses for all people.** After each number, have children hold up their fingers and say the number aloud.
- Continue, **Rule number 1: God is in charge of everything.**
- **Rule number 2: God is more important than anything else.**
- **Rule number 3: Use God’s name carefully.**
- **Rule number 4: Rest from working one day a week.**
- **Rule number 5: Obey your parents.**
- **Rule number 6: Don’t hurt or kill others.**
- **Rule number 7: Keep your promises.**
- **Rule number 8: Do not steal.**
- **Rule number 9: Tell the truth.**
- **Rule number 10: Be happy with what you have.**
- **We call God’s 10 rules the Ten Commandments. We can follow these rules to live a good life and make God happy.**
- Pray, **Dear God, please help us to follow your rules. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: I WILL OBEY

Stuff you need: white construction paper (one piece per child), white crayon, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, water

Preparation: Before starting, write “I obey” in large letters on each paper using white crayon.

- Allow children to paint on their papers. As children reveal the hidden words, take a moment to talk to each child individually. Read the words and make sure they understand what it means to obey. Remind them to obey God and their parents.

OPTION 2: THE CLOUDY MOUNTAIN

Stuff you need: The Cloudy Mountain activity sheet, cotton balls, glue, small paper plates, wet wipes

Preparation: Photocopy the Cloudy Mountain activity sheet, one per child. Pour a small amount of glue onto paper plates.

- Give an activity sheet to each child. Demonstrate how to dip a cotton ball into the glue and stick it to the paper. Have the children do the same to create the thick cloud over the mountain where Moses went to get the Ten Commandments from God.
- Use the wet wipes to clean hands when finished. Let the pictures dry. Children can take them home next week.

OPTION 3: COUNT TO TEN

Stuff you need: a soft ball that rolls well

- Sit in a large circle. Say, **This counting-to-10 game will help you remember that God gave Moses 10 rules for us to follow.**
- Roll the ball across the circle to a child. Have everyone count “One!” out loud. Continue having the children roll the ball and count until they reach ten. If time permits, repeat, starting over at one. Watch to see that every child gets a turn.

OPTION 4: FOLLOW THE RULES

- Say, **To make God happy and to live a good life, you have to know the rules and follow the rules. Let’s practice following rules, or obeying, some silly commands.**
- Lead the children in a simplified version of “Simon Says.” Do not say “Simon says” or count any children out. Just list off commands such as the following for them to follow:

Touch your toes

Hop on one foot

Reach for the sky

Flap your arms

Nod your head

Blink your eyes

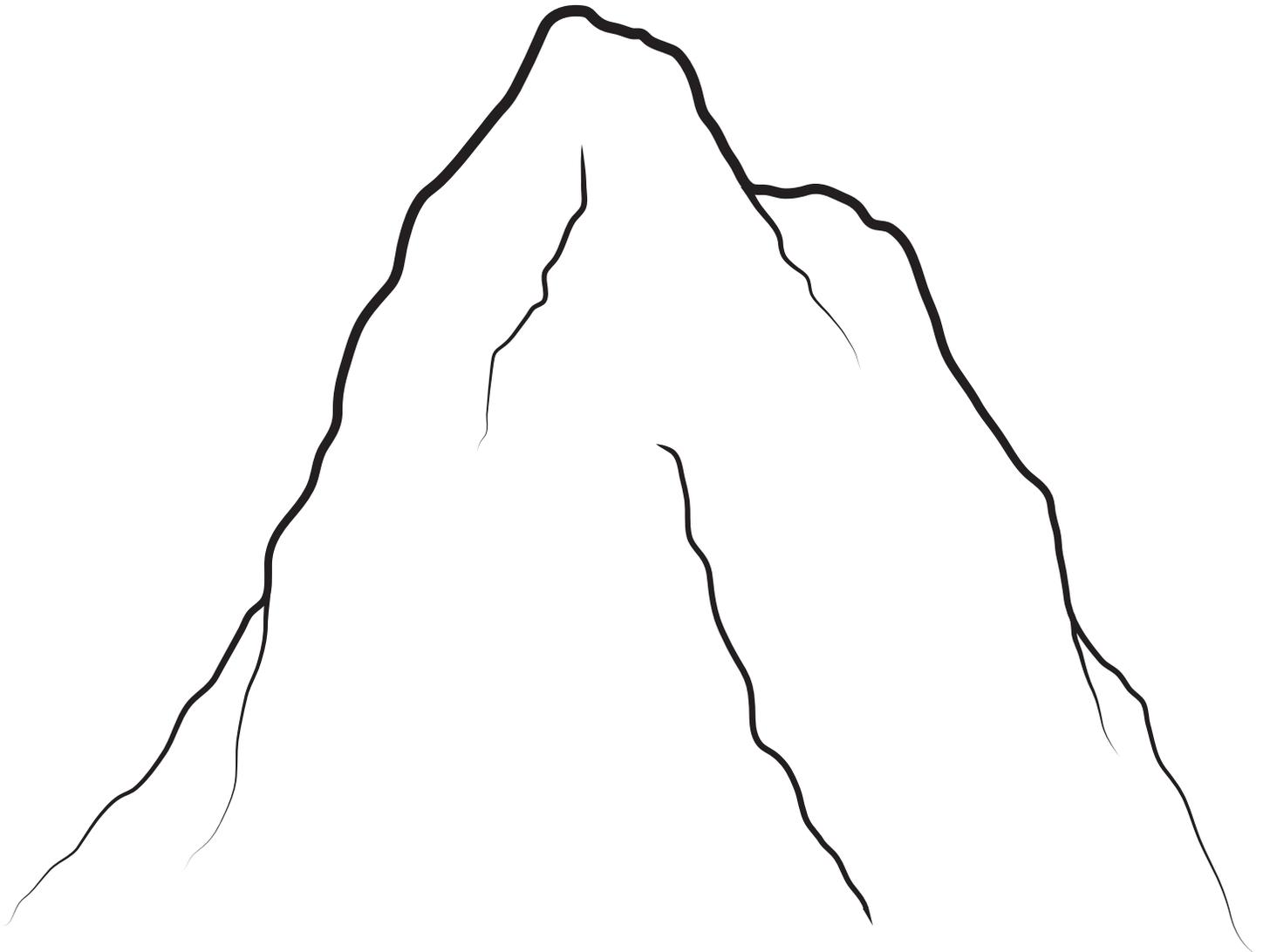
Spin in a circle

Wiggle your fingers

- Praise the children for their ability to listen and obey!

THE CLOUDY MOUNTAIN

We will obey God's rules. Exodus 19:8



Name: _____

TWO BELIEVING MEN

Bible Basis: Numbers 13–14

Bible Verse: Adapted from Numbers 14:8, 24: “God gave his people the home he promised.”

Bible Point: I can believe God’s promises.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: two cardboard toilet paper tubes, tape

Preparation: Tape the tubes together to make “binoculars.” Decorate them with paper or markers if you like.

- Say, **A spy is someone who watches in secret. I can spy on our classroom using these binoculars.** Tiptoe quietly to another area of the room. Use the binoculars to “spy on” something. Tiptoe back and report to the children what you saw (for example, “I saw a clear bag with a small, red lump of craft dough”).
- Give each child a chance to use the binoculars to spy on something and report back to the group.
- Say, **Today, we’ll learn about some spies from the Bible. Their names were Joshua and Caleb. They learned to believe God’s promises.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

- Say, **Remember, Moses and God’s people were living in the desert. They wanted to find a nicer home. God promised them a wonderful place with lots of food and everything they needed. How do you think God’s people felt about this promise? Show me with your face.** Children should respond with happy/excited expressions.
- Continue, **God’s people were excited about this new home, but they didn’t go there. They wanted to spy on the land first. They sent 12 men to spy on the land. How do you think the spies acted?** Children should act out tiptoeing and being quiet.
- Continue, **The spies saw many things. They reported back to God’s people. They told about a beautiful land with lots of food. How do you think God’s people acted when they heard this? Show me.** Children should cheer.
- Continue, **Two of the men, Joshua and Caleb, believed in God’s promise. They said, “Let’s go to this new land.” But the other spies weren’t so sure. They told God’s people that there were giants there! How do you think the people felt about the giants? Show me.** Children should look afraid.

- Continue, **Joshua and Caleb told the people to trust God. But the people did not believe God's promise. They did not go to the wonderful new home. They lived in the desert their whole lives. How do you think they felt about living in the desert?** Children should look sad.
- Continue, **Finally, when Joshua and Caleb were very old, they went to the home God promised. They got to live there because they believed in God's promise.** Lead the children in cheering for Joshua and Caleb.
- Pray, **Dear God, we believe in you. We know you keep your promises. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: TWO SPIES BELIEVED

Stuff you need: Two Spies Believed activity sheet (one per child), markers or crayons

- Give each child an activity sheet. Count the 12 spies out loud together.
- Say, **Only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, believed God's promise. Show me with your face how they felt about the new land.** Children should smile.
- Say, **Find the two spies, Joshua and Caleb, who believed God, and draw a circle around them.** Help children locate the two smiling spies, and use their crayons to draw a circle around them. They can then color those two spies, and the others as time allows.

OPTION 2: GIANT GRAPES

Stuff you need: purple or green balloons (inflated), laundry basket

- Say, **The spies saw lots of good food in God's promised land. They saw grapes so big it took two men to carry them! Let's work with a friend to collect some giant grapes.**
- Scatter the balloons around the room and place the laundry basket in the center. Have children collect the balloons one at a time and put them in the laundry basket. Remind the children that the grapes are so big and heavy, they have to work with a friend and together carry each one.

OPTION 3: STAND UP, SIT DOWN

- Sit in a large circle. Say, **God always keeps his promises. People should keep promises too, but sometimes we don't or we can't. Let's play a promise game.**
- Instruct the children to stand up if you say a promise they believe you can keep. Tell them to sit down if you make a promise they don't believe you can keep. Alternate between the two. Some examples:

"I will help tie your shoe."

"I will eat a healthy lunch today."

"I will give you a hug."

"I will flap my arms and fly to the moon."

"I will wrestle a lion today."

"I will give you a million dollars."

OPTION 4: THANK YOU, GOD

- Say, **God promised his people a wonderful new home, and he gave it to them. God has also given us many good things! Let's say thank you to God for some of the things he has given us.**
- Teach the children the simple sign for "thank you" (open hand to touch chin, then bring down to other open palm). Explain that this is a sign for "thank you," kind of like a thumbs-up means "good job." Practice the sign together a few times, saying "thank you."
- One at a time, have the children thank God for something in their lives. Encourage them to use the thank-you sign when they say those words.

TWO SPIES BELIEVED



I can believe God's promises.

Name: _____

GOD'S HELPER

Bible Basis: Joshua 1–2

Bible Verse: Adapted from Joshua 1:7: "God helps his people."

Bible Point: I can help people.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a chair

Preparation: Set the chair at the front of the group, sideways.

- Say, **Let's pretend this chair is in our way. We want to get to the other side. How can we get there?**
- Have one child demonstrate how to get to the other side (by either walking around, crawling under, or climbing over the chair). Have the other children follow in the same style.
- Ask, **Can anyone show us a different way to get to the other side?** Continue as before until all the children have walked around to the left, walked around to the right, crawled under, and climbed over.
- Say, **That was fun! Today, we'll learn how God helped some spies who had a wall in their way.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: a toy castle or dollhouse, action figure, 12-inch length of yarn

- Say, **When Joshua was ready to lead God's people into their new home, there was a problem. The city had a big wall all around it.** Bump the action figure into the outer wall of the castle.
- Continue, **Some spies went into the city to look around. Walk the action figure into the city. But the king found out about the spies. He tried to catch them. The spies needed help! God sent a woman named Rahab to help the spies. She hid them in her house.** Put the action figure in a room in the castle.
- Continue, **When the king came looking for them, the spies hid on the roof.** Put the action figure on the roof. **Rahab told the king, "Go that way! Hurry and you might catch them!" The king ran away.**
- Continue, **The spies needed a way out. Rahab put a rope out her window.** Hold the yarn out a window of the castle. **She told the spies to climb out.** Have the action figure climb down the yarn.

- Say, Rahab loved God and wanted to help his people. Later, the spies helped Rahab. They marched around the walls of the city and blew loud horns. God made the city walls fall down. The spies helped Rahab get out safely.
- Say, God loves to help people. He sends helpers like Rahab. God wants you to help others too.
- Pray, Dear God, thank you for helping us. We want to be your helpers too. Amen.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: HELPING HAND

Stuff you need: Helping Hand activity sheet, crayons

Preparation: Photocopy the Helping Hand activity sheet, one per child.

- Give each child an activity sheet.
- Say, **We can use our hands to help people. What are some ways we use our hands to help people?** Discuss ways to help people while children are coloring their activity sheet.

OPTION 2: HELP A FRIEND

Stuff you need: tissues, music (optional)

- Demonstrate the game with two volunteers before you begin.
- Children balance a tissue on their heads. As the music plays, they walk around an open area. If the tissue falls off, the child must freeze. Only a helper friend can pick up the tissue. The child places the tissue back on their own head and resumes walking.

OPTION 3: HIDE THE SPY

Stuff you need: a small yarn ball or something similar

- Have the children stand in a tight circle. Say, **Let's pretend this ball is a spy. Our job is to help hide the spy from the mean king, just like Rahab did!**
- Choose a volunteer to stand in the middle as the king. While the king closes his or her eyes and spins around one time, secretly hand the ball to a child. When the king opens his or her eyes, instruct the children to pass the ball around the circle behind their backs. Make sure they stand close together so the king can't see the ball!
- When you call, "Stop!" the king must guess who has the ball. Reveal who really has the ball. Then choose a different king and play again.

OPTION 4: WALLS FALL DOWN

Stuff you need: paper (one per child), tape, small building blocks

Preparation: Roll a piece of paper into a cone shape and tape it. Make one "horn" for each child.

- Say, **God helped his people get past the wall. They marched around the city and blew their horns. Then the walls fell down.**
- Spread the children throughout the room. Give each child a set of small blocks and a paper horn. Instruct them to each build a wall with the blocks. When their wall is done, the child can walk around it, blow the horn, and knock down the wall. Have the children rebuild and repeat as time allows.

HELPING HAND

God helps his people. Joshua 1:7



Name: _____

A STRONG MAN

Bible Basis: Judges 16

Bible Verse: Adapted from Judges 16:28: "Samson asked God for help."

Bible Point: I can ask God for help.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

- Say, **The muscles in your body make you strong. Let's test our muscles.**
- Have the children spread out in a large circle. Have them follow as you demonstrate each exercise.
 - Lie on your belly. Use your two hands to push up onto your hands and toes (plank position).
 - Lift one hand up off the floor.
 - Switch to lift the other hand off the floor.
 - With both hands on the floor, lift one foot.
 - Switch to lift the other foot.
 - Try to lift one hand and one (opposite) foot at the same time.
- Say, **That was tough, but I can tell you have strong muscles. Your muscles make your body strong on the outside. Knowing God makes you strong on the inside. Today, we'll hear about a strong man named Samson.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: two puppets

- Act out the following skit using the puppets. Use distinct voices for the puppets and your own voice for the narrator.

NARRATOR: *(hold up Samson puppet)* **When Samson was born, he was special. He would grow up to know God and listen to God. God said Samson could never cut his hair.**

SAMSON: **I am Samson. I listen to God and obey God. God made me very strong. Everyone knows that I am very strong. I have strong muscles. I am also strong on the inside because I know God.**

NARRATOR: *(hold up Delilah puppet)* **Samson met a woman named Delilah. He thought Delilah was pretty. Samson stopped listening to God. Samson only listened to Delilah.**

DELILAH: **Samson, you are so strong! What makes you so strong? What is your secret?**

SAMSON: **I can't tell you. It's a secret.**

NARRATOR: Delilah was pretty, but she was not good. She wanted to help people hurt Samson. She wanted to know his secret and take away his strength.

DELILAH: Oh, Samson, don't you love me? If you love me, you'll tell me your secret!

NARRATOR: Samson was not listening to God. He listened to Delilah.

SAMSON: God made me strong because I have never cut my hair. If you cut my hair, I won't be strong.

NARRATOR: When Samson fell asleep, Delilah had someone cut his hair. The bad guys came and took Samson to jail. Samson could not fight back because he was not strong. He stayed in prison for a long time. His hair began to grow back. Samson remembered God.

One day, the bad guys took Samson out of jail. They wanted to tease him. Samson asked God to make him strong again. God gave Samson strength to push down the building. He stopped all the bad guys.

Samson listened to God. Samson asked God for help. God helped him. You can ask God for help, and God will help you too.

- Pray, Dear God, please make us strong on the outside and on the inside. In Jesus' name, amen.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: Samson's Hair

Stuff you need: Samson activity sheet, brown yarn, glue, water, plastic bowls, wet wipes

Preparation: Photocopy the Samson activity sheet, one per child. Water down glue in each bowl (one part glue to four parts water). Cut the yarn into 5-inch lengths (10 per child).

- Have the children dip yarn in the glue mixture and place on Samson's head. Use wet wipes to clean their hands.
- Say, **When Samson's hair was cut, he lost his strength. When he asked God for help, God made him strong again.** Let their work dry completely before sending it home.

OPTION 2: Strong Man

Stuff you need: various items to use as obstacles

- Set up a Strong Man obstacle course, and lead the children through it. Use the equipment you have available. Some suggested activities:

- Crawl through a tube or box.
- Jump over a door draft guard or similar low object.
- Lift and throw a beanbag chair (or something soft that won't go far).
- Crawl over a wedge cushion.
- Hop (on two feet) the length of a gym mat.

OPTION 3: SAMSON GETS HIS STRENGTH

Stuff you need: large cardboard building blocks

- Stack the blocks in two pillars close together. Have the children stand in a large circle around the pillars. Say, **When the bad guys took Samson out of jail to tease him, he stood between two pillars, like this.**
- Choose a volunteer to stand between the pillars as Samson. The rest of the children walk around in a circle singing "God Is So Good" (or other simple, familiar song). When the song ends, have Samson push down the pillars.
- Rebuild and repeat as time allows, choosing a new Samson each time.

OPTION 4: ASKING GOD FOR HELP

- Say, **When we need help, we can ask God to help us. Let's practice asking God for help.**
- Explain each situation. Then demonstrate how to ask God for help and have the children repeat the words after you.

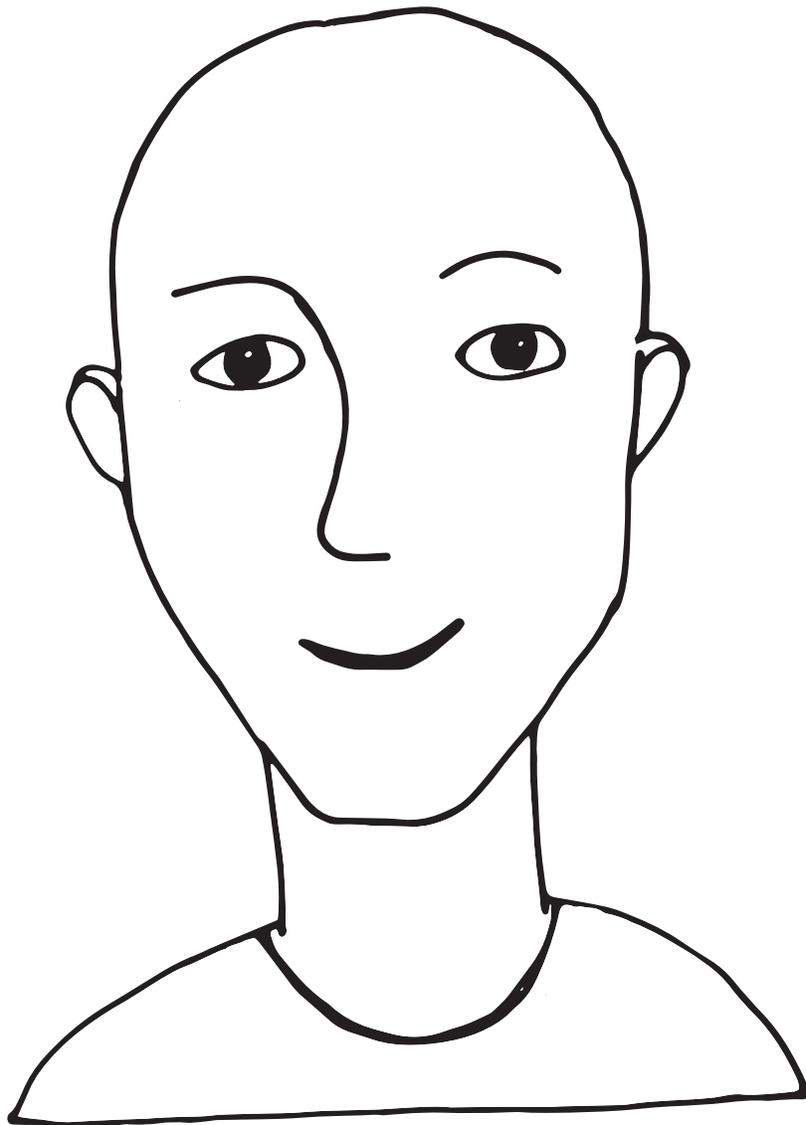
Situation

My room is very messy.
I am at school or church.
It is time for bed.
I am with a friend.
I got in trouble.

How to ask for help

God, please help me to pick up my toys.
God, please help me obey my teacher.
God, please help me go to sleep.
God, please help me to play nicely.
God, please help me to say, "I'm sorry."

SAMSON



Samson asked God for help. Judges 16:28

Name: _____

TWO KIND PEOPLE

Bible Basis: Ruth 12

Bible Verse: Adapted from Ruth 2:11–12: “God loves when we are kind to others.”

Bible Point: I can be kind to others.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: dried sheaves of wheat (real or fake), clear baggie of flour, bread

- Hold up the sheaves of wheat. Say, **This is a plant called wheat. It grows in fields just like grass. People pick the wheat for food. Show me what it would look like to pick wheat growing from the ground.** Have the children pretend to pick wheat.
- Hold up the bag of flour. Say, **People don’t eat the wheat right away. First, they pound it into powder called flour. Show me how you would pound and crush the wheat into flour.** Have the children pretend to pound wheat.
- Hold up the bread. Say, **People mix the wheat with other ingredients to make bread dough. They roll and pat the dough to make a loaf. Show me how you would roll and pat the dough.** Have the children pretend to roll out dough.
- Say, **When the dough is cooked, it makes delicious bread. In today’s story, we’ll hear about a kind woman named Ruth who picked wheat.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Ruth story pictures (included at the end of the lesson), tape

Preparation: Cut out the Ruth story picture figures. Post all except Ruth on a wall or board near your meeting area.

- Show the picture of Ruth. Say, **This is Ruth. She is sad. Her husband died and she is alone. She has no food or money. Ruth needs a friend.** Have a volunteer go to the board and bring you the picture of Naomi.
- Say, **This is Naomi. She is also sad and alone. She wants to go back to her home far away. Ruth tells her, “I will go with you. I will help you.” Ruth is kind to Naomi.**
- Continue, **Every day, Ruth goes out into the field to pick wheat.** Have a volunteer go to the board and bring you the picture of the wheat. **She gives the wheat to Naomi to make bread. Ruth is kind to Naomi.**

- Continue, **The man who owns the field of wheat sees Ruth. He sees that she is kind.** Have a volunteer go to the board and bring you the picture of Boaz. **The man's name is Boaz. He tells his workers to leave lots of wheat for Ruth to pick. Boaz is kind to Ruth.**
- Continue, **Boaz and Ruth fall in love. They get married. They have a baby boy.** Have a volunteer go to the board and bring you the picture of the baby. **Now, Ruth and Boaz and Naomi are all happy. They were kind to one another. God is happy that they were kind. When you are kind to others, you make God happy too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, help us to be kind to others. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: RUTH'S BASKET

Stuff you need: Ruth's Basket activity sheet (one per child), strips of yellow paper (one per child), glue sticks

- Say, **Wheat grows in tall strips like this.** Show a strip of yellow paper. Continue, **When Ruth went out to pick wheat, all that was left were little pieces, like this.** Demonstrate tearing the paper into small pieces. **It was a hard job until Boaz was kind to Ruth.**
- Have the children tear paper into small pieces and glue them onto their activity sheet.

OPTION 2: PICKING WHEAT

Stuff you need: spring clothespins (one per child), craft pom-poms, basket

Preparation: Spread pom-poms all over the floor. Place the basket in the middle.

- Say, **Ruth had to pick up pieces of wheat from the field. Let's see how much wheat you can pick up with this tool.**
- Demonstrate how to pinch a clothespin to pick up a pom-pom and how to pinch it again to release the pom-pom into the basket.
- Give each child a clothespin. Have them collect the pom-poms and place them in the basket using the clothespins.

OPTION 3: WHERE YOU GO, I WILL GO

- Say, **Ruth followed Naomi to her home. In this game, you need to follow the leader.**
- Play a few rounds of Follow the Leader, alternating the leader each time. Set up items of interest for the children to use, such as a mat to roll on, a tube to crawl through, and a bench to climb over.

OPTION 4: Kindness Song

- Teach the children “The Kindness Song” (sung to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell”).

*I'll be kind to you,
And you'll be kind to me,
'Cause when we're kind to others,
God is very pleased.*

- Have the children stand face-to-face with a partner. Instruct them to hold hands and swing both hands while they sing the song. Switch partners and repeat several times.

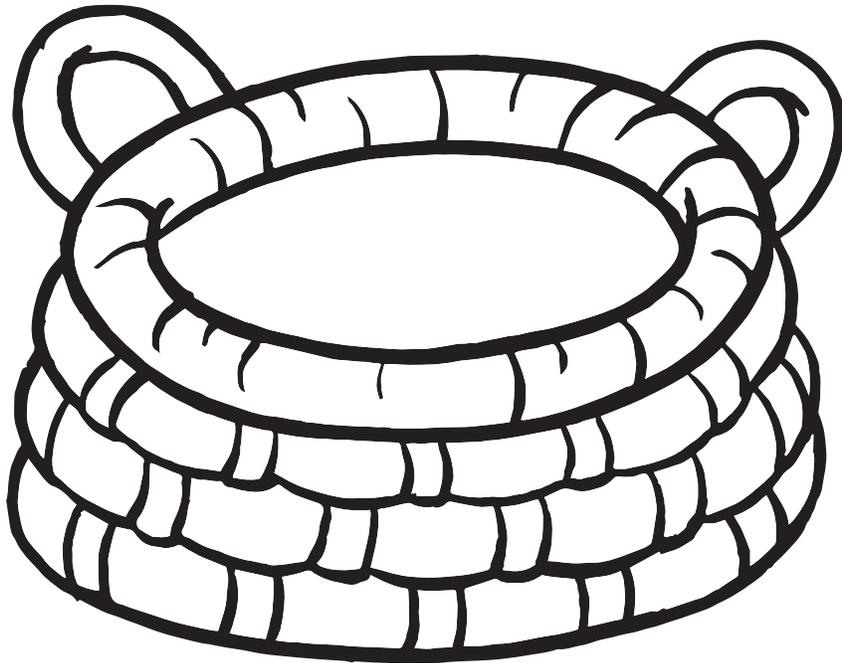
STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



RUTH'S BASKET



God loves when we are kind to others. Ruth 2:12

Name: _____

GOD HEARS HANNAH AND SAMUEL

Bible Basis: 1 Samuel 1:1–22; 3:1–10

Bible Verse: Adapted from 1 Samuel 1:27: “God has answered my prayer.”

Bible Point: God hears me pray.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: book, deck of cards, coins, two cups with one full of water, ball, spoon, and glass

- Keep the objects hidden. Say, **How do you listen? Point to the part of your body you use to listen.** Have the children point to their ears.
- Say, **In this game, you will use your ears but not your eyes. Close your eyes and listen for the sound I make.** Make a sound with one of your objects (flip the pages of the book, shuffle the cards, jingle the coins, pour water from one cup to the other, bounce the ball, clink the spoon against the glass). Tell the children to open their eyes.
- Ask, **Were you listening? What do you think made that sound? Raise your hand if you have a guess.** Take responses. Repeat with other objects.
- Say, **We use our ears to listen to all kinds of things. When we pray, God listens to us and we can listen to him.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: simple Bible-time costume pieces, blanket

- Have a volunteer stand by you to be Hannah. Give her a robe or something similar to wear. Say, **This is Hannah. She loves God. She loves her husband. But she is sad. Hannah wants a baby. She will pray to God.** Have Hannah kneel and fold her hands. Continue, **Hannah prays, “Lord, please give me a baby. I will take good care of him. I will make sure he grows up to be your special helper.”**
- Have another volunteer come up to be Eli. Give him a robe or something similar to wear. Say, **At church, there was a man named Eli. Eli told Hannah, “God has heard your prayer. He will give you a baby.” Eli was right! God answered Hannah’s prayer.**
- Have a volunteer come up to be Samuel. Wrap him in the blanket. Say, **God gave Hannah a baby boy. She named him Samuel. When Samuel grew up, Hannah remembered her promise to God.** Have Samuel change from the blanket into a robe or something similar. Continue, **Hannah brought Samuel to church. He would live and work there. Samuel would be God’s special helper. Eli would take care of him.** Have Hannah wave good-bye and return to her seat.

- Have Eli and Samuel lie down on different sides of your meeting area. Continue, **One night, Eli and Samuel were asleep. Samuel heard someone calling his name. He got up and ran to Eli.** Have Samuel run to Eli. **"Here I am," he said. Eli was confused. "I didn't call you. Go back to bed," he said.** Have Samuel return to bed.
- Continue, **Again, Samuel heard someone calling his name. He got up and ran to Eli.** Have Samuel run to Eli. **"Here I am," he said. Eli was confused. "I didn't call you. Go back to bed," he said.** Have Samuel return to bed.
- Continue, **Again, Samuel heard someone calling his name. He got up and ran to Eli.** Have Samuel run to Eli. **"Here I am," he said. Finally, Eli figured out what was happening. It was God who was calling Samuel's name! He said, "Go back to bed. If God calls you again, listen."** Have Samuel return to his "bed" and sit up.
- Continue, **This time, when God called Samuel, Samuel listened. God told Samuel many things. Samuel prayed to God. God heard his prayers. God heard Samuel and Hannah. He hears you too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, we love to talk to you in prayer. Help us to listen too. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: PRAYER PRINTS

Stuff you need: Prayer Prints activity sheet, washable paint, sponges, wet wipes

Preparation: Photocopy activity sheet, one per child. Pour some paint onto wet sponges to act as a stamp pad.

- Read the poem out loud to the children. Remind them that they can pray to say "thank you," "I'm sorry," "please," or "I love you" to God.
- Help the children press their palms onto the paint sponge and put a handprint on each side of the poem. Immediately wipe their hands with wet wipes.
- Read the poem again.

OPTION 2: MONKEY HEAR, MONKEY DO

Stuff you need: simple instruments such as shakers or rhythm sticks (one per child)

- Say, **Samuel was a good listener. To play this game, you'll have to be a good listener too. See if you can copy my sounds.**
- Play a simple sequence with the instrument, such as "shake, shake, pause, shake," or "click, pause, click, click." Have the children copy you. For variation, try adding a tap of the instrument on the ground or the leg, such as "shake, tap, shake." Repeat as time allows, varying the sequence each time.

OPTION 3: The Name Game

- Have the children lie down in a big circle and close their eyes, pretending to sleep. Tiptoe around the circle and call a child's name. Stand across the circle from the child you call.
- That child should "wake up" and run to the child you are standing behind. Prompt the child to ask, "Did you call me?" and the other child to respond, "No, go to bed." Repeat as time allows, being sure to call each child at least once.
- Demonstrate the game before you begin, and have the children practice the question and response.

OPTION 4: PRAYING HANDS

- Sit in a circle. Teach the children the following finger play:
 - Open, shut them, open, shut them, *(open and close fists)*
 - Give a little clap. *(clap on "clap")*
 - Open, shut them, open, shut them, *(open and close fists)*
 - Fold them in your lap. *(fold hands in lap)*
- Say, **We can pray to God about many things, and he hears us. Let's pray together now. You do the praying hands, and I'll say the prayers.**
- Do the praying hands finger play once together. Then pray aloud, **Dear God, we think you are great!**
- Do the praying hands finger play together again. Then pray aloud, **Dear God, please help us to be kind.**
- Continue alternating the finger play with simple, one-sentence prayers that you say aloud. Try to incorporate different kinds of prayers, such as praise, confession, requests, thanks, and prayers for others.

PRAYER PRINTS

I fold my hands to pray,
To say thanks for all you do,
To say I'm sorry, God, or please,
Or just to say, "I love you!"

Name: _____

DAVID AND THE GIANT

Bible Basis: 1 Samuel 17:1–50

Bible Verse: Adapted from 1 Samuel 17:45: "God made David brave."

Bible Point: God makes me brave.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: stuffed dog, pillow

- Say, **Everyone feels afraid sometimes, but God can help us to be brave.**
- Show the stuffed dog. Say, **Show me what people look like when they're afraid of dogs.** Pause. Continue, **We can ask God to make us brave. Show me what people look like when they're being brave around dogs.** Pause.
- Show the pillow. Say, **Show me what people look like when they're afraid of the dark.** Pause. Continue, **We can ask God to make us brave. Show me what people look like when they're being brave about going to bed in the dark.** Pause.
- Say, **It's okay to feel afraid sometimes. You can ask God to make you brave. That's what David did when he was afraid.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: stuffed sheep, lunch bag, toy sword

- Say, **I will tell you the story of David, but I need your help. When David is afraid, we will pray for him. We'll say, "God, please make David brave!" Try that with me now.** Practice this aloud together. Repeat wherever you see (*) in the story.
- Hold the sheep. Say, **David was a shepherd boy. He took care of the sheep. Does that sound scary to you?** Shake heads no. Continue, **One day a lion came! David had to protect his sheep, but he was afraid. Let's pray for David (*). God did make David brave. David fought the lion and saved his sheep.**
- Continue, **One day a bear came! David had to protect his sheep, but he was afraid. Let's pray for David (*). God did make David brave. David fought the bear and saved his sheep.**
- Hold the lunch bag. Say, **David's brothers were away. David had to bring them some lunch. Does that sound scary to you?** Shake heads no. Continue, **David's brothers were soldiers in the army. They were facing a scary giant. David saw the giant. Let's pray for David (*). God did make David brave. David said, "I will fight the giant."**

- Hold the sword. Say, **The giant's name was Goliath. He had a sword and a shield and a helmet. David tried to hold a sword, but it was too heavy. How would he fight Goliath? Let's pray for David (*). God did make David brave. David picked up some stones. He threw a stone at Goliath. It hit Goliath's head and knocked him down. David won!**
- Pray, **Dear God, thank you for helping us when we are afraid. Thank you for making us brave. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

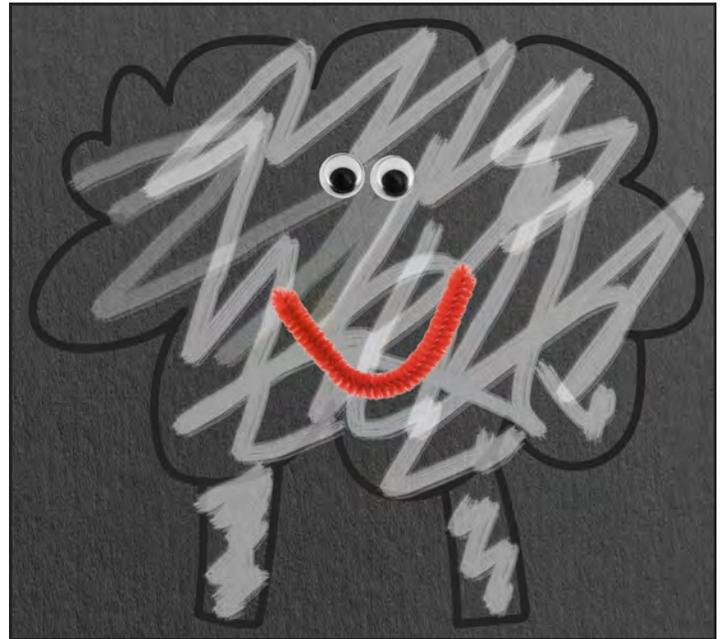
Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: DAVID'S SHEEP

Stuff you need: black construction paper (one per child), white chalk (one per child), googly eyes (two per child), red chenille stems, glue, wet wipes, scissors (adult use only)

Preparation: Cut chenille stems into one-inch lengths.

- Give each child a piece of black paper and white chalk. Allow them to scribble all over their paper. Cut each finished paper into a large circle with a scalloped edge to look like a fluffy sheep. Be sure to leave two legs at the bottom. Help the children glue two eyes and a chenille stem smile to the center.
- Wash children's hands with wet wipes when finished.



OPTION 2: GOLIATH FALLS DOWN

Stuff you need: a low stool or something similar for a child to stand on

- Stand in a large circle with the stool in the center. Have a volunteer play Goliath by standing on the stool (to become a "giant"). Holding hands, walk in a circle around Goliath while singing this song (to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down"):

*David made the giant fall down, giant fall down, giant fall down.
David made the giant fall down. God made him brave.*

- After the song, have Goliath step down and fall to the floor. Then, choose a new Goliath and repeat.

OPTION 3: One Smooth Stone

Stuff you need: a smooth stone (one for each child), paint, paintbrushes, wet wipes

- Have the children paint their stone however they like.
- Say, **This stone will remind you of how David beat Goliath. If you are afraid, it will remind you to be brave, like David. God made David brave. He can make you brave too.**
- Wash children's hands with wet wipes when finished.

OPTION 4: Beat the Giant

Stuff you need: duct tape, cardboard, large craft pom-poms, scissors

Preparation: Cut out a giant-sized head and shoulders silhouette from the cardboard. Wrap the head in duct tape, sticky side out. Tape it to a wall slightly higher than the height of the children.

- Give each child a turn to throw a pom-pom at "Goliath." See if anyone can get their "stone" to stick. Adjust the distance to allow the children to hit their target.

DAVID IS SORRY

Bible Basis: Psalm 51:1–12

Bible Verse: Adapted from Psalm 51:12: "I am sorry when I do wrong things."

Bible Point: God forgives me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: red card stock or foam, brass fasteners (one per child)

Preparation: Cut out a heart for each child, about the size of their two hands. Cut each one down the middle and fasten at the bottom with a brass fastener.

- Show the children how to gently move the pieces of their heart to show it whole and broken.
- Say, **Your feelings come from your heart. Good feelings make your heart feel good and whole. Show me a nice, whole heart.** Pause for response. **Bad feelings make your heart feel sad and broken. Show me a broken heart.** Pause for response.
- Continue, **Show me with your heart how it feels when you play with a friend.** Children should show a whole heart. Continue with the following list, allowing the children to respond to each item by showing a whole or broken heart.
 - **Show me how your heart feels when your friend pushes you down.**
 - **When your friend says, "I'm sorry."**
 - **When you make a big mess.**
 - **When your mommy says, "I forgive you."**
 - **When you disobey God.**
 - **When God says, "I still love you."**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: large pieces of butcher paper (one red, one white), scissors, marker, tape

Preparation: Cut a large heart out of the red paper and trace it onto the white paper. Cut the red heart into seven large, distinct pieces (like a puzzle). Trace the pieces in their places on the white heart. Hang the white heart on the wall. Put a tape loop (sticky side out) on the white heart in the center of each outlined piece.

- Say, **Do you remember David, the shepherd boy who beat the giant? Well, he grew up to be a king! God made David king because David loved God very much. King David did many**

good things, and he helped many people. But he also did some bad things. When David did things wrong, it made God sad, like his heart was broken in little pieces. David was very sorry for what he did wrong. Now he was sad too, and his heart was broken.

- Show the red heart pieces. Continue, **These are pieces of a broken heart. The heart needs healing, and you can help. I will read you a song that David wrote. As we listen to the song, we will put the heart back together.**
- Say, **David felt sorry for what he did wrong. He wrote a song to God. Here's what the song says:** After each line, have a child help put a piece of the heart in its place.
 - **God, I want you to still love me.**
 - **God, I know I did something wrong.**
 - **God, I am so sorry.**
 - **God, please forgive me.**
 - **God, please help me to do what is right.**
 - **God, I want to obey you.**
 - **God, I feel so happy when you forgive me.**
- **Look at that! The heart is whole again! This is what happens when we tell God we are sorry. When we ask God to forgive us, he heals our hearts. God forgave David, and he forgives us too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, we are sorry for the things we do wrong. Please forgive us. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD FORGIVES

Stuff you need: Happy activity sheet, plastic page protector, black dry-erase marker, eraser

Preparation: Print the Happy activity sheet and insert it in the page protector. Use the dry-erase marker to draw over the happy face on the plastic to make a sad face (eyebrows and smile become the circle; add a frown and sad eyebrows).

- Say, **We all do wrong things. What are some wrong things we do?** Take responses.
- Show children the sad face. Say, **When we do wrong things, it makes God sad. How can we make God happy again?** (Take responses: say, "I'm sorry"; ask for forgiveness).
- Have a volunteer use the eraser on the plastic. When the sad face is wiped away, it will reveal the happy face underneath. Redraw the sad face, and allow each child a turn to use the eraser on it. To get the best result from this trick, post the page on a board or easel where the children can watch the erasing, but stand in front of it to hide how you redraw the sad face.

OPTION 2: GOD ERASES OUR MISTAKES

Stuff you need: tubs of rice or sand (one per child)

- Say, **This is my sand tub. I can draw in the sand using my finger. Watch me draw a picture of my dog.** Begin drawing. **Oh, no! That's not right. I did something wrong. I can erase my mistake and start over.** Give the tub a little shake (without picking it up) to reset the sand. Continue, **This is a lot like how God erases our mistakes. If we say we're sorry, God will forgive us and we can start over!**
- Allow the children to draw in their tubs. Remind them to just give a little shake and start over if they make a mistake.

OPTION 3: ASKING FORGIVENESS

Stuff you need: 6 Hula-Hoops

Preparation: Lay the Hula-Hoops in a staggered path in an open area.

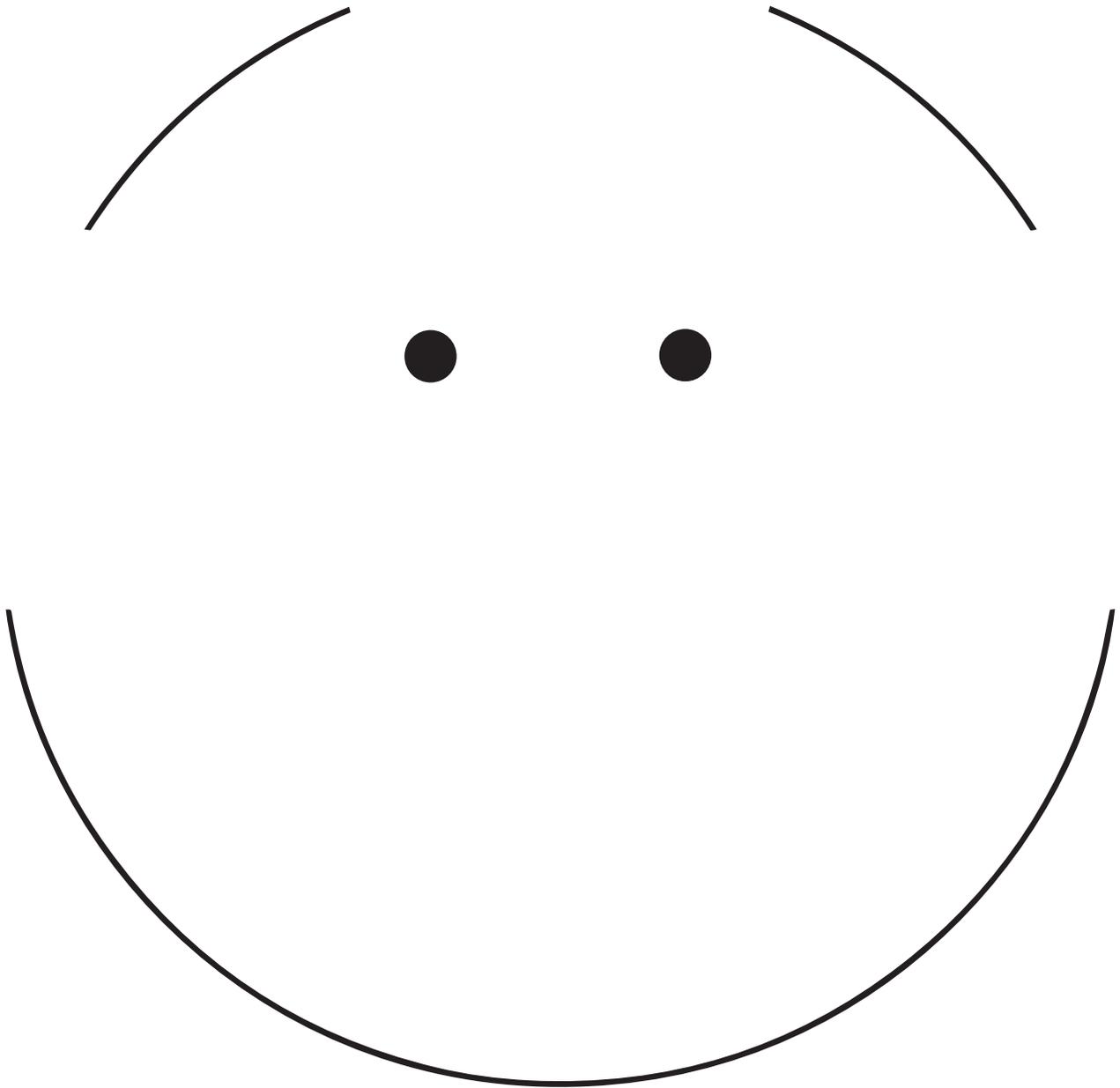
- Say, **Everyone does wrong things sometimes. That's why we learn to say, "I am sorry. Please forgive me." Let's practice saying that together.** Do so.
- Demonstrate how to leap from one hoop to another while saying one word in each hoop: **I am sorry. Please forgive me.** The children can say the words along with you to practice.
- Ask each child one of the following questions (or a similar question), and have him or her answer by leaping from hoop to hoop, saying only one word in each hoop, "I am sorry. Please forgive me."
 - What do you say if you made a mess with your toys?
 - What do you say if you pushed a friend?
 - What do you say if you threw a fit in a store?
 - What do you say if you used mean words?

OPTION 4: PRAISE HIM WITH SONG

Stuff you need: kid-friendly instruments, praise music (optional)

- Stand in a large circle. Distribute instruments to the children (if you don't have enough for every child, let those without an instrument hold a crepe paper streamer). Play praise music or sing a simple praise song as you march in a circle playing the instruments.
- Trade instruments and repeat as time allows.

HAPPY



Name: _____

WISE KING SOLOMON

Bible Basis: 1 Kings 3:1–15; 4:29–34; 2 Chronicles 9:1–8

Bible Verse: Adapted from Proverbs 3:7: “God is the wisest One of all.”

Bible Point: God can make me wise.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: gift box, Wish story pictures, scissors, gift wrap, tape

Preparation: Print the Wish story pictures and cut apart the pictures. Put them in the box and wrap as a present. Wrap the box and lid separately.

- Show the children the gift. Say, **When it’s time for your birthday or Christmas, what kind of present do you wish for?** Take responses.
- Continue, **What if your parents said you could have any present you want—anything in the world. What would you ask for?** Open the present. Take out the pictures one at a time. For each one ask, **What about lots of money? Who would ask for that?** Repeat for each picture (friends, a fancy house, lots of toys, a trip to an amusement park, an airplane to fly around the world) as you take it out of the box.
- Say, **Today, we’ll hear about a man who wished for something really great, and God answered his prayer.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Wish story pictures from Come Together activity, tape, gift-wrapped box from Come Together activity

Preparation: Tape the images to a board or easel.

- Say, **David was the king who loved God. David had a son named Solomon. When Solomon grew up, he became king. Solomon also loved God and obeyed him. God was very happy with Solomon and wanted to give him a present.**
- Show the present. Continue, **God said, “Ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you.” What do you think Solomon asked for?** Point to each picture and ask, **Do you think he asked for lots of friends? Do you think he asked for a fancy house?** (Continue asking similar questions for each of the pictures.)
- Say, **Solomon did not ask for any of those things. He asked God, “Please make me wise. I want to be a good king who knows how to help people. Help me to know what is right and what is wrong.”**

- Continue, **Do you think God gave Solomon this present? Yes, he did! The present didn't come in a box like this. God put the wisdom right into Solomon's head. Now Solomon knew how to help people. He knew what was right and what was wrong. He taught the people how to live good lives by obeying God.**
- Say, **God made Solomon wise. He can make you wise too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, we know you are the wisest One of all. Help make us wise too. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: SOLOMON'S CROWN

Stuff you need: yellow construction paper (one sheet per child), tape, markers, sparkly stickers, stick-on gems, and jewels

Preparation: Cut the sheets of construction paper in half the long way.

- Give each child one strip of yellow paper. Have them color it and put on sparkly stickers, stick-on gems, and jewels, any way they'd like. When they have finished, attach the other strip of yellow paper to each end to make a crown. Place the crown on the child's head and adjust to fit.

OPTION 2: THE WISDOM GAME

Stuff you need: chair or stool, crown

- Put the crown on the stool in a large open area. Have the children stand in a large circle around the crown, holding hands.
- Say, **Let's see if you are wise like King Solomon. I will tell you an idea. If you think it is wise, we'll take a step closer to the crown. If the idea is not wise, we'll take a step back.**
- As you read each idea, help the children step either forward or back. Then, repeat the idea, emphasizing, **Yes, it is wise to help your mom and dad,** or **That's right, it's not wise to stay up too late.**
 - Come to church
 - Eat healthy food
 - Stay up too late
 - Share your toys
 - Use mean words
 - Help your mom and dad
 - Tell the truth
 - Push and kick
 - Yell at your pet
 - Obey God
- Continue until the children reach the crown. Tell them they are wise like King Solomon!

OPTION 3: SOLOMON BUILDS a TEMPLE

Stuff you need: building blocks

- Say, **God was happy that Solomon asked for wisdom and not toys or money. God was so happy, he gave Solomon lots of money too. What do you think Solomon did with so much money?** Take responses.
- Continue, **Solomon used the money to build a great church for God. It is called the temple. Use your blocks to show what you think the temple looked like.**
- Allow the children time to build with the blocks.

OPTION 4: WISDOM IS GREATER THAN RICHES

Stuff you need: wide-mouth clear jar with lid, lots of coins, 3 plastic alphabet letters (all W)

Preparation: Fill the jar almost to the top with loose change. Add two plastic letters (both W) and close the lid.

- Sit in a circle. Say, **Solomon knew that being wise is better than being rich.** Show the jar. Continue, **This jar is full of money, but there's something better inside—wisdom! Wisdom looks like this.** Show the letter W (an extra one that you didn't put in the jar).
- Give the jar to one child. Instruct him or her to gently twist and roll the jar until a W appears. Then pass the jar to the next child to do the same.

STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



THE SPLIT IN THE KINGDOM

Bible Basis: 1 Kings 11:4–6; 12:1–33; 14:22–23, 25–28; 15:11–14

Bible Verse: Adapted from 1 Kings 15:11: “Asa did what was right.”

Bible Point: God uses mistakes to teach me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a very simple wooden puzzle (the kind where each shape fits in its own space rather than interlocking)

Preparation: Remove the pieces from the puzzle.

- Show the children the puzzle with the pieces dumped out. Say, **Watch as I put this puzzle together.**
- Hold up one piece. Demonstrate clearly how it doesn't fit into any of the wrong spaces. Say, **Well, I just can't get this piece to fit! I tried lots of places. Can anyone come help me?** Allow a volunteer to do so.
- Continue, **Thank you. It probably helped to see my mistakes. You knew that the piece wouldn't fit here or here.**
- Continue in this fashion until the puzzle is complete, always emphasizing how the children can learn from your mistakes.
- Say, **Today, we'll hear about a king who learned from the mistakes of other kings.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: two crowns

- Have a volunteer stand next to you and wear one crown. Say, **David was the shepherd boy who beat the giant. He grew up to become king. King David loved God, but he also made some mistakes. When King David made mistakes, he asked God to forgive him. Show me a thumbs-up if you think David was a good king or a thumbs-down if you think he was a bad king.** Pause.
- Have another volunteer join you. Pass the crown and have David sit down. Say, **David had a son named Solomon. He also grew up to become king. At first, King Solomon loved and obeyed God. He asked God for wisdom and built a temple for God. But when he got older, Solomon stopped worshiping God. Show me a thumbs-up if you think Solomon was a good king or a thumbs-down if you think he was a bad king.** Pause.
- Have another volunteer join you. Pass the crown and have Solomon sit down. Say, **Solomon had a son named Rehoboam. He also grew up to become king. Rehoboam did not love and**

worship God. He was a mean king. Show me a thumbs-up if you think Rehoboam was a good king or a thumbs-down if you think he was a bad king. Pause.

- Continue, **Many of God's people wanted to get away from bad King Rehoboam. They left and started a new kingdom with a different king.** Have a second volunteer join you and wear the second crown. Continue, **The two kingdoms did not get along. They fought all the time. Sometimes they had good kings, but sometimes they had bad kings. Show me with your thumb how you feel about the bad kings fighting.** Have the second volunteer sit down and focus back on Rehoboam.
- Have another volunteer join you. Pass the crown from Rehoboam, and have Rehoboam sit down. Say, **Rehoboam had a son named Abijah. He was also a bad king.**
- Have another volunteer join you. Pass the crown from Abijah, and have Abijah sit down. Say, **Abijah had a son named Asa. He also grew up to become king. King Asa loved God and wanted his people to obey God again. King Asa saw the mistakes the bad kings made. He wanted to be a good king. Show me a thumbs-up if you think Asa was a good king or a thumbs-down if you think he was a bad king.** Pause.
- Continue, **Before King Asa, the bad kings did not worship God. They worshiped statues. King Asa got rid of the statues. Before King Asa, the bad kings let God's beautiful temple fall apart. King Asa fixed the temple. Let's give King Asa a cheer for being a good king!** Clap and cheer for King Asa.
- Say, **King Asa learned from the mistakes other kings made. You can learn from mistakes too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, please help us to learn from our mistakes so we can love and obey You. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: TAMBOURINES

Stuff you need: small white paper plates (one per child), dried beans, stapler, paper streamers, markers, stickers

Preparation: Cut the paper streamers into 8-inch lengths, 4 to 5 per child.

- Say, **God's people were very happy when King Asa loved and followed God. They were very happy when King Asa fixed up God's temple. They celebrated and danced and sang songs to God. Today we are going to make tambourines that we can use when we sing and praise God.**
- Have each child decorate the back of a plate with markers and stickers. Fold the plate in half and hold it like a taco shell as the child places a handful of beans inside. Staple around the edges, including some streamers as you go. Staple close together so the beans don't fall out.
- Lead the children in singing songs to God and shaking their tambourines.

OPTION 2: BALLOON BATTLE

Stuff you need: balloons, laundry basket, painter's tape or similar tape

Preparation: Inflate and tie off the balloons. Put them in a laundry basket. Tape a line along the floor to divide your play area in half.

- Say, **God's people split into two kingdoms with two different kings. They fought all the time. We'll have a fun balloon battle to remind us of this split.**
- Assign half of the children to one side to be the kingdom of Israel and the other half to the other side to be the kingdom of Judah. Tell them that their job is to pick up the balloons and throw them to the other side without crossing the line. Dump the laundry basket in the middle of the room and enjoy the balloon battle!

OPTION 3: GOOD KING / BAD KING

- Have the children stand up. Say, **I am going to tell you something that a king does. If it sounds like a good king, reach to the sky and jump up and down. If it sounds like a bad king, bend down and touch your toes.**
 - **This king listens to God.** (good)
 - **This king worships statues.** (bad)
 - **This king reads God's Word.** (good)
 - **This king is mean to his people.** (bad)
 - **This king teaches his people to obey God.** (good)
 - **This king disobeys God.** (bad)
 - **This king learns from mistakes and does what's right.** (good)

OPTION 4: SPLIT IN THE KINGDOM

Stuff you need: chairs, music

Preparation: Line up the chairs (one per child) on opposite sides of an open play area.

- Say, **When God's people had a bad king, they split in two. Some people stayed with the bad king, and some went to a new kingdom. The game we'll play today is a split in two game.**
- Instruct the children to wander around in the play area as you play the music. When the music stops, they should hurry to one side or the other to sit in a chair. When all the children are seated say, **These children ended up in the kingdom of Israel, and these children ended up in the kingdom of Judah.**
- Repeat as time allows.

ELIJAH

Bible Basis: 1 Kings 16:29–17:6; 18:1–2, 41–46; 19:3–16; 2 Kings 1:1–15

Bible Verse: Adapted from 1 Kings 17:1: “I will serve the Lord.”

Bible Point: God helps me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a potted plant that is wilting and turning brown (potted herbs wilt quickly)

- Show the children the plant. Say, **This is a plant I keep in my house. I really like this plant, but it has a problem. Do you see these droopy leaves? Do you see these brown spots? I’m sad that I might have to throw my plant in the garbage.**
- Continue, **Maybe you can help me figure out how to help my plant. I have given it nice fresh soil. I sprinkled some plant food in the pot. I keep it in front of a nice sunny window. I thought it had everything it needed to grow. What do you think is the problem?** Take responses. If necessary, lead the children to the response that the plant needs water.
- Continue, **That’s it! How could I have forgotten something so important? Plants need water. Plants that grow in pots, like this one, need people to water them. Plants that grow outside on the ground need God to send rain. God is so powerful, he controls the weather.**
- Ask, **What do you think would happen to all the plants if God didn’t send rain?** Take responses.
- Say, **Today, I’ll tell you about a time long ago when God didn’t send any rain.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

- Teach the children the following hand motions. Practice a few times together. Whenever you see (*) in the story, cue the children to use the motions.
- King Ahab: Place palms on temples with fingers spread (to make a crown).
- Elijah: Stroke an imaginary beard (because Elijah was old).
- Say, **For many years, God’s people had some good kings and some bad kings. King Ahab (*) was a very bad king. King Ahab (*) did not worship God. He worshiped statues. God wanted to teach King Ahab (*) a lesson.**
- Continue, **God chose a messenger named Elijah (*). Elijah (*) was an old man who listened to God. Elijah (*) went to King Ahab (*) and told him that God would not send any rain for a long time.** Have the children repeat, **“No more rain!”**

- Continue, **King Ahab (*) was very angry. God sent Elijah (*) far away to hide in a safe place. For three years, there was no rain. The plants died. The animals and people were very thirsty. But God took care of Elijah (*). He drank from a stream. The birds brought him food.**
- Continue, **Finally, God told Elijah (*) that he would send rain. King Ahab (*) learned that God is powerful. He controls the rain and the weather.**
- Continue, **Elijah loved and obeyed God his whole life. When it was time for Elijah to go to heaven, God did something special. He sent a fiery chariot with horses. And then he took Elijah to heaven in a strong wind!**
- Say, **God helped Elijah when there was no rain. God can help you too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, thank you that you are always there to help us. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: CHARIOT OF FIRE

Stuff you need: Elijah activity sheet, yellow and red washable paint, plastic forks, paper plates, wet wipes

Preparation: Photocopy the activity sheet, one per child. Pour a bit of paint on each plate so the red and yellow are touching but not mixed together.

- Say, **Before Elijah was taken to heaven, God sent a chariot of fire. Here's a picture of Elijah and the chariot, but there's no fire.**
- Show the children how to gently dip the fork flat in the paint and press several times to the paper. The paint won't cover the picture entirely but will look like flames leaping all over.
- Allow the children to paint their papers. Use wet wipes to wash hands when finished.

OPTION 2: GOD SENDS THE RAIN

Stuff you need: small plastic tub, large plastic tub, water, blue food coloring, cotton balls or pieces of sponge, wooden tongs (optional)

Preparation: Fill the small tub partway with water. Add a few drops of blue food coloring. Place the small tub in the larger tub.

- Say, **God is so powerful he can control the rain and the weather. He sends clouds that hold water and then, SQUISH! The clouds drop the water as rain!**
- Show the children how to use the tongs or their fingers to pick up a cotton ball and soak it in the "rain." Then squeeze the cotton ball to make the rain drip out. Allow the children to explore clouds and rain at this fun water station.

- Depending on the number of children you have, you may want to set up more than one station or have them take turns.

OPTION 3: PICK A SIDE

Stuff you need: crown, dress-up beard

- Place the crown and the beard on opposite sides of the play area. Have the children stand in the middle. Remind them that the crown stands for King Ahab (practice the motion from “Hear the Story”) and the beard stands for Elijah (practice his motion). As you ask each question, have the children answer by moving to the corresponding side and making the motion.
 - **Who told the king that it would not rain?** (*Elijah*)
 - **Who worshiped statues instead of God?** (*King Ahab*)
 - **Who had to run away and hide?** (*Elijah*)
 - **Who disobeyed God?** (*King Ahab*)
 - **Who was given food by the birds?** (*Elijah*)
 - **Who learned a lesson about God’s power?** (*King Ahab*)
 - **Who went to heaven in a fiery chariot?** (*Elijah*)

OPTION 4: RAIN DANCE

Stuff you need: music player and preschool music

- Say, **After three years without rain, the people of Israel were very happy when it rained again! I wonder if they went out and danced around in the rain. We are going to play a freeze-dance game. When the music plays, keep dancing. When the music stops, freeze!**
- Play several rounds of this game.

ELIJAH



Name: _____

MESSAGES FROM GOD

Bible Basis: Isaiah 14:1–5; 49:8–9

Bible Verse: Adapted from Isaiah 49:8: “I will keep you safe.”

Bible Point: God is always with me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a cell phone, a note card with envelope, a pen

- Show the children the phone. Say, **I have a message for my friend Debbie. I want to tell her that I will be a little late for lunch. How can I use this to get the message to her?** Take responses.
- Show the children the note card and pen. Say, **I have a message for my Aunt Ginny. I want to tell her “thank you” for sending me a birthday present. How can I use this to get the message to her?** Take responses.
- Say, **There are lots of ways to send people messages. Sometimes, God uses people to deliver his message. Today, we’ll hear the story of a special messenger named Isaiah.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Preparation: Before class, write each of the six messages below on a separate slip of paper. Number the slips. Give them to six different children. Note which child has which number so you can call their names in order. Tell them to bring the paper to you as a messenger when you call their names.

- Say, **Elijah was a special messenger of God, and so was Elisha. God had another messenger named Isaiah. Isaiah had a special message from God. God’s people were not obeying God. Here is a message God sent them.**
- Choose the child who has the first message and read it to the class.

1. Always obey God.

- Ask, **Do you think God’s people listened to Isaiah? No, they did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So God sent Isaiah with another message.**
- Choose the child who has the second message and read it to the class.

2. Listen to what God says and ask for forgiveness.

- Ask, **Do you think God’s people listened to Isaiah? No, they did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So God sent Isaiah with another message.**
- Choose the child who has the third message and read it to the class.

3. Listen to God, or you will be in trouble.

- Ask, **Do you think God’s people listened to Isaiah? No, they did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So God sent Isaiah with another message.**
- Choose the child who has the fourth message and read it to the class.

4. You are in trouble. You better start praying to God.

- Ask, **Do you think God’s people listened to Isaiah? No, they did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. Boy, these people do not want to listen! But God does not give up on them. And Isaiah didn’t give up. So God sent Isaiah with another message.**
- Choose the child who has the fifth message and read it to the class.

5. God will send his Son, Jesus, to earth to save you.

- Say, **That is such an amazing message! Do you think God’s people listened to Isaiah? No, they did not listen to Isaiah. They did not listen to God. So God sent Isaiah with another message.**
- Choose the child who has the sixth message and read it to the class.

6. You have not obeyed God. But he will send his Son, Jesus, to save you.

- Ask, **Do you think God’s people listened to Isaiah? No, they still did not listen to God. But Isaiah’s messages from God were written down in the Bible, and we can see that everything Isaiah said is true.**
- Pray, **Dear God, thank you that you are always with us. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: THE BIBLE IS TRUE

Stuff you need: large sheet of butcher paper, marker, crayons, stickers, foam shapes, glue sticks, tape

Preparation: Write “The Bible Is True” in large letters on the butcher paper.

- Say, **Isaiah told God’s people that Jesus would come to save them. Many years later, his message came true. All of God’s messages in the Bible are true.**
- Allow the children to decorate the poster. Hang it in your classroom and read it as a reminder whenever you talk about the Bible.

OPTION 2: MESSENGER RELAY

Stuff you need: Messages activity sheet; a large jar, bucket or plastic bin full of beans, rice, or pasta

Preparation: Photocopy the activity sheet so there is one message for each child. Cut the messages apart, fold them in half, and mix them into your bucket of beans, rice, or pasta.

- Show the children the bucket of beans. Say, **There are lots of messages from God in this bucket. They look like this.** Hold up a folded card, and then bury it back in the bucket. Place the bucket on the opposite side of the play area. **When I call on you, run over and dig through the bucket. Pull out a message and run back to your spot. I will read the message out loud.**
- Call the children one by one. Read each message to the group and have them repeat it after you.

NOTE: After the messages are read, collect them in a basket to use for the Message Game.

OPTION 3: The Message Game

Stuff you need: Messages activity sheet, Voice activity sheet, two baskets

Preparation: Print the activity sheets and cut the cards apart. Put the Messages cards in one basket and the Voice cards in the other. You may reuse the Messages cards from the Messenger Relay.

- Choose a volunteer to take one card from each basket. Read the cards aloud to the volunteer, explaining that the volunteer should share the message “[read the card]” in a “[read the card]” voice. Demonstrate the voice as you read that card.
- Have the volunteer repeat the message, mimicking the voice you demonstrated.
- Return the two cards to the proper baskets and repeat until each child has had a turn.

OPTION 4: Isaiah Song

- Sing the following lyrics to the tune of “Ho-Ho-Ho-Hosanna” while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times.

I-I-I-Isaiah,	(stroke imaginary beard)
He-he was God’s messenger.	(point to the sky)
They-they did not listen,	(shake head and finger in “no” gesture)
But he did not give up!	(swing arms and march in place)

MESSAGES

God loves you.

Always obey
God.

God helps me.

God made
everything.

I can
follow God.

God cares
for me.

Be kind
to others.

God hears
me pray.

God
forgives me.

VOICES

loud

quiet

squeaky

silly

high

low

JEREMIAH

Bible Basis: Jeremiah 1:4–10; 18:1–12

Bible Verse: Adapted from Lamentations 3:24: “God is all I need.”

Bible Point: God always loves me.

PREPARATION FOR LESSON 18: Ask parents to send in a smock or old T-shirt for next week’s painting activity. They will be needed again for Lessons 26 and 30.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: modeling dough or modeling clay

- Show the children the clay. Say, **Watch as I turn this lump into a little pot.** Push your thumbs into the ball and start stretching the sides into a pot shape. Narrate as you work.
- Pinch one side until it tears apart. Say, **Oh no! I made a mistake. I can squeeze my clay back into a lump and start over.** Do so.
- Push on one side until it collapses. Say, **Oh no! I made a mistake. I can squeeze my clay back into a lump and start over.** Do so.
- Make the pot correctly and show it to the children. Say, **Everyone makes mistakes. That’s why God lets us say “I’m sorry” and he forgives us. Today, we’ll learn about people who made lots of mistakes and about someone who reminded them to obey God.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Jeremiah story picture, markers or crayons, scissors, glue, wooden craft stick, clay pot from Come Together

Preparation: Print the Jeremiah story picture. Color and cut out the picture of Jeremiah. Glue a craft stick to the back to use it as a puppet.

- Say, **God loves us and wants to talk to us. Sometimes, he uses a special messenger. The Bible tells about some of God’s special messengers, like Jeremiah.**
- Show the Jeremiah puppet. Continue, **Jeremiah loved and obeyed God. One day, he watched a man making a clay pot.**
- Show the clay pot. Continue, **He watched the man work on the clay. The man made a mistake, so he squished the clay into a ball and started over. Jeremiah thought about God’s people. They were making lots of mistakes. They weren’t following God. Jeremiah thought they needed to start over, like the man with the clay pot.**

- Hold up the puppet. Continue, **God told Jeremiah, “You will be my special messenger. Go speak to the people.” Jeremiah obeyed God, but the people wouldn’t listen. Here’s what they did.**
- Cover your ears and say, **I can’t hear you.** Have the children do the same. Practice a few times. Have them repeat this after each message from Jeremiah:
 - Why don’t you love God?** (*I can’t hear you.*)
 - Why don’t you follow God?** (*I can’t hear you.*)
 - Why do you worship statues?** (*I can’t hear you.*)
 - God loves you! He will forgive you.** (*I can’t hear you.*)
- Continue, **It was sad that those people wouldn’t listen, but God still loved them. God loves us too, and we can listen to his message. Let’s practice listening to God. I’ll tell you a message from God’s Word, and then we’ll all say it together:**
 - God loves me!** (*God loves me!*)
 - I can follow God!** (*I can follow God!*)
 - God is good to us!** (*God is good to us!*)
- Pray, **Dear God, thank you that you always love us. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD LOVES ME

Stuff you need: construction paper, scissors, yarn, glue, water, small bowls, wet wipes

Preparation: Cut out a large paper heart for each child, approximately 6 inches high. Cut the yarn in 6-inch lengths, about 6 to 8 pieces per child. Water down glue in each bowl (one part glue to four parts water).

- Say, **We all make mistakes sometimes. If our heart gets full of too many messy mistakes, it’s time to tell God we’re sorry. He’ll forgive us and he still loves us.**
- Show children how to decorate their hearts by dipping a piece of yarn into watered-down glue and laying it on the paper. Let them enjoy making lots of messy squiggles. Wash hands with wet wipes as soon as they’re done. Let their work dry completely before sending it home.

OPTION 2: THUMBPRINT BOWLS

Stuff you need: modeling dough (store-bought or homemade; you can find recipes online) or hardening clay, such as Crayola Model Magic; toothpicks

Preparation: Divide modeling dough into balls, one ball per child.

- Give the children each a ball of modeling dough. Have them push their thumbs into the dough and begin to make an indent in the ball. They should rotate the ball and continue to push the indent with their thumbs until they have a small bowl. If you use hardening clay, use a toothpick to write the children's initials on the bottoms of their bowls. Let the bowls dry, and send them home next week.
- As the children work, remind them of Jeremiah's trip to see the potter.

OPTION 3: Pom-Pom Drop

Stuff you need: multi-colored craft pom-poms (at least 1 inch in diameter), plastic tub, plastic tongs, pie tins, colored construction paper, tape

Preparation: For each pom-pom color, make a corresponding cone of rolled construction paper in the same color (the narrow end should be large enough to allow a pom-pom to pass through). Tape both ends of each cone to the wall at child height, with the large end facing upward. Set a pie tin under each cone. Place the craft pom-poms in the tub, and put the tub in the center of the room.

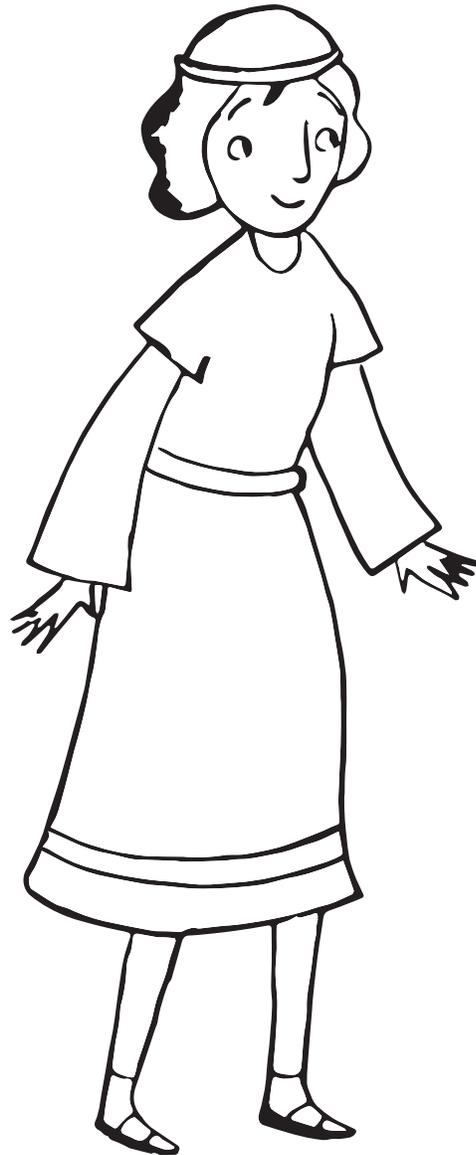
- Show the children how to use the tongs to pick up one pom-pom from the tub. Drop the pom-pom into the matching cone and watch as it slides through and drops into the pie tin. Demonstrate again with another color, but drop the pom-pom before you get to the cone. Say, **Oops, I made a mistake. I can just pick it up and try again.** Do so.
- Allow the children several turns at the pom-pom drop. For larger groups, spread the cones across a larger area and use multiple tongs so several children can have a turn simultaneously.

OPTION 4: Jesus Loves Me

- Sing the following song while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times.

Jesus loves me, this I know	<i>(fold arms across chest to hug self)</i>
For the Bible tells me so.	<i>(hold palms open like a book)</i>
Little ones to him belong,	<i>(rock an imaginary baby)</i>
They are weak but he is strong.	<i>(let arms flop, then make muscles)</i>
Yes, Jesus loves me,	<i>(fold arms across chest to hug self)</i>
Yes, Jesus loves me,	<i>(fold arms across chest to hug self)</i>
Yes, Jesus loves me,	<i>(fold arms across chest to hug self)</i>
The Bible tells me so.	<i>(hold palms open like a book)</i>

STORY PICTURE



ASK GOD FOR HELP

Bible Basis: Daniel 6:1–23

Bible Verse: Adapted from Daniel 6:10: “Daniel always prayed to God.”

Bible Point: I can be loyal to God.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: crown

- Put the crown on your head. Say, **Let’s pretend I’m the king. You have to do whatever I say. Stand up!** (Pause) **Sit down!** (Pause) **Touch your nose!** (Pause)
- Ask, **What happens if you don’t listen to the king?** (Take responses) Say, **Anyone who doesn’t listen to the king or follow his laws might get arrested. They might go to jail or worse.**
- Continue, **Let’s pretend I made a law that says, “No blue pants allowed.” Come stand by me if you have blue pants on.** (Pause) **You would all be arrested because you broke the law.**
- Have those children sit down. Repeat two more times with silly laws like “No hair clips or bows in your hair” or “No hands on the floor while you sit down.”
- Say, **The Bible tells us Daniel got arrested for breaking the law. But he broke the law because he loved God. Let’s see what happened to Daniel.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Daniel story pictures, card stock, markers, scissors, hot-glue gun, knit glove

Preparation: Print the Daniel story pictures on card stock. Color and cut out the images. Glue each one to a finger of the glove to use as finger puppets.

- Put on the glove. As you share the story, hold up the corresponding finger puppet each time you see (*).
- Say, **A long time ago, God’s people were ruled by a king named Darius (*). King Darius had many friends who helped tell him how to rule his kingdom. One of his friends was Daniel (*). King Darius really liked Daniel. This made some of the other friends (*) mad. They wanted to get rid of Daniel. They wanted to throw him to the lions (*).**
- Put all fingers down. Continue, **The king’s friends (*) thought of a mean trick. They told the king to make a law (*). The law said, “No praying to God. You can only pray to King Darius (*).” They knew that Daniel (*) would break the law. Daniel loved God and prayed to him every day. Now the mean friends could throw Daniel to the lions (*).**

- Put all fingers down. Continue, **Daniel (*) heard the law (*). He went to his house and prayed to God. Then the mean friends (*) showed up. "You broke the law!" they said. "We will throw you to the lions (*)"** This made King Darius (*) very sad.
- Put all fingers down. Continue, **King Darius (*) had to follow the law (*). He sent his friend Daniel (*) to the lions (*) to be eaten. He told Daniel, "You have always been loyal to God. You pray every day. I hope God will save you now."** Then the guards shut Daniel inside.
- Put all fingers down. Continue, **In the morning, King Darius (*) ran to the lions' den. He called out, "Are you okay? Did God save you?" Daniel (*) answered him, "God saved me. He sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions (*)." King Darius was so happy.**
- Pray, **Dear God, help us to be loyal like Daniel and always pray to you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: STORY POP-UP

Stuff you need: Daniel finger puppet from Hear the Story

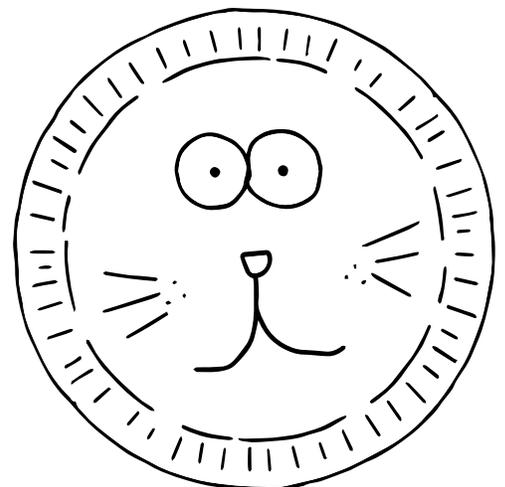
- Divide the children into 2 groups. Instruct one group to stand up everytime you say, "King Darius." Instruct the other group to stand up every time you say, "Daniel."
- Read the story from Hear the Story again, using the finger puppets. Pause to encourage the children to stand up when their Bible character is mentioned. Pause again when you want them to sit back down.

OPTION 2: LION FACES

Stuff you need: paper plates (one per child), disposable 3 oz. paper cups, yellow and orange finger paint, scissors, black marker, wet wipes

Preparation: Ask parents to send in a smock or old T-shirt the week before this activity. Have a few extras on hand.

- Give the children each a paper plate and two small cups of paint. Allow them to finger paint all over one side of their plates. Wash hands with wet wipes.
- Once paint has dried, cut 2-inch slits into the plate all around the outside to make a fringe. Draw a lion's face in marker in the middle (see illustration).



OPTION 3: ANGEL AND LIONS

Stuff you need: angel costume prop (halo and/or wings)

- Choose a volunteer to be the angel and wear the costume. Instruct the other children to crawl around on all fours like lions. They can roar as much as they like. The angel's job is to walk around and tap each lion on the back. When a lion is tapped, it must lie down and stop roaring. When all lions have been tapped, choose a new angel and play again.

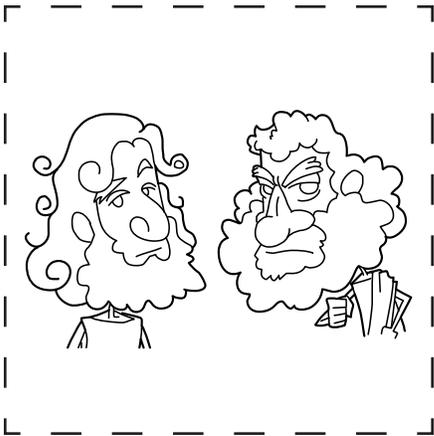
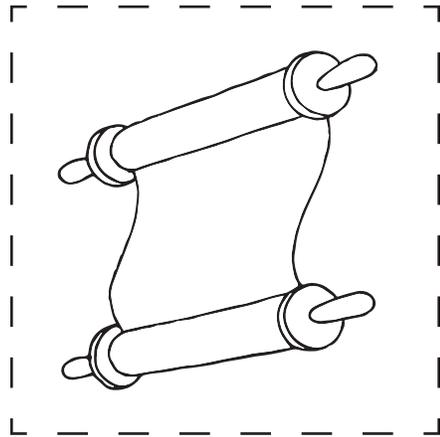
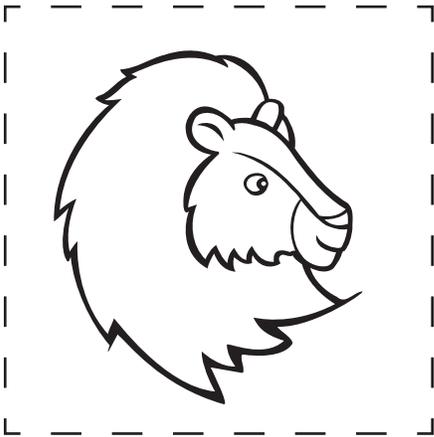
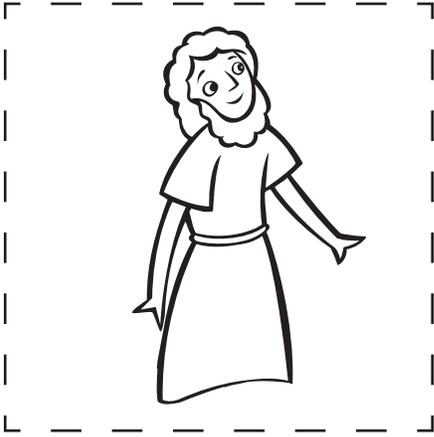
OPTION 4: DANIEL AND THE LIONS

- Sing the following song (to the tune of "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho") while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times.

Daniel was thrown into the lions' den,	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
Lions' den,	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
Lions' den.	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
Daniel was thrown into the lions' den,	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
'Cause he prayed to God alone.	<i>(hold hands in prayer position)</i>

God sent his angel to the lions' den,	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
Lions' den,	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
Lions' den.	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
God sent his angel to the lions' den,	<i>(hold up "claws" and roar after "den")</i>
To shut the lions' mouths.	<i>(clap hands together and hold shut)</i>

DANIEL



GOD'S HOUSE

Bible Basis: Ezra 1:1–7; 3:10–13; Haggai 1:2–15; Zechariah 8:2–22

Bible Verse: Adapted from Zechariah 8:8: "They will be my people. I will be their God."

Bible Point: God wants me to follow him.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a few pictures of your own home (or those cut from a magazine or printed from the Internet) that you can show or project

- Show a picture of a bedroom. Say, **This bedroom is yellow. What color is your bedroom?** (Take responses.)
- Show a picture of a kitchen. Say, **This kitchen has a sink in it. What else do people have in their kitchens?** (Take responses.)
- Show a picture of a family room. Say, **People can do puzzles in this family room. What else can people do in this room?** (Take responses.)
- Say, **God doesn't live in a house like we do, but his people built him a beautiful temple, like a church. Let's hear about this fancy temple.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: God's Temple activity sheet

Preparation: Print the activity sheet. If you wish, color it and decorate it with gold glitter.

- Post the image of the temple to one side of your meeting area. Gather the group near where the picture of the temple is posted. Say, **Do you remember wise King Solomon? He built a beautiful temple for God. It was like a very fancy church, with gold and silver shining everywhere.**
- Continue, **But years later, something bad happened. God's people were taken far away from their home by a bad king, and their temple was destroyed.** Take down the picture of the temple and lay it facedown on the floor. Have all the children move with you to the opposite side of your meeting area.
- Continue, **Finally, a new king told God's people they could go back home and build a new temple. God's people were very happy. Everyone was happy! Their neighbors and the king gave them gold and silver. They said, "Here, go build a new temple."**
- Have all the children move with you back to where you started. Pick up the picture and post it again. Continue, **God's people worked to build a new temple for him. They loved God and**

wanted to follow him. Some bad guys tried to stop them, but God took care of his people. He protected them from bad guys. He gave them everything they needed while they worked on the temple. When it was all finished, the people cheered and celebrated. Lead the children in a cheer for God's temple.

- Continue, **The temple belonged to God. The people belonged to God too. That means they loved and followed God. We can love and follow God too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, thank you for being our God. Help us to follow you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD'S TEMPLE

Stuff you need: God's Temple activity sheet, butcher paper, glue, gold glitter, wet wipes

Preparation: Photocopy the activity sheet, one per child. Cover the work surface with the butcher paper.

- Give each child an activity sheet. Demonstrate how to drizzle glue onto the picture, and have the children do the same. (You can work a few at a time, based on the number of helpers you have.)
- Sprinkle glitter over the glue, and let the children help you tap off the extra onto the butcher paper.

OPTION 2: BUILDING THE TEMPLE

Stuff you need: wooden blocks

- Give each child, or group of children with a leader, their own pile of blocks to build a temple.

OPTION 3: BE A GOD FOLLOWER

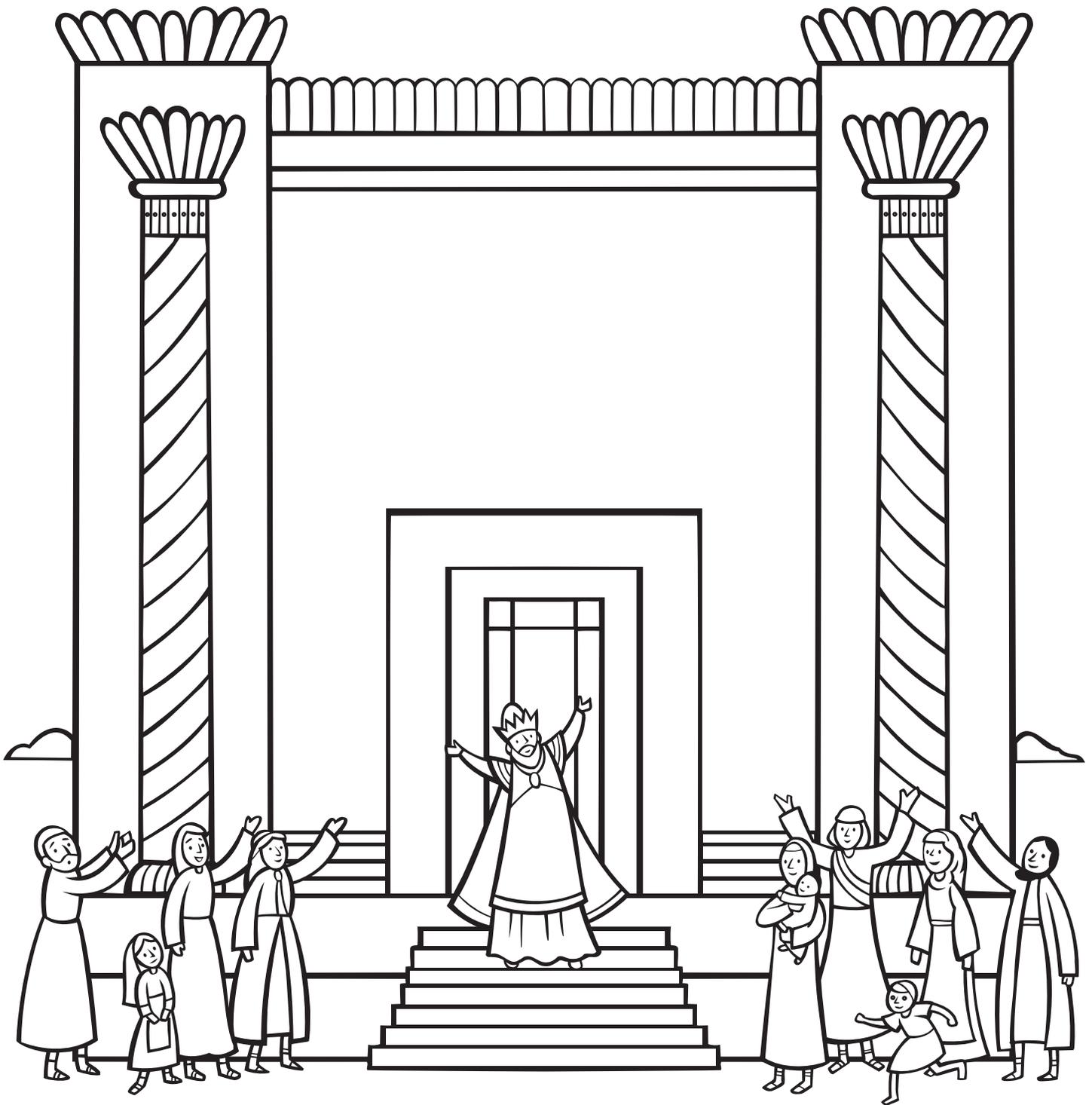
- Have children sit in a circle. Choose a volunteer to stand outside the circle, and say that child's name aloud. Have the children all cheer, "[Name] can follow God!" once you lead him or her around the outside of the circle. That child chooses another to switch spots (similar to Duck, Duck, Goose).
- Repeat until all children have had a turn.

OPTION 4: TRUST AND OBEY

- Say, **God wants us to follow him. That means we trust, or believe, in him. And we obey him, or do what he says.**
- Sing the chorus of "Trust and Obey" while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times.

Trust and obey,	<i>(hold hands in prayer, then salute)</i>
For there's no other way,	<i>(shake head and finger in "no" gesture)</i>
To be happy in Jesus,	<i>(trace smile with two fingers)</i>
But to trust and obey.	<i>(hold hands in prayer, then salute)</i>

GOD'S TEMPLE



"They will be my people. I will be their God." Zechariah 8:8

Name: _____

ESTHER GETS READY

Bible Basis: Esther 1–9

Bible Verse: Adapted from Esther 4:14: “Queen Esther had a hard job to do.”

Bible Point: God helps me when it’s hard.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: balloon, paper streamer, tape, birthday candles, toothbrush, large pajama shirt, storybook

- Say, **Let’s play a guessing game. I will pretend to get ready for something. You watch and guess what I’m getting ready for.**
- Blow up the balloon, tape up a streamer, and count out a few candles. Ask, **What am I getting ready for?** (Take responses.) Say, **Yes, a birthday party! Let’s play again.**
- Put on the pajama shirt, pretend to brush teeth, and open the book. Ask, **What am I getting ready for?** (Take responses.) Say, **Yes, going to bed.**
- Say, **Getting ready for bed or a birthday party isn’t too hard. But sometimes we have to get ready for a hard job. God will always help us. In the Bible, Esther had a hard job to do, but God helped her.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Esther story pictures, tape, crown made according to the directions in the Esther’s Crown “Explore More” option (silver or gold doily, sparkly stickers, stick-on gems)

Preparation: Print the Esther story pictures. Color and cut out each face, including the large circle for the mouth. Prepare the crown.

- Say, **The Bible tells us that long ago there was a beautiful young girl named Esther.**
- Hold the Esther mask to your face and speak through the mouth hole. Say, **I love God. I am one of God’s people, a Jew. My parents are gone, but my cousin takes care of me. We are both Jewish.**
- Say, **In Esther’s town, there was a king.**
- Hold the king mask to your face and speak through the mouth hole. Say, **I am the king. I can do anything I want. Right now, I want a new queen. I will call all the beautiful girls to the palace. Then I will choose a queen.**

- Say, **Esther was picked to go to the palace. Maybe the king would choose her to be his queen! Esther had to get ready.**
- Hold the Esther mask to your face and speak through the mouth hole. Say, **I have to look my best. I will eat special food. I will take care of my hair and skin. I will do something else too. I will keep a secret. I won't tell anyone that I'm Jewish.**
- Say, **It was time for the king to choose. Do you know who he picked? Esther! Now she would be the queen.** Tape Esther's crown to her head.
- Hold the Haman mask to your face and speak through the mouth hole. Say, **My name is Haman. I work for the king. I do not like Jewish people! I will make a law that gets rid of all the Jewish people.**
- Say, **Esther heard about Haman's mean law. Now she had a hard job to do.**
- Hold the Esther mask to your face and speak through the mouth hole. Say, **I have to save God's people. I will have to talk to my husband, the king. I will get ready to do this hard job.**
- Say, **Esther invited the king to a fancy dinner. She also invited bad Haman.**
- Hold the king mask to your face and speak through the mouth hole. Say, **My beautiful wife, this was a wonderful dinner. Ask me for anything, and I will give it to you.**
- Say, **Now was the time for Esther to do her hard job. God helped her.**
- Hold the Esther mask to your face and speak through the mouth hole. Say, **Please save me and my people. Haman wants to get rid of all the Jewish people.**
- Say, **The king was very surprised. He was very mad at Haman. The king saved the Jewish people and punished Haman. With God's help, Esther saved the Jewish people.**
- Pray, **Dear God, please help us to get ready for hard jobs, just like Esther. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: ESTHER'S FEAST

Allergy Alert! Check with parents and your Sunday school director to make sure none of the children in your class have food allergies to any of the foods you are serving. As an extra precaution, hang a sign on your door stating which foods you will be serving, so that as parents check in, they can alert you if there is a problem.

Stuff you need: several tongs, turkey chunks, cheese chunks, bread chunks, carrot slices, grapes cut into quarters, apple slices, cups of juice, colorful paper plates, serving trays

Preparation: Set up the food on trays. Have adult helpers use the tongs to serve the children.

- Say, **Today we are having a fancy dinner. We have a lot of different kinds of foods, just like Queen Esther served the king.**
- Pray and thank God for this fancy dinner. Allow children to eat the food. Close by saying, **Esther got ready for a fancy dinner with the king. She also got ready for the hard job she had to do. God will help you do what he wants you to do, even when it's hard.**

OPTION 2: ESTHER'S CROWN

Stuff you need: large silver or gold doilies (one per child), glue, long strips of paper, sparkly stickers, glitter glue, stick-on gems, tape

Preparation: Fold the doilies in half. Slide a long strip of paper inside the folded doily and glue in place to form a crown.

- Give a crown to each child. Have them decorate the crown with sparkly stickers and stick-on gems. Measure them around children's heads and tape to fit.

OPTION 3: CELEBRATION

Stuff you need: upbeat music

- Say, **When the king saved the Jews and punished Haman, the Jewish people were very happy. They had a joyful celebration.**
- Stand in a large circle. Play the music and have the children imitate you as you perform some simple gross-motor moves:

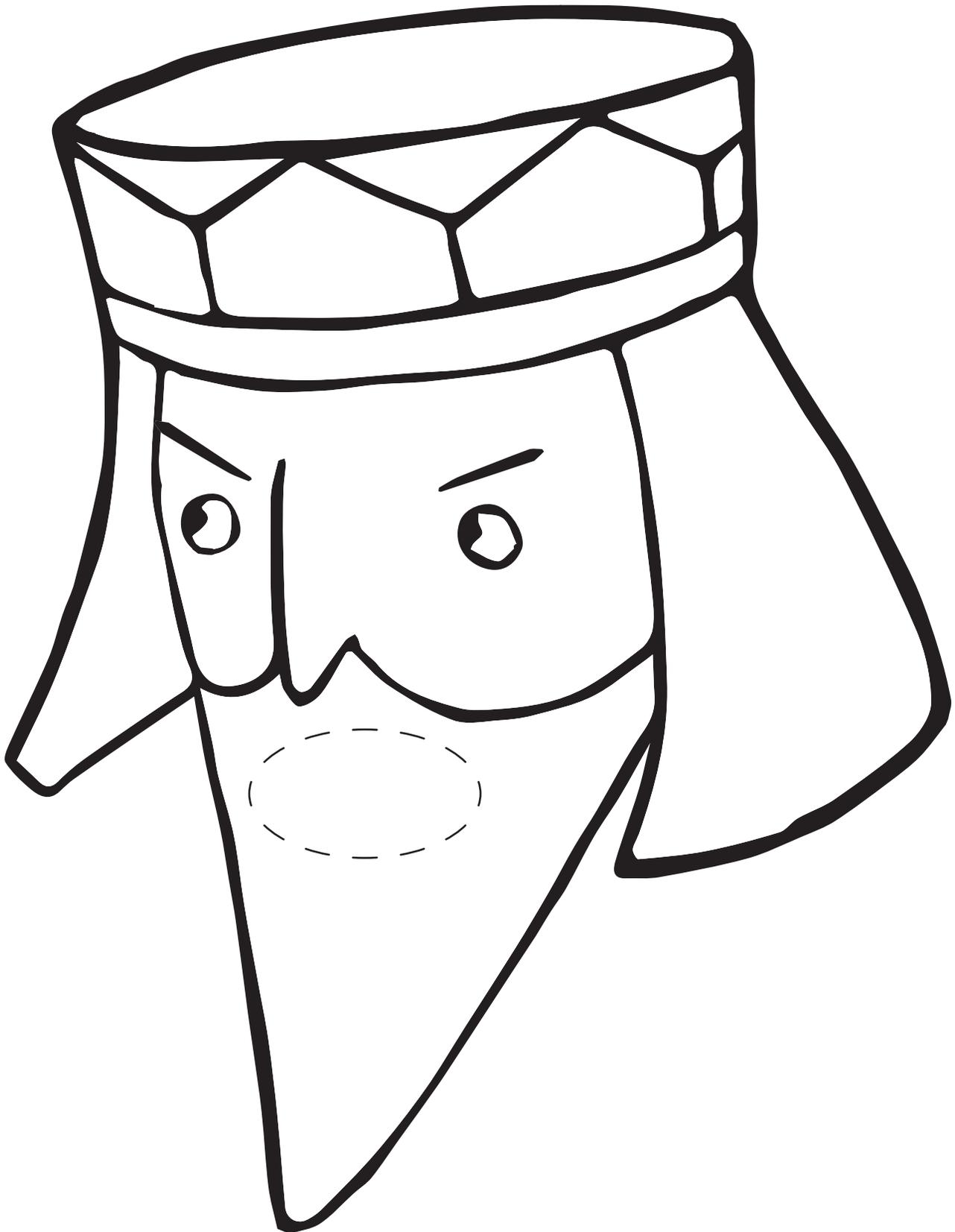
Twist	Clap and sway
Hop side to side with feet together	Kick feet out in front
Swim arms	Stretch alternating arms overhead
Hop from one foot to the other	Squat and stand

OPTION 4: ESTHER SONG

- Say, **Sometimes we have to do a hard job. We can pray and ask God to help us, just like he helped Queen Esther.**
- Sing the following song to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel" while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times.

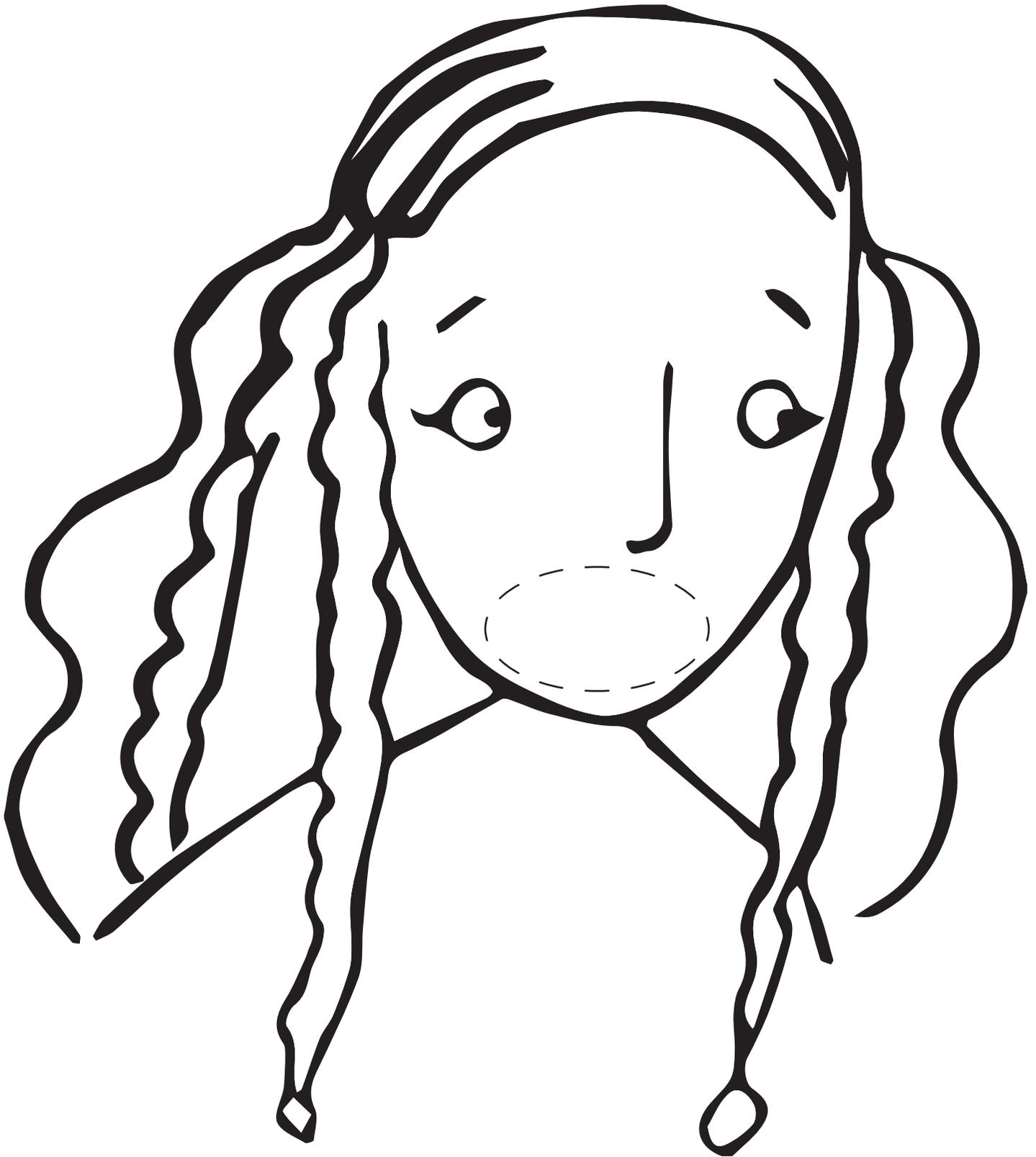
Beautiful Queen Esther,	<i>(hold hands above head like a crown)</i>
She had a job to do.	<i>(shake pointer finger up and down)</i>
God helped her do her hard job,	<i>(hold hands out with palms up)</i>
And God will help me too.	<i>(point to chest with pointer finger)</i>

STORY PICTURES





STORY PICTURES



GOD IS ON OUR SIDE

Bible Basis: Ezra 7:1, 7, 10–11; Nehemiah 1:2–6, 11; 4:4–6, 13–23; 8:1–12

Bible Verse: Adapted from Nehemiah 4:14: “God is great and powerful.”

Bible Point: God is on my side.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: chart paper (or whiteboard) and marker, something to keep hands very busy (like a knitting project)

- As you begin the lesson, knit (or pretend to) while you talk. Say, **I’m very busy today. I’m trying to finish knitting this scarf, but I also need to write your names on this paper. Let me see if I can try doing both things at once.**
- Attempt to do both at once, but fail comically. Say, **It’s hard to do two things at once! Let’s see if you can do it.**
- Guide the children in patting themselves on the head with one hand. Then guide them in rubbing their tummies in a circular motion. Finally, have them try doing both at once!
- Say, **It can be hard to do two things at once. But we can work together to get a job done, like Nehemiah and the people do in our story today.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Jerusalem activity sheet, building blocks, toy sword

Preparation: Print a copy of the Jerusalem activity sheet. Color it if you like. Stack the blocks to one side of your meeting area.

- Hold up the picture of Jerusalem. Say, **This is the city of Jerusalem. God’s people live here. This is where wise King Solomon built a temple for God.**
- Set the picture on the floor and continue, **God loves his people. He wants them to be safe. Their city needs a wall to protect them from bad guys. But the people have a problem.**
- Have a volunteer retrieve a block to begin building a wall around the city. Hold out the sword to block the child’s path on the way back. Say, **If the people are working on the wall, they can’t fight the bad guys.**
- Have the volunteer hold the sword. **If they fight the bad guys, they can’t build the wall.** Excuse your volunteer. Say, **They can’t do two things at the same time.**

- Continue, **God wants his people to be safe. He sent Nehemiah to show them how to work together.**
- Call up two volunteers. Give one the sword. Have the other retrieve a few blocks to start building a wall around the picture of Jerusalem. Say, **The people worked together. One person worked on the wall, while the other one looked out for bad guys. Then they switched.** Have the volunteers switch and continue building.
- Say, **When God’s people worked together, they stayed safe and built their wall. God was on their side.**
- Pray, **Dear God, You are great and powerful. We are happy you are on our side. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: WALLED CITY

Stuff you need: Jerusalem activity sheet, crayons, glue sticks, gray craft foam

Preparation: Photocopy the Jerusalem activity sheet, one per child. Cut the foam into small rectangles, matching the size of the blocks in the wall on the activity sheet.

- Allow the children to color their activity sheet. Demonstrate how to glue the foam “stones” across the picture to make a wall. You may want to draw a line of glue along one row of stones for the children and have them press the foam into place. Then add glue to the other row.

OPTION 2: BALLOON RELAY

Stuff you need: balloon (inflated), safety cone

- Have the children sit side by side. Place the safety cone on the floor in front of them. Call the first two to stand and hold the balloon between them by pressing against each side of the balloon with their palms. Show them how to walk carefully around the cone without dropping the balloon. If it drops, just pick it up and place it back in their hands.
- Once they’ve made it around the cone and back, help another pair take a turn.

OPTION 3: BUILD A WALL

Stuff you need: plastic cups (8 to 10 per child)

- Show the children how to line up cups, open side down, touching one another. Balance a few cups on top to make a second row and then a third.

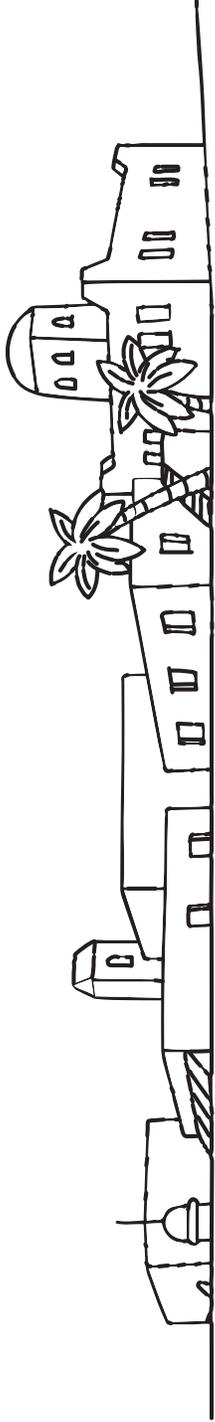
- Give each child 8 to 10 cups. Allow them to practice their motor skills while they build their own “wall” of cups (and have fun knocking it down and rebuilding).

OPTION 4: MY GOD IS SO BIG

- Sing the chorus of “My God Is So Big” while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times. Try using a deep, booming voice for one chorus and a whisper for the next.

My God is so big,	<i>(hold hands high overhead)</i>
So strong and so mighty,	<i>(make muscles with both arms)</i>
There’s nothing my God cannot do!	<i>(swing arms in a “safe” gesture)</i>

JERUSALEM



"God is great and powerful." Nehemiah 4:14

Name: _____

BABY JESUS

Bible Basis: Matthew 2:1–12; Luke 1:26–2:20; John 1:1–18

Bible Verse: Adapted from Luke 2:11: “Jesus is the Savior.”

Bible Point: Jesus is God’s Son.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: yellow star cutouts (one per child), tape, small treats or prizes such as stickers (one per child)

Preparation: Before the children come into the room, hide the prizes in simple spots. Tape a star just above each hiding spot. Make sure there is one per child.

- Hold a cutout star. Ask, **When you came into the room, did you notice some stars like this? Now that you’re looking for them, I bet you see a lot of stars. Point to a star. When I call your name, go look near the star. You will find a surprise.**
- Call the children one at a time to go look for a prize and bring it back to their spot. Help direct them as necessary.
- Say, **The Bible tells us about a star that led the way to a wonderful surprise—baby Jesus!**

NOTE: Save the star cutouts if you plan to do Option 1: Star Over Bethlehem.

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: baby doll, stuffed toy sheep

- Lead the children in saying, “Do not be afraid.” Tell them that they will say this whenever it’s time for an angel in the story to speak. Practice several times, cuing them by saying, “The angel said . . .” In the story, this will be followed by (*).
- Say, **God made us and he loves us. But God doesn’t like when we do wrong things, or sin. God sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to save us from our sins.**
- Call up a girl to stand by you. Say, **When it was time for God’s Son to come to earth, God chose a young woman to be a good mommy. Her name was Mary. One day, an angel came to Mary. The angel said . . . (*) (Do not be afraid.) You will have a baby. It is God’s Son.**
- Call up a boy to stand by you. Say, **God chose a man to be the daddy. His name was Joseph. An angel came to Joseph too. The angel said . . . (*) (Do not be afraid.) You will have a baby. Name him Jesus.**

- Continue, **Mary and Joseph went on a trip. There were no hotels. They had to sleep in a barn with some animals. While they were there, Mary had the baby.** Hand Mary the baby doll. **They named the baby Jesus.**
- Call up a volunteer to hold the sheep. Say, **There were shepherds out in the fields. An angel came to them. The angel said . . . (*) (Do not be afraid.) God's Son is born. He is the Savior.**
- Continue, **The angels told the shepherds they would find Jesus lying in a manger, which is like a box that holds food for animals! They hurried to go find Jesus and were happy to meet their Savior.**
- Continue, **Others wanted to meet the newborn Savior too. They followed a special star that appeared in the sky when Jesus was born. The star led them right to the Savior.**
- Pray, **Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: STAR OVER BETHLEHEM

Stuff you need: star cutouts (one per child), tape, craft sticks (one per child), glue, water, paper cups, paintbrushes, paper plates, gold glitter

Preparation: Water down the glue (one part glue to four parts water) in each cup. Tape a craft stick to the back of each star to serve as a handle. Pour glitter onto paper plates.

- Give each child a star and a paintbrush. Show them how to brush the glue onto their star.
- As they finish, help them dip their star into a plate of glitter by holding the handle. Set aside to dry.
- Ask, **What did the star lead to?** (baby Jesus)

OPTION 2: FOLLOW THE STAR

Stuff you need: star on a stick (prepared according to the directions in Option 1: Star Over Bethlehem or a similar star), masking tape, 3 or 4 items for a simple obstacle course such as a mat, a tube, a bench.

Preparation: Set up items for a simple obstacle course, such as a mat to roll on, a tube to crawl through, a bench to climb over.

- Say, **Some people followed the star to Baby Jesus. We are going to pretend we are following the star too.** Hold the star and lead children through the obstacle course. Then, choose a child to be the leader, and use the masking tape to attach the star to the leader's back or shoulder. Play a few more times, alternating the leader each time.

OPTION 3: NATIVITY SNACK

Allergy Alert! Check with parents and your Sunday school director to make sure none of the children in your class have food allergies to any of the foods you are serving. As an extra precaution, hang a sign on your door stating which foods you will be serving so that as parents check in, they can alert you if there is a problem.

Stuff you need: paper plates (one per child), graham crackers, popcorn, baby carrots, mini pretzel sticks, star fruit, apple

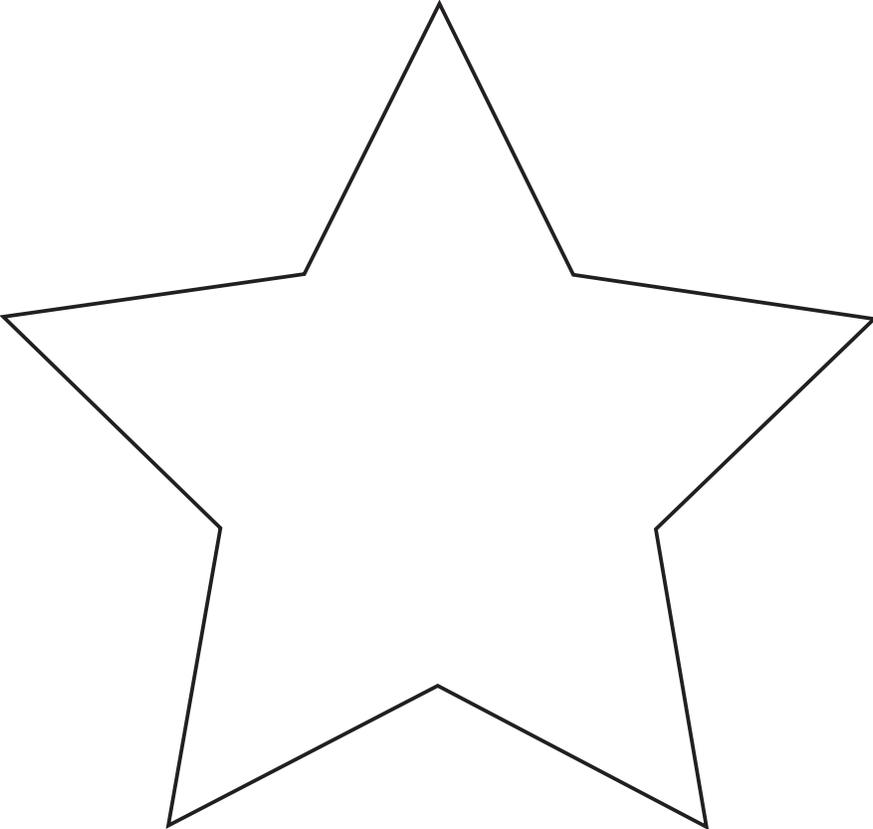
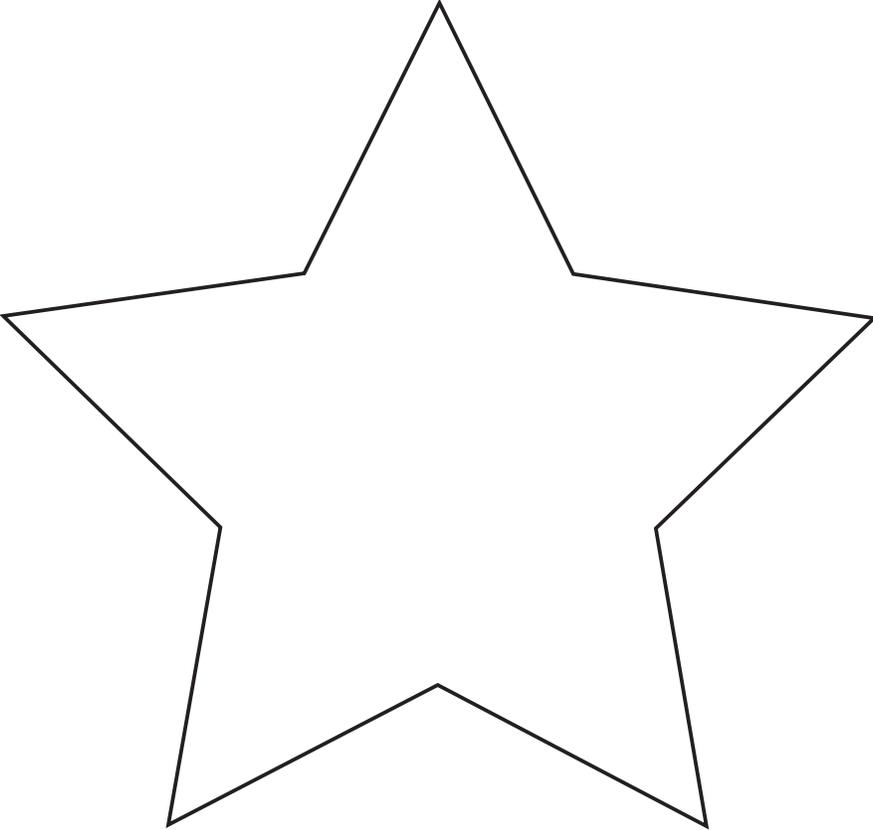
Preparation: Wash and slice the star fruit and apple.

- Give each child a paper plate. Explain that you will be building the story of Jesus' birth using snacks. As you retell the story, pass out the following items and show the children how to set them on their plate as a nativity scene:
 - Graham cracker—This is the stable. Lean the two halves against each other at the top to make a roof.
 - Pretzels—This is the straw on the ground.
 - Popcorn—These are the fluffy sheep all around.
 - Apple slice—This is the manger.
 - Carrots—These are Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. Put the smallest baby carrot on the "manger."
 - Star fruit—This is the star that led the way to baby Jesus.
- As the children enjoy their snack, ask each child something about the scene they built.

OPTION 4: HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS

Stuff you need: baby doll

- Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. Give the children turns holding the baby doll while you sing. Remind them that Christmas is a party for Jesus' birthday.



THE POWER OF GOD

Bible Basis: Matthew 3:1–17

Bible Verse: Adapted from Matthew 3:16: “Jesus was baptized.”

Bible Point: God is powerful.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: church worker ID badge (or work ID badge), wedding ring

- Show the children your ID badge. Ask, **What is this? What is it for?** (Take responses.) Explain that it is like a sign to show people that you belong here.
- Show the children the wedding ring. Ask, **What is this? What is it for?** (Take responses.) Explain that it is like a sign to show people that a person is married.
- Say, **When people decide to follow God, they sometimes want a sign to show others. They might wear a necklace with a cross on it. They might put a fish symbol on their car. Today we’ll hear about a sign people saw when Jesus was baptized. It was a sign of God’s power.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Jesus Is Baptized story picture and puppet, craft stick, glue, scissors, cardboard tube

Preparation: Color the Jesus Is Baptized story picture and cut a slit in the picture where indicated. Color the Jesus puppet and cut it out. Glue the craft stick to the back of the puppet, with the bottom half of the stick extending below the feet of the puppet to use as a handle.

- Show the children the Jesus Is Baptized story picture (without Jesus in it). Say, **This is John. He loves God. He tells other people to follow God. The people come to John to be baptized. That means he dunks them in the river. This shows they want to wash away their sins and follow God.**
- Show the Jesus stick puppet. Say, **This is Jesus. He is the Son of God. He does not sin. He is perfect. One day, he went to the river to see John. Here’s what happened.**
- Act out the following dialogue, using the picture and puppet:

JESUS: **Please baptize me.**

JOHN: **But you are perfect. You should baptize me!**

JESUS: **This is what God wants.**

JOHN: **Okay, I’ll do it.**

- Slide the stick puppet down and up through the slit one time. Say, **Then something amazing happened. The clouds rolled back. God's Spirit came down from heaven and rested on Jesus like a beautiful white bird. Then all the people heard God's voice.**
- Speak through the cardboard tube to make a booming God voice. Say, **This is my Son. I love him, and I am very happy with him!**
- In your own voice, continue, **Everyone was amazed by God's power. They knew Jesus was God's Son. Jesus has God's power too. He uses it to help people.**
- Pray, **Dear God, you are powerful. Please use your power in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: HANDPRINT DOVE

Stuff you need: blue construction paper (one sheet per child), nontoxic washable white paint, yellow construction paper, scissors, glue, black marker, wet wipes

Preparation: Cut the yellow construction paper into small triangles, one per child.

- Paint the palm of one hand of each child with a coat of white paint (one child at a time), being sure to cover the entire palm and every finger. Help the children to spread their fingers, then carefully lay their hand on the blue paper to create a white handprint, making sure to roll the thumb to make a wide thumb print. Immediately wash the child's hand with wet wipes.
- Help the children glue the yellow triangle on the outside of the thumb (the dove's head) for a beak. Set aside to dry. Use black marker to make an eye after the paint is dry.



OPTION 2: JESUS IS BAPTIZED

Stuff you need: Baptism activity sheet, blue tissue paper, scissors, glue sticks

Preparation: Photocopy a Baptism activity sheet, one for each child. Cut the blue tissue paper into 1-inch squares.

- Give each child a Baptism activity sheet. Spread glue over the water part of the picture and have the children press the blue tissue paper onto it.

OPTION 3: NATURE WALK

Stuff you need: a rope, several adult volunteers

- Take the children outside for a nature walk. Have them all hold on to a rope, and make sure to station an adult at the beginning of the rope, an adult at the end of the rope, and an adult on each side. Or, if you have enough adults, you can have each adult hold hands with two children. Remind the children of God's power. Walk around your church and point out things God created—the sun, the sky, the breeze, trees, and birds. Explain that everything God created is a sign of his power.

OPTION 4: MY GOD IS SO BIG

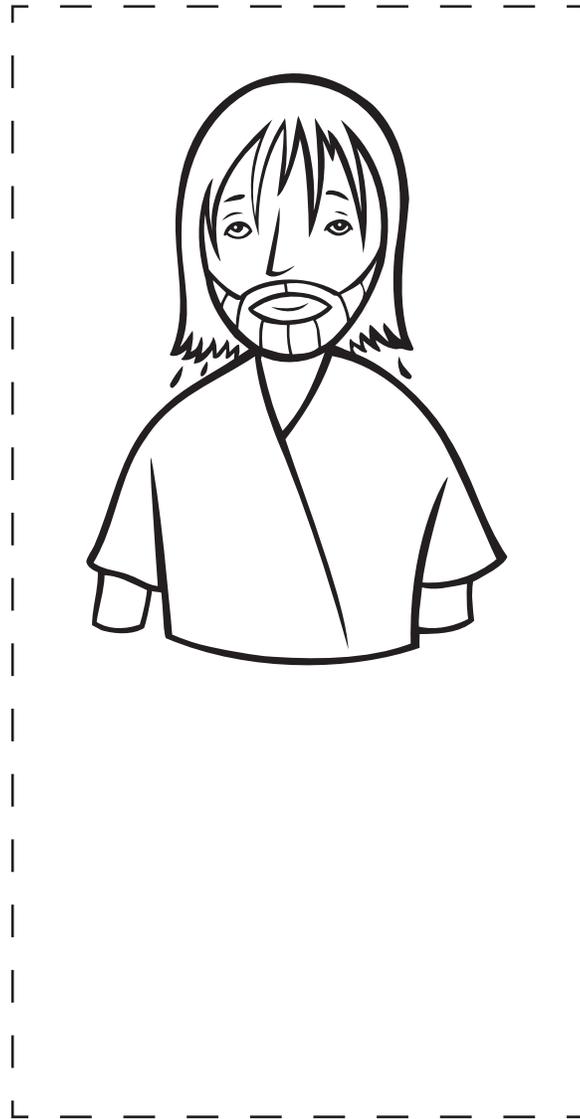
- Sing the chorus of "My God Is So Big" while demonstrating the motions. Repeat several times. Try using a deep, booming voice for one chorus and a whisper for the next.

My God is so big,	<i>(hold hands high overhead)</i>
So strong and so mighty,	<i>(make muscles with both arms)</i>
There's nothing my God cannot do!	<i>(swing arms in a "safe" gesture)</i>

BAPTISM



BAPTISM



BAPTISM



"Jesus was baptized." Matthew 3:16

Name: _____

JESUS, THE TEACHER

Bible Basis: Luke 10:25–37; John 6:60–71

Bible Verse: Adapted from John 6:69: “Jesus is holy.”

Bible Point: I can learn from Jesus.

PREPARATION FOR LESSON 25: This week, take pictures of the children in your class. You will need them for a craft next week. You can take one of the whole group if you are pressed for time, but individual pictures would work best.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: cookbook, instruction manual for any household item, Bible

- Show the children the cookbook. Say, **This is a cookbook. It teaches me how to cook things. If I follow the directions, I could make this chocolate cake.**
- Show the children the instruction manual. Say, **These are directions for my blender. It teaches me what all the buttons do. If I follow the directions, I can use my blender the right way.**
- Show the children the Bible. Say, **This is the Bible. It teaches me how to know God. If I follow what it says, I can live the way God wants me to live.**
- Say, **The Bible tells us about Jesus. It tells us what he said and what he taught people. Today, we’ll hear a story that Jesus told.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: robe, small cloth bag with a few coins

- Say, **Jesus is the perfect Son of God. He taught people to be good. He told stories about how to be good. Here is one of Jesus’ stories from the Bible.**
- Call up a volunteer to wear the robe and hold the bag of money. Begin, **Once there was a man who went on a trip.** Direct your volunteer to walk a short distance and then stop. Call up another volunteer to direct as you continue, **A robber attacked him. The robber took his money and even his robe. The robber left him alone, lying at the side of the road.** Dismiss the robber.
- Say, **The man was hurt. He needed help. Look, here comes someone now!** Call up a volunteer. **It’s a pastor from the church. Maybe he will help.** Direct the volunteer to walk right past the injured man and return to sit with the group.

- Say, **Oh no! He didn't help. Here comes someone else!** Call up another volunteer. **It's a Sunday school teacher. Maybe she will help.** Direct the volunteer to walk right past the injured man and return to sit with the group.
- Say, **Hmm, those two weren't very kind. They just walked by without helping. Let's see who else is coming.** Call up another volunteer and place the robe on him or her. **Uh oh, I don't think this one will help either. He's from a different town and these two aren't usually friends. I wonder what will happen.** Direct the volunteer to approach the injured man and give him the robe. Continue, **Look at that! He's helping! He gave the man his robe. He will help him get better and give him some money. Let's clap for this kind helper.** Lead the kids in clapping.
- Say, **Jesus told this story to his followers. He wanted them to be kind and loving. When we hear this story, we learn to be kind and loving too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, thank you for teaching us to be kind and loving. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Stuff you need: Love Your Neighbor activity sheet, crayons, extra-small or round spot adhesive bandages, enough for 5 bandages per child

Preparation: Photocopy the Love Your Neighbor activity sheet, one per child. Unwrap the bandages, but do not remove the tabs over the adhesive.

- Give each child an activity sheet. Let them color it with crayons.
- Demonstrate how to peel the tabs off of the bandages. Place the bandages on the picture of the injured man. Have each child put 5 bandages on their picture.

OPTION 2: GOOD SAMARITAN RELAY

Stuff you need: paper cups, water, bandages, robe, coins

- Place all items on one side of the play area. Have the children take turns being the injured man by lying on the floor. Guide the other children as they take turns walking to the table, selecting an item and bringing it to the injured man.
- They should help the injured man put on the robe, drink the water, put on a bandage, and hold the coins.

OPTION 3: BOWLING

Stuff you need: 4 empty two-liter pop bottles, beach ball

Preparation: Line up pop bottles close together on the floor.

- Have children line up and take turns rolling the beach ball to knock down the pop bottles. They can be good neighbors to one another by helping each other pick up the bottles for the next person in line.

Option 4: Kindness Song

- Teach the children the “Kindness Song” (sung to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell”).

*I'll be kind to you,
And you'll be kind to me,
'Cause when we're kind to others,
God is very pleased.*

- Have the children stand face-to-face with a partner. Instruct them to hold hands and swing both hands while they sing the song. Switch partners and repeat several times.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR



Name: _____

JESUS AND THE LITTLE CHILDREN

Bible Basis: Matthew 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16

Bible Verse: Adapted from Matthew 19:14: “Jesus said, ‘Little children, come to me.’”

Bible Point: Jesus loves me.

PREPARATION FOR LESSON 26: Ask parents to send in a smock or old T-shirt for next week’s painting activity.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: crayon, permanent marker, child’s bowl, cooking pan

- Show the children the crayon. Ask, **What is this for?** (Take responses.) Ask, **Are you allowed to use it?** (Take responses.)
- Show the children the permanent marker. Ask, **What is this for?** (Take responses.) Ask, **Are you allowed to use it?** (Take responses.) **No, this could make a mess that won’t wash away. Just mommies and daddies can use these.**
- Show the children the bowl. Ask, **What is this for?** (Take responses.) Ask, **Are you allowed to use it?** (Take responses.)
- Show the children the cooking pan. Ask, **What is this for?** (Take responses.) Ask, **Are you allowed to use it?** (Take responses.) **No, this gets too hot for you to touch. You could get hurt. Just mommies and daddies use these.**
- Say, **There are some things kids can do and some things you can’t do. Here’s something all kids can do: You can get to know Jesus.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: construction paper, scissors, marker, craft stick or ruler

Preparation: Make a two-sided sign with a craft stick or ruler handle. Draw a smiley face on one side of the sign and a frown on the other.

- Say, **Show me your best happy, smiling face.** (Pause) **Now show me a sad, frowning face.** (Pause) **As I tell you the story, watch for this sign.** Hold up sign. **If you see the smiley side, show me that smiling face. If you see the frown side, show me your sad face.** Practice this a few times.

- Say, **Jesus is the Son of God. He came to earth as a little baby boy and grew up. He helped people and taught them how to have a good life. Some of Jesus' friends knew he was very special.** Hold up smiling sign.
- Continue, **These friends followed Jesus everywhere. They walked a long way. They saw Jesus help many people. They knew Jesus must be very tired. They wanted him to rest.** Hold up the frowning sign.
- Continue, **While Jesus was resting, some people saw him. They thought Jesus was special too. They wanted to visit him. There were some children. The children really wanted to see Jesus.** Hold up the smiling sign.
- Continue, **Jesus' friends were worried. They didn't want the children to play with Jesus. They wanted Jesus to rest. They said, "No! Go back! You're not allowed to see Jesus."** Hold up the frowning sign.
- Continue, **Jesus wanted to see the children. He loves children. Jesus told his friends, "It's okay. Let the children come to me." The children ran to Jesus. He loved them and he prayed for them. Now they were happy.** Hold up the smiling sign.
- Say, **We can all get to know Jesus. We can hear stories about Jesus, pray to him, and sing songs to him. Jesus loves when we come to him. Jesus loves you!**
- Pray, **Dear Jesus, I know you love me. I love you too. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: LITTLE CHILDREN

Stuff you need: Jesus Loves the Little Children activity sheet, scissors, magazines, glue sticks

Preparation: Photocopy the Jesus Loves the Little Children activity sheet, one per child. Cut out pictures of children from magazines (parenting magazines are great for this). Also cut out several other images, such as grown-ups, food, pets, and household objects.

- Give each child an activity sheet. Read the heading aloud. Say, **We are going to glue pictures of little children here.** Hold up a picture of a child. Ask, **Is this a little child?** (Yes) Demonstrate how to glue it to the paper. Hold up a picture that is not a child. Ask, **Is this a little child?** (No) Say, **So I won't glue that one to my paper. I just want to fill my paper with pictures of children.**
- Allow the children to search through the pictures. Help them select pictures of children and glue them to their papers.

OPTION 2: Jesus Loves Me

Stuff you need: photographs of children taken last week, craft foam frames (one per child), stick-on foam shapes, tape, permanent marker, scissors, white craft foam

Preparation: Print the photographs from last week in a size that fits your frames. Cut the white craft foam into strips and glue one strip on each frame.

NOTE: You will likely have children in class this week who were not in class last week. You can make a note for their parents to put a picture in the frame they've made, or you can check with church staff to see if they have a camera and printer that a volunteer could use to take pictures at the beginning of this session and print the photos in time for the craft.

- Give each child a frame. Let them decorate the frames with the stick-on craft foam shapes.
- For each child, write, "Jesus Loves [name]" in permanent marker on the strip of white craft foam. Tape their pictures in their frame.

OPTION 3: HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES AND TOES

- Say, **God made every part of you, and he loves you very much. He loves your head** (point to head), **your shoulders** (point to shoulders), **your knees** (point to knees), **and your toes** (point to toes). **Do that with me.** Repeat slowly as you touch each body part.
- Go right into singing the song and touching each body part:
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes!

OPTION 4: JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE ONES

- Sing "Jesus Loves the Little Ones." Have the children point to themselves every time they sing "me."
Jesus loves the little ones like me, me, me.
Jesus loves the little ones like me, me, me.
Little ones like me,
Sat upon his knee,
Jesus loves the little ones like me, me, me.

JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN

"Jesus said, 'Little children, come to me.'" Matthew 19:14

Name: _____

JESUS' SACRIFICE

Bible Basis: Matthew 26:26–28; 27:46–50; Luke 23:32–49; John 13:21–30; 14:1–15; 18:4–9; 19:30

Bible Verse: Adapted from John 14:1: “Trust in Jesus.”

Bible Point: Jesus gave his life for me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: superhero action figure, large wooden block, box or birdcage (to serve as a jail), toy car

- Show the children the superhero. Hold the block near the figure as if it were a building falling over. Say, **Oh no, this big building is tipping over right onto our hero! What will happen?** (Take responses.) Say, **His super strength will catch the building and set it back up.** Demonstrate this with the figure and block.
- Put the figure in the “jail.” Say, **Oh no, the bad guys put our hero in jail! What will happen?** (Take responses.) Say, **He will use his superpowers to fly right out.** Demonstrate this with the figure.
- Place the car upside down on the floor. Say, **Oh no, there are people trapped in this car! What will happen?** (Take responses.) Say, **Our hero will save them!** Demonstrate this with the figure.
- Say, **This is a great hero, but he is just pretend. We have a hero who is real—Jesus. He has all the power of God, and he loves to help people. In today’s story, it might seem like the bad guys are winning. Remember, Jesus is a real superhero who will save us in the end.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 26

Preparation: Open the *Story for Little Ones* book to Chapter 26 (page 118). Show the pictures in the book as you tell the story.

- Show the picture of the Last Supper. Say, **This is Jesus with his friends. They are having dinner together. They know Jesus is kind and helpful. They know he is the Son of God. But Jesus is telling them some bad news. Jesus said, “Some people don’t love me. Some bad guys want to stop me from teaching.”**
- Show the picture of The Garden. Say, **Jesus took his friends to a garden. It was nighttime, but they had an important job to do. Jesus wanted them all to pray. He prayed, “Dear Father, I know the bad guys are coming to get me. I trust you. I know you will help me.”**
- Show the picture of the bad guys. Say, **Then Jesus was arrested. The soldiers took him to jail. Should they keep him in jail? He didn’t do anything wrong. Some angry people yelled, “Kill him!” That seems sad, but remember that God’s plans are always good.**

- Show the picture of Jesus Crucified. Say, **The bad guys killed Jesus. They hung him on a cross. Jesus' friends were very sad. They didn't know God's good plan. But we know it.**
- Put the book down. Say, **Jesus didn't die by accident. He did it so he could save us. God had a plan to help wash away all the wrong things we do. Those wrong things are called sins. God's plan has a very happy ending. Come back next week to hear what happens. I'll give you a hint: Our hero, Jesus, has the power to come back to life!**
- Pray, **Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us so much that you died so our sins can be forgiven. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: THE LAST SUPPER

Allergy Alert! Check with parents and your Sunday school director to make sure none of the children in your class have food allergies to the food used in this activity. As an extra precaution, hang a sign on your door stating which foods you will be handling so that as parents check in, they can alert you if there is a problem.

Stuff you need: The Last Supper activity sheet, round soup crackers, glue

Preparation: Photocopy the Last Supper activity sheet, one per child.

- Show the picture. Say, **When Jesus had dinner with his friends, he told them something very important. He said, "I will give my life for you. My body will be broken, like we break this bread. Whenever you eat bread, you will think of how much I love you."**
- Give each child a Last Supper picture and 2 to 3 crackers. Dab a few glue dots on their paper and show them how to stick crackers to it. Set the pictures aside to dry.

OPTION 2: PASS THE CUP

Stuff you need: plastic wine goblet, purple tissue paper, music, stickers

- Crumple the tissue paper into the cup. Say, **When Jesus had dinner with his friends, he poured some wine. Then he told them something very important. He said, "I will give my life for you. This wine is like my blood that I will pour out for you. Whenever you drink wine, you will think of how much I love you."** (You may substitute "juice" for "wine.")
- Stand in a circle. Have the children pass the cup to one another around the circle while the music plays. When the music stops, have the "cup holder" say, "I know Jesus loves me." Repeat until each child has had a turn.

OPTION 3: THE CROSS

Stuff you need: white paper (one sheet per child), clear tape, finger paint, wet wipes, smocks or old T-shirts

Preparation: Ask parents to send in a smock or old T-shirt the week before this activity. Have a few extras on hand. Use tape to make an “invisible” cross on each paper.

- Say, **Today’s story seems sad, but that’s because it’s not over yet. There’s a wonderful surprise still to come. Now you’ll make a painting that has a surprise to it. You work on painting, and then I’ll show you the surprise.**
- Allow the children to cover their papers in paint. Wash their hands with wet wipes. Peel off the tape to reveal the cross.

OPTION 4: JESUS LOVES ME

- Sing “Jesus Loves Me” along with the motions below.

Jesus loves me,	(hug self)
This I know,	(point to temple)
For the Bible tells me so,	(hold hands like a book)
Little ones to him belong,	
They are weak but he is strong.	(make muscles on “strong”)
Yes, Jesus loves me.	(hug self, rocking side to side)
Yes, Jesus loves me.	(hug self, rocking side to side)
Yes, Jesus loves me,	(hug self, rocking side to side)
The Bible tells me so.	(hold hands like a book)

THE LAST SUPPER



"Trust in Jesus." John 14:1

Name: _____

JESUS HAS RISEN

Bible Basis: Matthew 28:2–8, 16–20; Luke 24:36–49; John 21:1–7

Bible Verse: Adapted from Matthew 28:6: “Jesus has risen.”

Bible Point: God can give me a new life.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

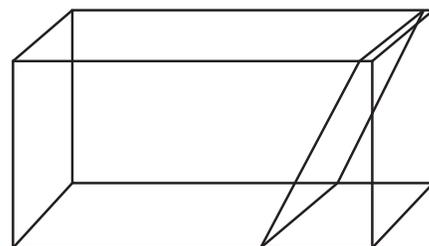
Stuff you need: the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, a blanket

- Spread out a blanket or two for the children to sit on, and read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* aloud to them. If you have a small group, you can sit on the floor too. If you have a larger group, it will be easier for the children to see pictures if you sit in a chair.
- When you are finished, say, **In this story, the caterpillar ate and ate and ate. Then he wrapped himself up in a cocoon. It looked like he was dead. But inside that cocoon, God did a miracle. He turned that caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly! What is a miracle?** (Take responses.) Explain that it is something only God has the power to do.
- Say, **Today we are going to learn about the most amazing miracle God ever did—even more amazing than turning a caterpillar into a butterfly.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: *The Story for Little Ones*, page 122, cardboard box with lid, piece of cardboard, scissors, tape, black paint or paper, action figure

Preparation: Prepare a “magic box” to use as the tomb. Paint the inside of your box and the extra piece of cardboard black or cover them with black paper. Tape the piece of cardboard to the bottom of the box so it flips back and forth freely and creates a flap with a small space behind it. Make sure your action figure fits in the small space.



- Show the picture of Jesus crucified on page 122 of *The Story for Little Ones*. Say, **This is where we left off in our story of Jesus last week.** Ask,
 - Was this a happy or a sad time?** (Sad)
 - Why was it sad?** (Jesus had been killed)
- **Was Jesus really dead? Was he just sleeping or pretending?** (He was really dead)
- Continue, **That is sad, but it's not the end of the story. God performed an amazing miracle to give the story a happy ending. Here's what happened.**

- Show the action figure, holding it gently in a reclined position. Say, **Jesus was really, truly dead. His friends were very sad. They put his body in a tomb, which is like a cave. They covered the tomb with a heavy stone.** Show the empty box, holding the secret flap against the near end of the box. Set the box on a desk or table and put the figure inside, behind the secret flap. Place the lid on the box.
- Continue, **For three days, Jesus lay dead in the tomb. Then, some of Jesus' friends went to the tomb. The big, heavy stone had been rolled away!** Remove the lid. **When they looked in the tomb, Jesus was not inside!** Holding the flap firmly against the near end of the box to hide the figure, show the children the inside of the box.
- Continue, **Then an angel appeared and told them, "Jesus is not here! He is risen! He is alive!"** Lead the children in cheering. **God had done the biggest miracle of all. He gave Jesus new life, and that means we can all have new life too. Because Jesus gave his life, we can ask God to forgive our sins. We can have a home in heaven someday.**
- Explain, **Now, to tell that story, I played a little trick on you.** Show the children how the magic box works. **But God's miracles are no trick. Jesus really died and really rose again. He's alive today.**
- Pray, **Dear Jesus, I believe that you died and rose again. I believe that you have a home for me in heaven. Amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: RESURRECTION BINGO

Allergy Alert! Check with parents and your Sunday school director to make sure none of the children in your class have food allergies to any of the foods you are serving. As an extra precaution, hang a sign on your door stating which foods you will be serving so that as parents check in, they can alert you if there is a problem.

Stuff you need: Bingo activity sheet, jelly beans or plastic markers

Preparation: Photocopy Bingo activity sheet, one per child. Print a set of Bingo image cards for yourself.

- Give each child a Bingo sheet and a handful of jelly beans (or plastic markers). Draw the first image from your deck of cards and explain its connection to the resurrection story. Show the children how to find this image on their sheet and cover it with a jelly bean (or plastic marker). Continue in this fashion until their sheets are covered completely. Then enjoy eating the jelly beans!

Jesus—Easter is to celebrate Jesus.

Bread—Jesus shared a special meal with his friends. They had bread.

Cup—Jesus wants his friends to remember him when they eat the bread and share a special cup.

Crown of thorns—Soldiers put a pretend crown on Jesus' head.

Nails—Nails were used to put Jesus on the cross. The thorns and the nails hurt Jesus.

Cross—Jesus died on a cross. Jesus' friends were sad.

The number 3—Jesus was dead in the tomb for three days.

Empty tomb—Jesus came to life and left the tomb!

Angel—The angel told Jesus' friends, "Jesus is alive!" They were happy. We are too!

OPTION 2: EGG HUNT

Stuff you need: set of Resurrection Eggs, basket, marker

Preparation: Prepare a set of Resurrection Eggs (instructions widely available online). Mark each one with the number of its sequence in the story. Hide the eggs in simple spots around the room. Instead of finding objects to put inside the eggs, you could print the images from the Bingo activity sheet.

NOTE: For children this young, you may want to simplify the resurrection story by using just six eggs/objects. Optional: hide additional eggs with stickers or small treats inside (enough so each child receives one).

- Hold the basket. Say, **At Easter, we celebrate Jesus rising to life. I've hidden some Easter eggs around the room. Your job is to find them and put them in this basket. Once I have all the eggs, I'll show you the surprises inside. Now, go look for eggs—and no peeking inside!**
- Help the children find all the eggs. Then gather together as you open each one in order. They can help tell the resurrection story if they recognize an item.

OPTION 3: ALIVE!

Stuff you need: disposable cups (one per child), potting soil, grass seed, small scoops, water, eyedropper, newspapers, wet wipes

Preparation: Spread newspaper over your work area.

- Show the children the soil. Ask, **Does this look like it's alive?** (Take responses.) Explain, **It's not moving or breathing or growing. It's not alive.**
- Show the children the grass seed. Ask, **Does this look like it's alive?** (Take responses.) Explain, **It's not moving or breathing or growing. It's not alive.**
- Say, **Only God has the power to make something that's not alive come to life. Jesus was dead in the tomb for three days, but God brought him back to life. We'll plant these seeds and see if God brings the plants to life.**

- Help each child fill a cup with soil, about an inch from the top. Sprinkle grass seed and then place another half inch of soil on top. Add a little water using the eyedropper. Place the cups near a sunny window.
- Say, **It doesn't look like anything is living. Come back next week and we'll see what God has done.**

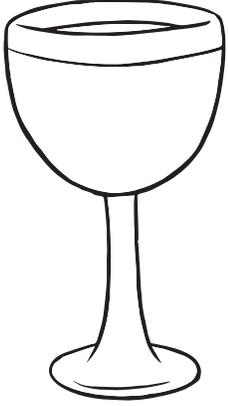
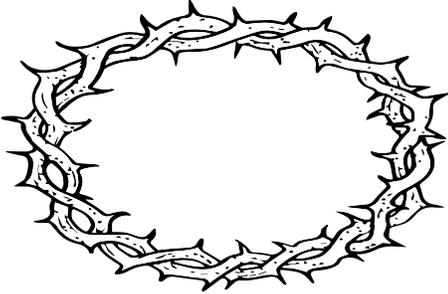
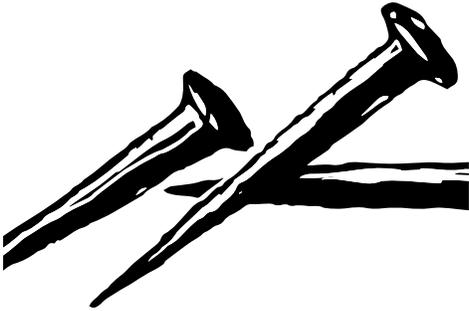
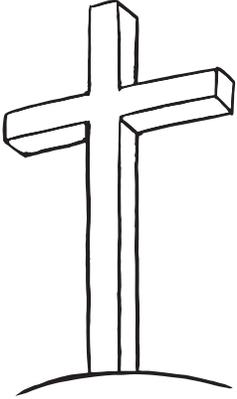
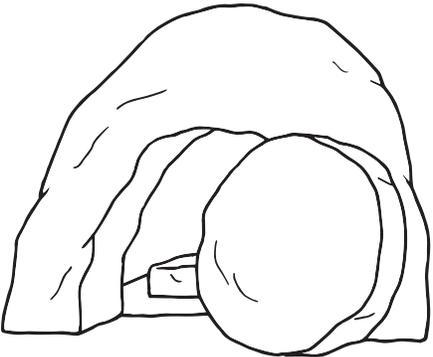
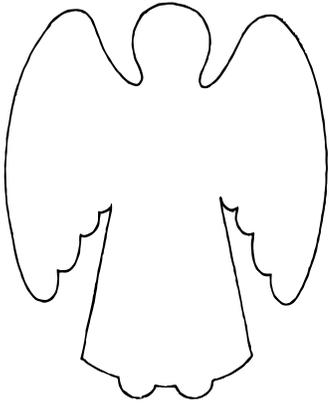
OPTION 4: HALLELUJAH!

Stuff you need: multicolored paper streamers, cardboard tubes (one per child), music

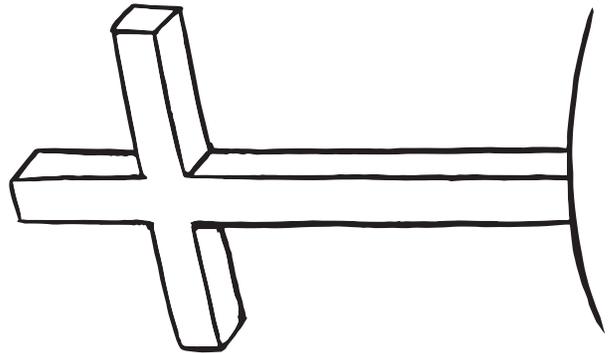
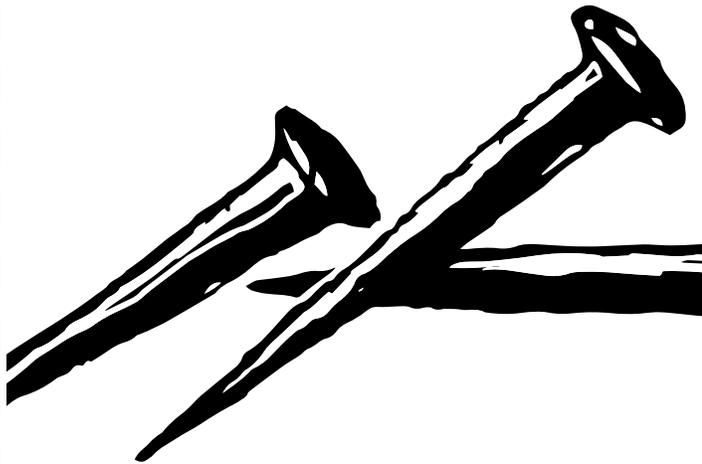
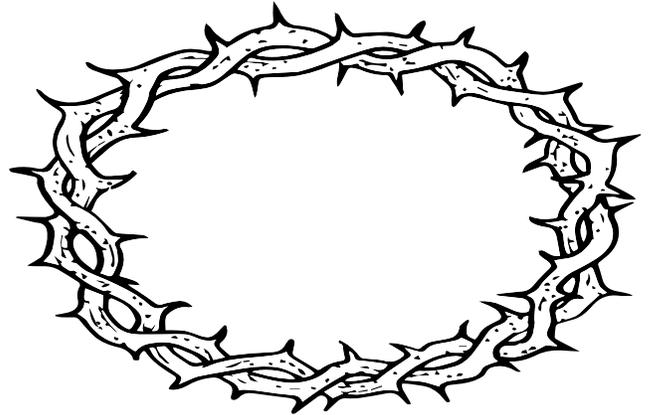
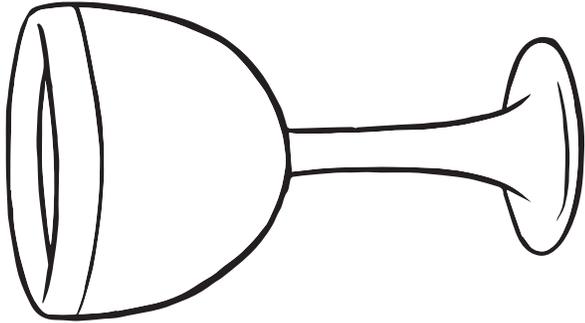
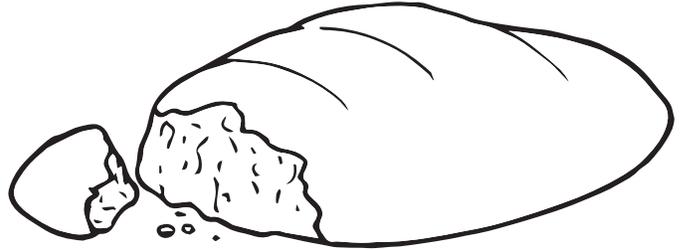
Preparation: Make a rainbow streamer wand for each child by taping streamers to the tube handle.

- Celebrate the risen Savior! Put on some Easter praise music and guide the children in waving their streamers to the beat.

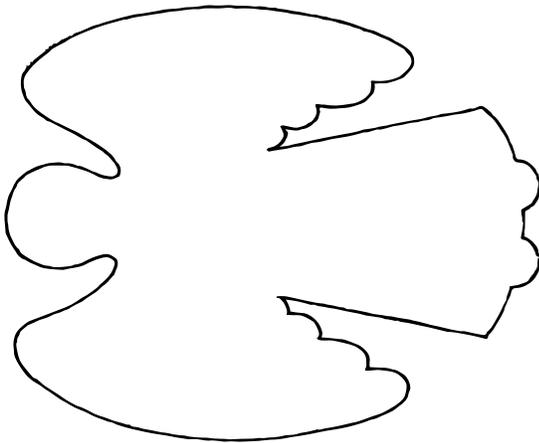
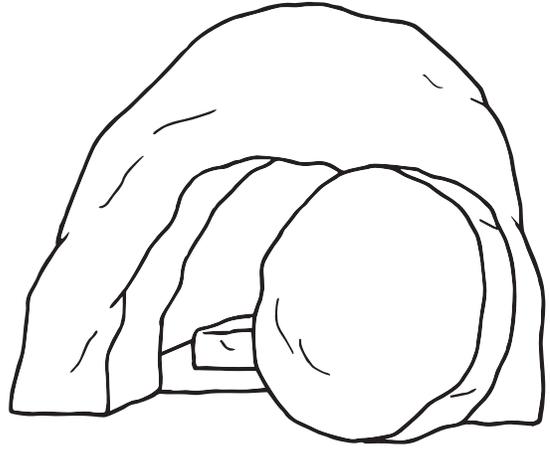
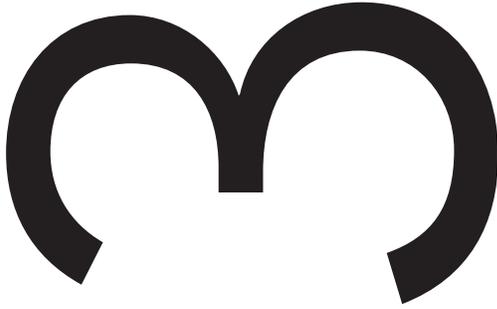
BINGO

BINGO SELECTION



BINGO SELECTION



THE HOLY SPIRIT

Bible Basis: Acts 2:1–6

Bible Verse: Adapted from Acts 2:4: “They were filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Bible Point: The Holy Spirit can live in me.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

- Say, **Good morning!** Pause to let the children respond. Focus on one child and say, **Hello!** Pause for a response. Look at another child and say, **Hi!** Pause for a response.
- Say, **We have lots of ways to say hello. If you visit somewhere far away and want to say hello to someone, you might have to learn their language. In China, people don't say "hello." They say "ni hao" (nee-how). Try that with me.** Greet one another by saying, “ni hao.”
- Continue, **Maybe some of you say hello in a different way at home with your families. Do any of you know another way to say hello?** (Take responses.) Invite any volunteers to share the way they say hello in their own families. Give the children time to practice saying hello in those different ways or languages.
- Continue, **It's fun to learn another language. Today, we'll hear about God's miracle that helped people speak different languages.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: Trinity story pictures

Preparation: Print the Trinity story pictures. Color them if you like.

- Show the picture of Jesus. Say, **Jesus is the Son of God. He was born on earth as a baby. He grew up and taught people how to live good lives. He was killed on a cross. Ask, Do you remember what happened after that?** (Take responses.) **Yes, he rose from the dead, and he is alive.**
- Show the picture of God the Father. Say, **God created everything. He made the whole world, and he made you too. God is perfect and loving. That's why he sent us Jesus.**
- Show the picture of the Holy Spirit. Say, **God also gives us the Holy Spirit. We're not sure what the Holy Spirit looks like. When Jesus was dunked in water, or baptized, the Holy Spirit came down like a white bird. Today, we'll hear a story about how the Holy Spirit looked like fire.**
- Post the three pictures. As you share the story, have the children point to the corresponding one each time you see (*). Practice this before you begin.

- Say, **God (*) sent his Son, Jesus (*), to die for our sins. God (*) raised him from the dead. Then Jesus (*) visited his friends. He taught them more about God (*). He told them to go into the city and wait there. Then Jesus (*) rose up into the air, right to heaven.**
- Continue, **The friends went into the city to wait. There were lots of people in the city. They came from far away. They spoke different languages. Jesus' friends wanted to tell them all about Jesus (*), but they were still waiting. They sat together. They prayed. What were they waiting for?**
- Continue, **Suddenly they heard a strong wind. They saw something that looked like little flames. The Holy Spirit (*) had come to live in them! A little flame sat above each person. The Holy Spirit (*) gave them power. Now they could speak different languages. Now they could tell all the people about Jesus (*).**
- Continue, **Many people believed in Jesus (*) that day. They asked Jesus (*) to be their Savior. The Holy Spirit (*) came to live in them too. They helped spread the story of Jesus (*) all around the world. When you believe in Jesus (*), the Holy Spirit (*) will live in you too.**
- Pray, **Dear God, help us to believe in Jesus and have the Holy Spirit live inside us. In Jesus' name, amen.**

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: FIERY HEADBAND

Stuff you need: red, orange, and yellow tissue paper; construction paper; scissors; glue; tape

Preparation: Cut construction paper lengthwise into 1-inch strips (2 strips per child). Cut the tissue paper into small squares.

- Help the children crumple the tissue paper and glue it onto one of their construction paper strips so the pieces look like flames. After the glue is dry, tape ends of the strip to a second strip to form a circle that will fit around the child's head.

OPTION 2: TONGUES OF FIRE

Stuff you need: Disciples activity sheet, red stamp pad, wet wipes

Preparation: Photocopy Disciples activity sheet, one per child.

- Give each child a Disciples activity sheet. Show the children how to press one finger into the ink and make a fingerprint "flame" on the paper. Allow them to add fingerprint flames, one flame above each disciple's head. Wash their hands with wet wipes as soon as they're done.

OPTION 3: HOLY SPIRIT

Stuff you need: white balloon (inflated), orange balloon (inflated)

- Show the children the orange balloon. Say, **When the Holy Spirit came to live in Jesus' friends, something that looked like fire appeared.**
- Show the children the white balloon. Say, **When Jesus was dunked in the water, or baptized, the Holy Spirit came down looking like a white bird.**
- In an open play area, have the children try to keep both balloons in the air. If one drops, just have them pick it up and bump it back into the air.

OPTION 4: THREE IN ONE SONG

- Teach the children the following song (to the tune of "Frère Jacques") and motions. Explain the meaning of each motion.

God the Father, God the Father,

(hold hands in a crown over head)

God the Son, God the Son,

(make a cross with arms)

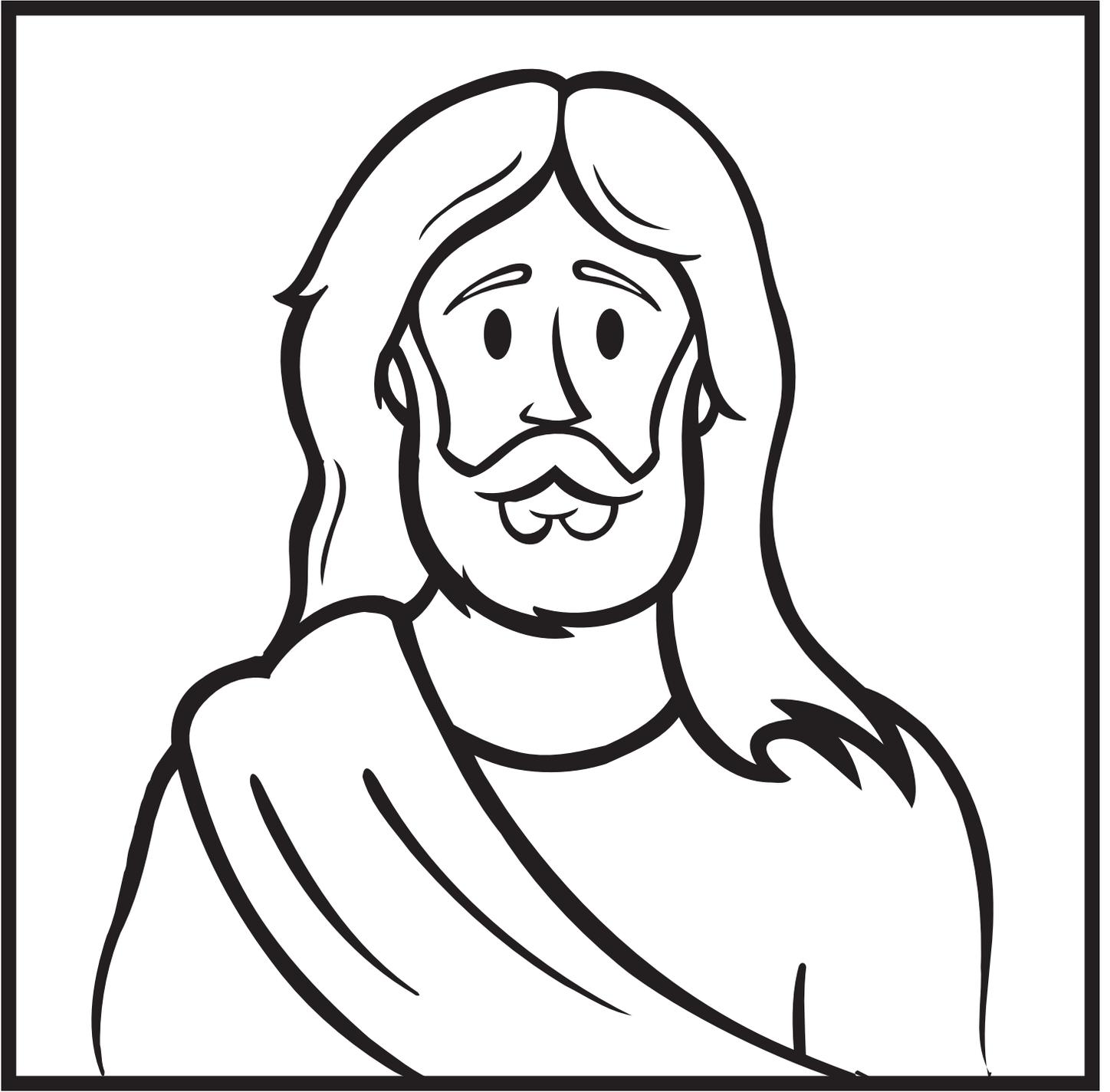
God the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit,

(flutter hands like a dove)

Three in one, three in one.

(hold up three fingers, then clasp fingers in other hand)

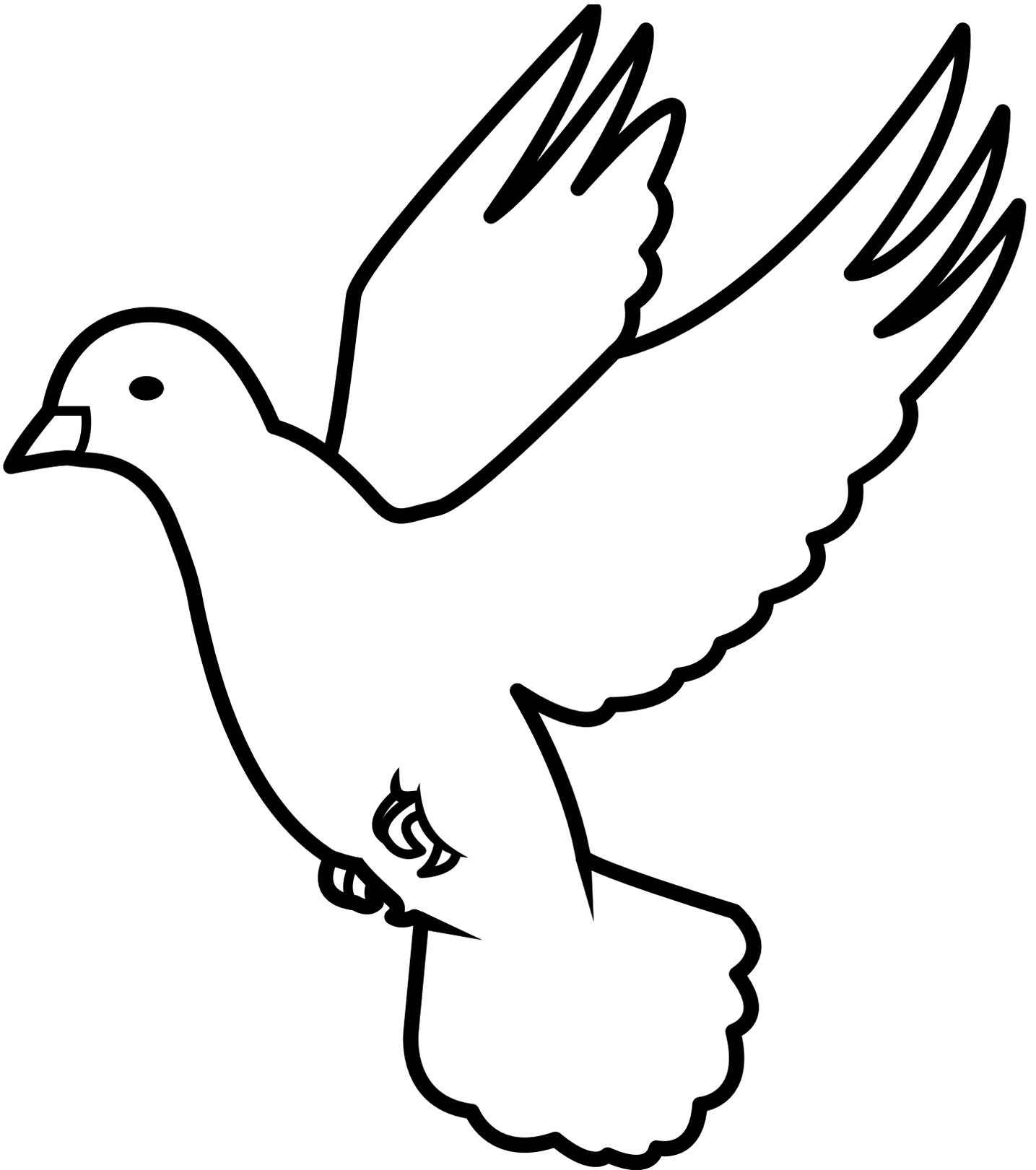
STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



DISCIPLES



"They were filled with the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:4

Name: _____

GOD USES PAUL

Bible Basis: Acts 16:16–36

Bible Verse: Adapted from Acts 16:30–31: “Believe in Jesus and you will be saved.”

Bible Point: Jesus can save me.

PREPARATION FOR LESSON 30: Ask parents to send in a smock or old T-shirt for next week’s activity.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: Helpers story pictures, scissors

Preparation: Print the Helpers story pictures and cut the pictures apart. Color them if you like.

- Show the picture of the firefighter. Ask, **Who is this? What does he do?** (Take responses.) **Firefighters save people from dangerous spots, like a burning building or a car crash.**
- Show the picture of the doctor. Ask, **Who is this? What does she do?** (Take responses.) **Doctors save people’s lives when they are sick or hurt.**
- Show the picture of Jesus. Ask, **Who is this? What does he do?** (Take responses.) **Jesus saves us from our sins. When we believe in Jesus, we can have the Holy Spirit. We can have a home in heaven with God, even though we’re not perfect.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: green card stock, red card stock, tape, wooden craft stick, glue, scissors

Preparation: Glue the card stock back-to-back with the craft stick in between to make a two-sided sign (red on one side and green on the other).

- Show the children your sign. Tell them to shout “GO” when you hold up the green side and “STOP” when you hold up the red side. Practice this a few times. Throughout the story, hold up the sign where indicated.
- **There once was a man named Paul. Paul traveled around and told lots of people about Jesus. GO! But this made some people angry. They wanted Paul and his friend Silas to be put in jail! STOP! They tried to stop them from teaching about Jesus.**
- **They put Paul and Silas in jail. The guards put chains on their feet. Even though they were chained up in jail, Paul and Silas still followed Jesus. GO! They couldn’t go anywhere, but they sang songs and prayed.**

- Suddenly an earthquake shook the jail and the doors opened. Paul and Silas didn't run away. STOP! They wanted to be honest. They told the guard, "Don't worry, we're still here."
- The guard went to Paul and Silas. They told him about Jesus, and he believed. GO! The guard took them to his home. Then his whole family believed in Jesus.
- Paul and Silas were freed from jail. GO! They traveled again to tell people about Jesus, even though they might get into trouble. Paul wrote lots of letters to churches he visited. His letters are now part of the Bible!
- Paul and Silas believed in Jesus. They taught others to believe in Jesus and be saved. You can believe in Jesus and be saved too.
- Pray, Dear God, thank you for the people who tell us about Jesus. Please save us. In Jesus' name, amen.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: Jesus Saves Banner

Stuff you need: butcher paper, marker, glue stick, colored construction paper, hole punch, paper cups (one per child)

Preparation: Write "Jesus Saves" in large block letters on the butcher paper. Stack several colors of construction paper and punch holes, dropping the punched dots into paper cups (one cup per child).

- Read the banner to the children. Assign each child a letter to work on (partnering or doubling up as needed). Spread glue on each letter. Give each child a cup of paper dots to press into the glue.
- Hang the finished banner where all can enjoy it.

OPTION 2: Jesus Saves Us

Preparation: You may need an adult helper to make the bridge with you or to help guide the children in a circle.

- Play a game of "London Bridge" with the following lyric changes:

*Jesus saves us, you and me,
You and me, you and me,
Jesus saves us, you and me,
He saved [name, as you "capture" someone].*

OPTION 3: Red Light / Green Light

Stuff you need: sign from "Hear the Story"

- Have the children line up side by side at one end of your play area. Stand at the other end with the sign. When you show the green side, have them walk toward you. When you show the red side, have them freeze. Alternate until they reach you.
- Repeat the game with different types of motions: big steps, tiptoe, crawl, hop, walk backward.

OPTION 4: PRAISING GOD

Stuff you need: strips of black construction paper, tape

Preparation: Form paper chains 4–5 loops long, one per child.

- Have the children sit in a circle. Give each child a paper chain. Show them how to slip their wrists through the two end loops.
- Say, **Just like Paul and Silas, we will sing songs of praise, even though we are in chains.**
- Lead the children in singing some favorite, simple praise songs from previous lessons, such as “My God Is So Big” or “Jesus Loves Me.”

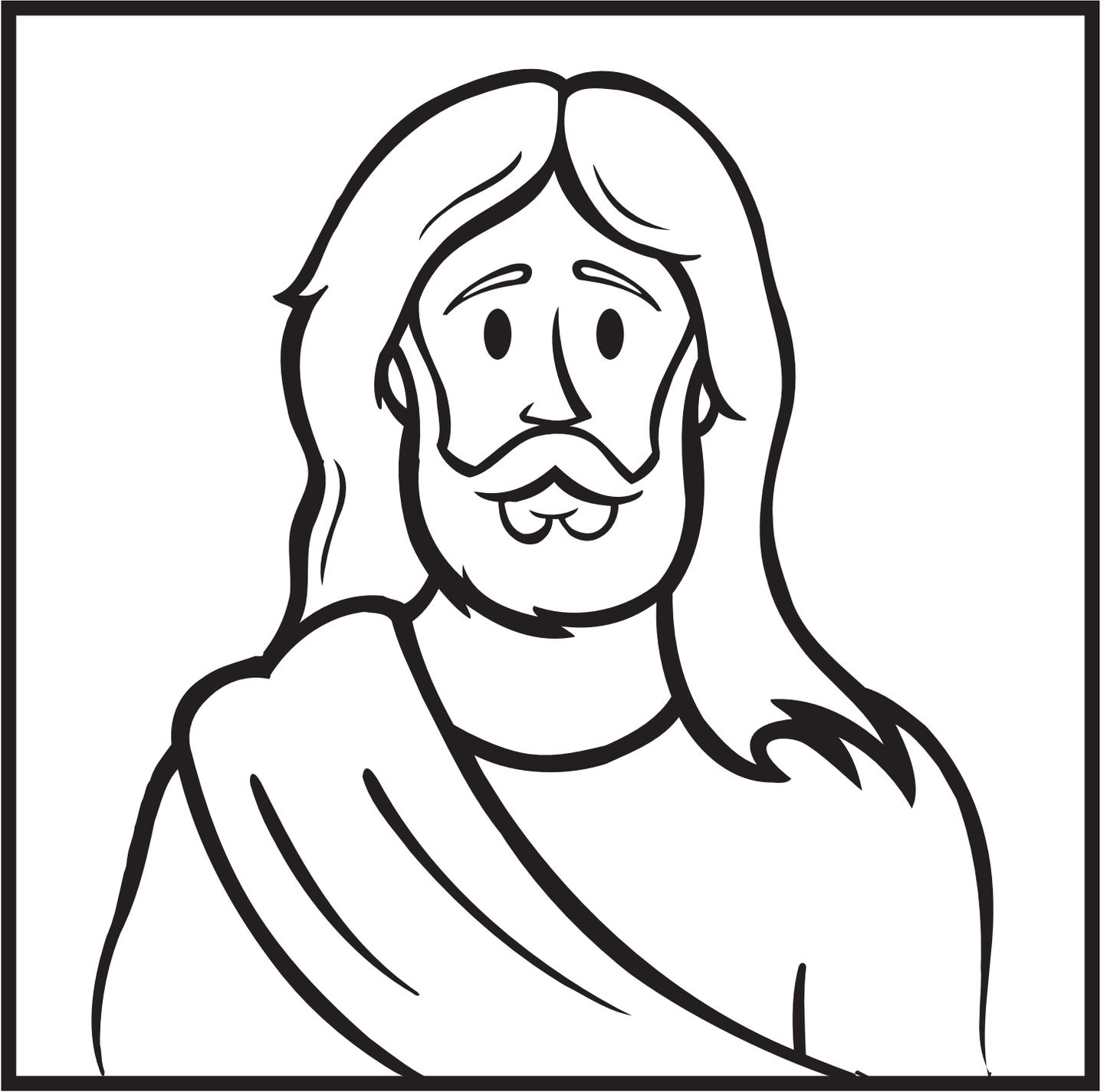
STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



STORY PICTURES



GOD'S SERVANT

Bible Basis: Acts 20:22–28, 36–38; 22:22–29; 27:1, 9–44; 28:1–10

Bible Verse: Adapted from Acts 20:24: "God wants us to tell others about him."

Bible Point: I can serve God.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Allergy Alert! Check with parents and your Sunday school director to make sure none of the children in your class have food allergies to any of the foods you are serving. As an extra precaution, hang a sign on your door stating which foods you will be serving so that as parents check in, they can alert you if there is a problem.

Stuff you need: paper plates (one per child), knife, oranges, pretzel sticks, cheese

Preparation: Make a snack boat for each child. Place a half circle orange slice on the plate for the boat. Use one pretzel stick as the mast. Cut two triangles of cheese to make a sail. Set the plates in one area where the children will not be sitting.

- Say, **Today we will start with a little snack. But you will not serve yourself. You will serve a friend. I will call your name. You come to get a snack, but don't eat it! Give it to a friend. I'll make sure a friend serves you too.**
- Guide the children in serving one another one by one. When everyone has a snack, point out that it looks like a boat. Tell them there is a boat in today's story. Then enjoy the snack!

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

- Say, **Last time, we learned about Paul. Paul traveled all over telling people about Jesus. Sometimes bad things happened and sometimes good things happened. But God always took care of Paul.**
- Show the children how to hold their cheeks and moan aloud when you demonstrate. Show them how to raise their hands and cheer for God when you demonstrate. Cue them to do these motions throughout the story where indicated by (*).
- Say, **Last time, we learned that Paul got put in jail (*moan). Even though he was chained up, he sang songs to praise God (*cheer). Then an earthquake shook the ground and opened the doors of the jail (*moan). But Paul stayed there and told the guard about Jesus. Then the guard's whole family believed in Jesus (*cheer).**
- Continue, **Paul kept traveling and telling people about Jesus. He prayed to God. God told Paul, "Go to Jerusalem." But there were people in Jerusalem who wanted to hurt Paul (*moan). Paul wanted to obey God. So Paul went to Jerusalem (*cheer).**

- Paul told the people about Jesus (*cheer). But some angry people put Paul in jail (*moan). They decided to send Paul to a different city. They put Paul on a boat to sail far away.
- While Paul was on the boat, a big storm came (*moan). It shook the boat for days. But Paul knew that God would save him (*cheer). Finally, the boat crashed in the sand near an island (*moan), but everyone was okay and got to land (*cheer). While Paul sat near a fire, a snake slithered up and bit him on the hand (*moan). It was a poisonous snake. But Paul did not die or get sick. God saved him (*cheer).
- Even when it was hard or scary, Paul served God. He served God for the rest of his life by telling people about Jesus. Whenever Paul was in trouble, God always took care of him. Let's cheer for Paul and for God (*cheer).
- Pray, Dear God, help us to serve you like Paul did. In Jesus' name, amen.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: STORMY SEAS

Stuff you need: Stormy Seas activity sheet, plastic bowls, shaving cream, glue, blue food coloring, newspapers, paper towels, wet wipes

Preparation: Ask parents to send in a smock or old T-shirt the week before this activity. Have a few extras on hand. Photocopy the Stormy Seas activity sheet, one per child. Cover the work area with newspaper.

- Give each child an activity sheet and a bowl. Add a large squirt of shaving cream to each bowl and a big dollop of glue. Add a drop of food coloring. Firmly remind the children that this is not food!
- Demonstrate for the children how to mix the contents of their bowls with their hands and spread it on the water part of the picture. Set aside the pictures to dry. Clean up with paper towels and wet wipes.

OPTION 2: WE CAN SERVE

Preparation: Plan ahead with your church office to come up with a simple task the children can help with, such as putting inserts into bulletins or pushing in chairs in a classroom or fellowship hall. Recruit adult helpers as needed.

- Say, **We can serve God by helping out in our church.** Explain the task and guide the children through it.
- When finished, explain the benefit of their service. Say, **Thank you for serving God in this way!**

OPTION 3: SNAKEBITE

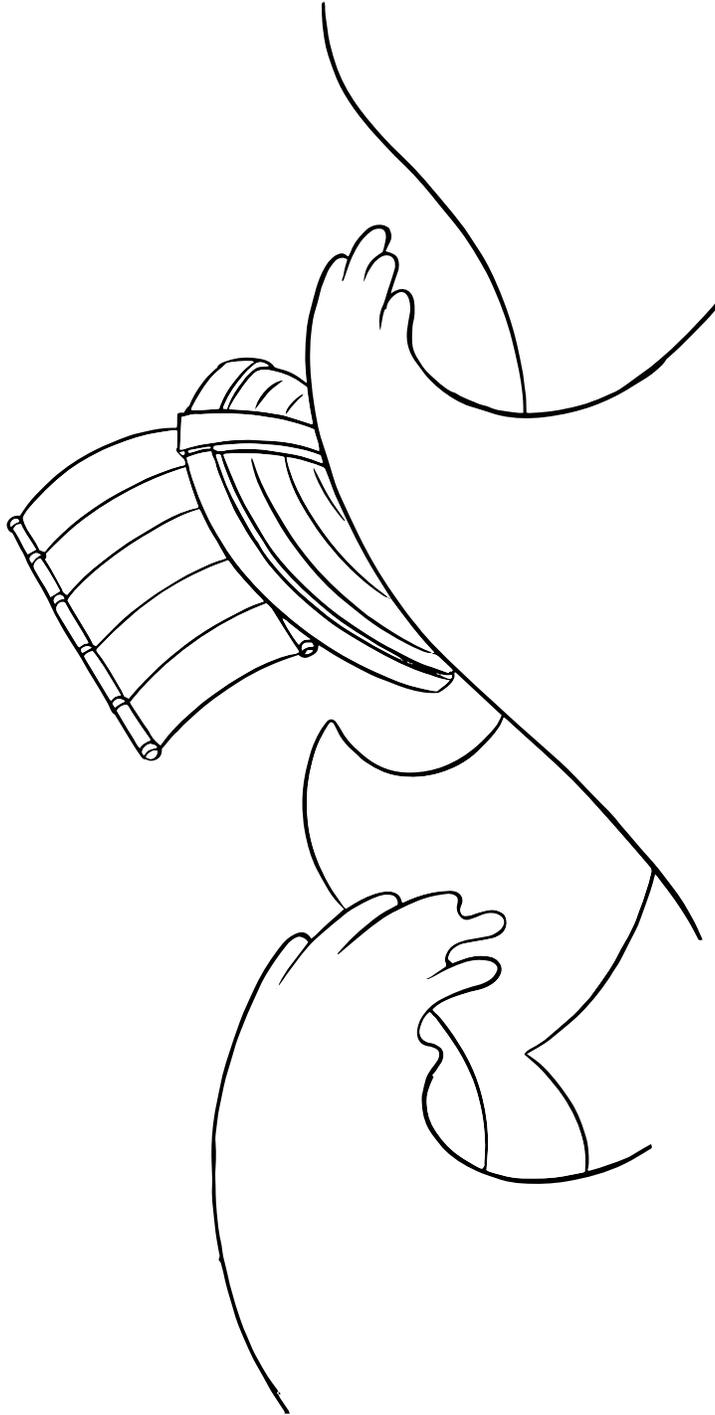
Stuff you need: doll or action figure to represent Paul

- Help the children line up and hold the shoulders of the person in front of them. Hold the doll in front of the line.
- Say, **Let's pretend this doll is Paul and you're the snake. Try to catch Paul.**
- Lead the line of children around the room, winding around furniture. Once you allow the first child in line to "bite" Paul by catching up to the doll, say, **It's okay. God will keep Paul safe.**
- Change leaders and repeat.

OPTION 4: USING OUR BODIES TO SERVE

- Say, **You can use your whole body to serve God. Let's sing a song and think about how we can use our bodies to serve God.** Sing and do the motions to "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." Between each round of the song, ask one of the following questions:
 - **What part of our body do we use to listen to stories about Jesus?** (ears)
 - **What part of our body do we use to give someone a hug?** (arms)
 - **What part of our body do we use to run to help someone?** (legs)
 - **What part of our body do we use to tell others about Jesus?** (mouth)

STORMY SEAS



“God wants us to tell others about him.” Acts 20:24

Name: _____

JESUS' RETURN

Bible Basis: Revelation 1:1–20; 4:1–11; 5:13–14; 19:11–15; 21:10–18, 21–27; 22:7–14, 16–21

Bible Verse: Adapted from Revelation 1:7: "Jesus will return."

Bible Point: I have a home in heaven.

STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: watch, alarm clock

- Show the watch. Ask, **What is this? What is it for?** (Take responses.) Say, **Sometimes I wear a watch so I can check the time. If I have to meet a friend for lunch at a certain time, I keep an eye on my watch.**
- Show the alarm clock. Ask, **What is this? What is it for?** (Take responses.) Say, **Sometimes I use the alarm clock to wake me up. If I have to wake up early for work, I know the buzzing of my alarm clock will wake me up on time.**
- Say, **There's another important thing coming up, but I don't know when it will happen. Jesus told his friends he would come back to earth from heaven. No one knows when he'll come back. We can't use a watch or an alarm clock to help us find out when he's coming, but we want to be ready. We can learn about Jesus and sing to him and talk to him in prayer. Then we'll be ready to see him again.**

STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: some beautiful jewelry (play jewelry is fine)

- Say, **When Jesus was on earth, he had a very good friend named John. John loved to learn from Jesus. When Jesus died, John was very sad. When Jesus came back to life, John was very happy. Then John waved good-bye to his friend Jesus and watched him go up to heaven. Have the children wave good-bye.**
- **John told other people all about Jesus. Some bad guys arrested John and sent him far away. John had to live all by himself. But God was with him. God gave John special messages through visions, which could be like dreams. Show me how you dream. Let the children lie down and close their eyes momentarily. You dream with your eyes closed when you're asleep. God gave John special dreams while he was awake.**
- **In the dreams, God showed John heaven. John saw a beautiful city and other beautiful things like gold and pearls. Pass around the jewelry. Heaven is more beautiful than anything we've ever seen. John saw Jesus and angels there.**

- Jesus sat on a throne like a king. The angels sang songs to him. Here's what they sang (have the children repeat after you):

Holy
holy
holy
is the Lord God
Almighty.

- Everyone in heaven worships God. They love Jesus. They have a home in heaven because Jesus saved them from their sins. Now, they can live with him in a beautiful, perfect place. Jesus said, "I will come to earth again. I will find my friends. I will bring them to my perfect home in heaven."
- Ask, Would you like a place in Jesus' perfect home in heaven? All you have to do is believe in Jesus.
- Pray, Dear Jesus, we believe in you. We want to live with you in heaven someday. Amen.

STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: A Home in Heaven

Stuff you need: Heaven activity sheet, gold and silver crayons, sparkly stickers, stick-on gems, glue sticks, glitter

Preparation: Photocopy Heaven activity sheet, one per child.

- Distribute one activity sheet to each child. Help the children decorate their papers. As they work, reinforce the idea that heaven is perfect and beautiful. Remind them that Jesus lives there. Ask them how people get to have a home in heaven (by believing in Jesus).

OPTION 2: WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE?

Stuff you need: ball or beanbag

- Have the children sit in a large circle on the floor.
- Say, **It's fun to think about how wonderful heaven will be. What will we do? What will we see? What will we eat? When I pass you the ball, you tell me something you would like to do in heaven, have in heaven, or eat in heaven. Then pass the ball back to me.**
- **I'll start. I believe there will be no bad guys in heaven.**
- Continue until everyone has had a turn.

- Say, **We don't know exactly what heaven will be like, but we know it is wonderful. It is a perfect, happy place! The most important thing about heaven is that we will be there with Jesus.**

OPTION 3: Heaven's Beauty

Stuff you need: a rope, several adult volunteers

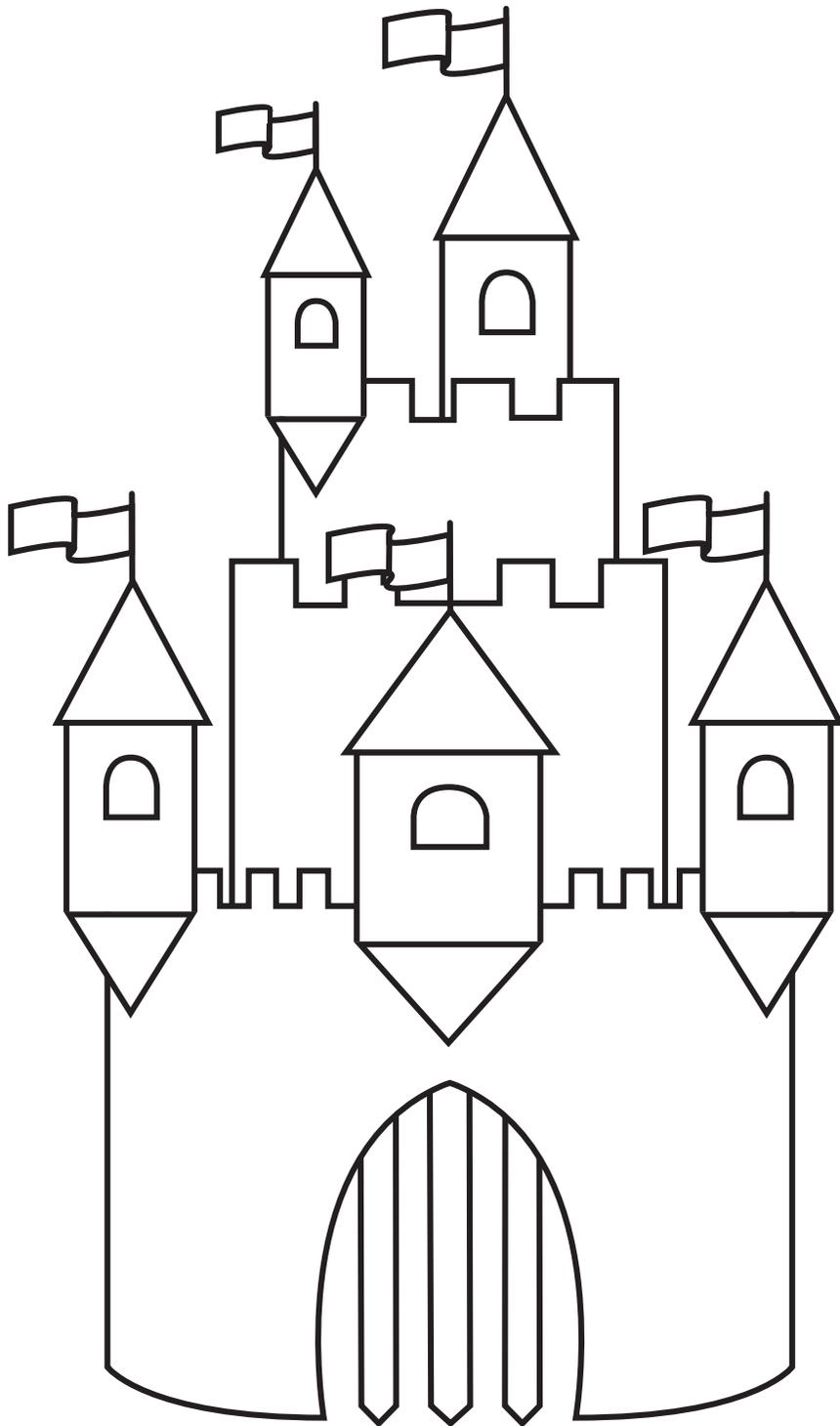
- Take the children outside for a nature walk. Have them all hold on to a rope, and make sure to station an adult at the beginning of the rope, an adult at the end of the rope, and an adult on each side. Or, if you have enough adults, instead of using a rope you can have each adult hold hands with two children.
- As you walk around your church, point out some beautiful things (flowers, animals, sunshine) and some not-so-beautiful things (litter, noisy cars). For each one, ask, **Is this something you think we'll find in heaven?** Point out that heaven is beautiful and perfect.

OPTION 4: Oh, You Can't Get to Heaven (on Roller Skates)

Stuff you need: equipment to play "Oh, You Can't Get to Heaven (on Roller Skates)"

- Say, **We know that the way to get to heaven is to believe in Jesus. This silly song is about all the ways that won't get us to heaven!**
- Play the song and lead the children in acting out each motion described, such as roller skating, jumping on a pogo stick, and driving.
- Ask, **What's the real way to get to heaven?** (Believe in Jesus)

HEAVEN



"Jesus will return." Revelation 1:7

Name: _____