

Family Page



Family Prayer for EASTER

Reading: John 20:1-9

Leader: During those times when we argue with one another,

All: Lord, teach us how to love.

Leader: During those times when we fail to listen to one another,

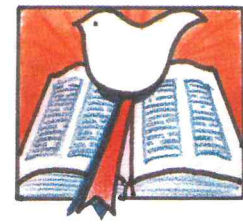
All: Lord, teach us how to love.

Leader: During those times when we take one another for granted,

All: Lord, teach us how to love.

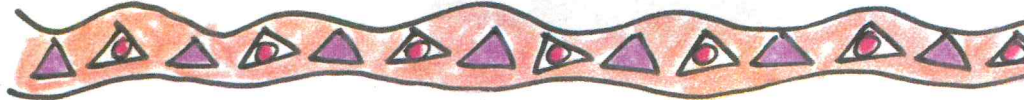
Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Lent is over and Easter is here at last. On this happy feast day, we remember the joy of your disciples when they learned that you had risen. Fill our family with this same Easter joy. Give us new life through your Holy Spirit, who lives and loves in us this day. Lead us and guide us to the Father, who awaits our new birth in heaven one day. And help us always to love one another as you have loved us.

Amen



explaining GOD'S WORD

Easter Sunday (B) • John 20:1-9 or Mark 16:1-7 • March 31, 2024



New Life Game

There are many things that remind us of Jesus' Resurrection. After a storm, the sun suddenly comes shining through. Dark nights change into daylight. All around us in nature are signs of going from "death to new life." They remind us of Jesus' promise that we too will enjoy the glory of heaven forever with Jesus and all the saints. Can you match up these pictures that show how some things change from death to life? Maybe you can draw some of your own.

THROUGH DEATH TO NEW LIFE



Written by Francine M. O'Connor. Art by Chris Sharp. © 2024 Liguori Publications, Liguori, MO 63057-9999. Imprimatur: Most Rev. Robert J. Hermann, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Printed in USA. All rights reserved. It is a violation of copyright law to reproduce all or part of this material without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications. Liguori.org

You & Jesus

Let's pretend you are in Jerusalem, staying in the house with the apostles. You are all very sad because Jesus has died.

Suddenly, you hear a knock on the door. It's Mary Magdalene, Jesus' good friend. Mary is very upset. She can hardly speak. Someone has taken Jesus' body.

With Peter and the other disciple, you race for the place where Jesus is buried. You look inside. You see the place where Jesus was lying, but Jesus is not there. You feel a little scared. Why would someone take him away?

Later that day, Mary Magdalene returns. She is so excited that her eyes sparkle. She has seen the Lord, she tells you. You wonder, how can one come back to life? You remember then — Jesus said he would!



That evening, as you sit together talking, Jesus comes into the room — even though the door is locked. "Peace be with you," Jesus says, and your heart is filled with joy.

Easter is an exciting feast. When we sing "Alleluia," it's like saying, "Praise the Lord! Jesus lives!"

Family Page

The message of today's gospel is faith. To help your children grow in their faith, play the "Show and Tell and Believe" game with them.

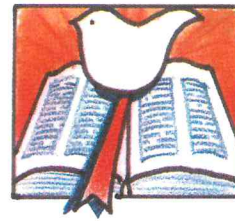


1 Have each member draw a picture of something that reminds him or her of Easter. It could be a lily or a butterfly or an egg.

3 Have members take turns showing what they have drawn and explaining why they chose that particular image.

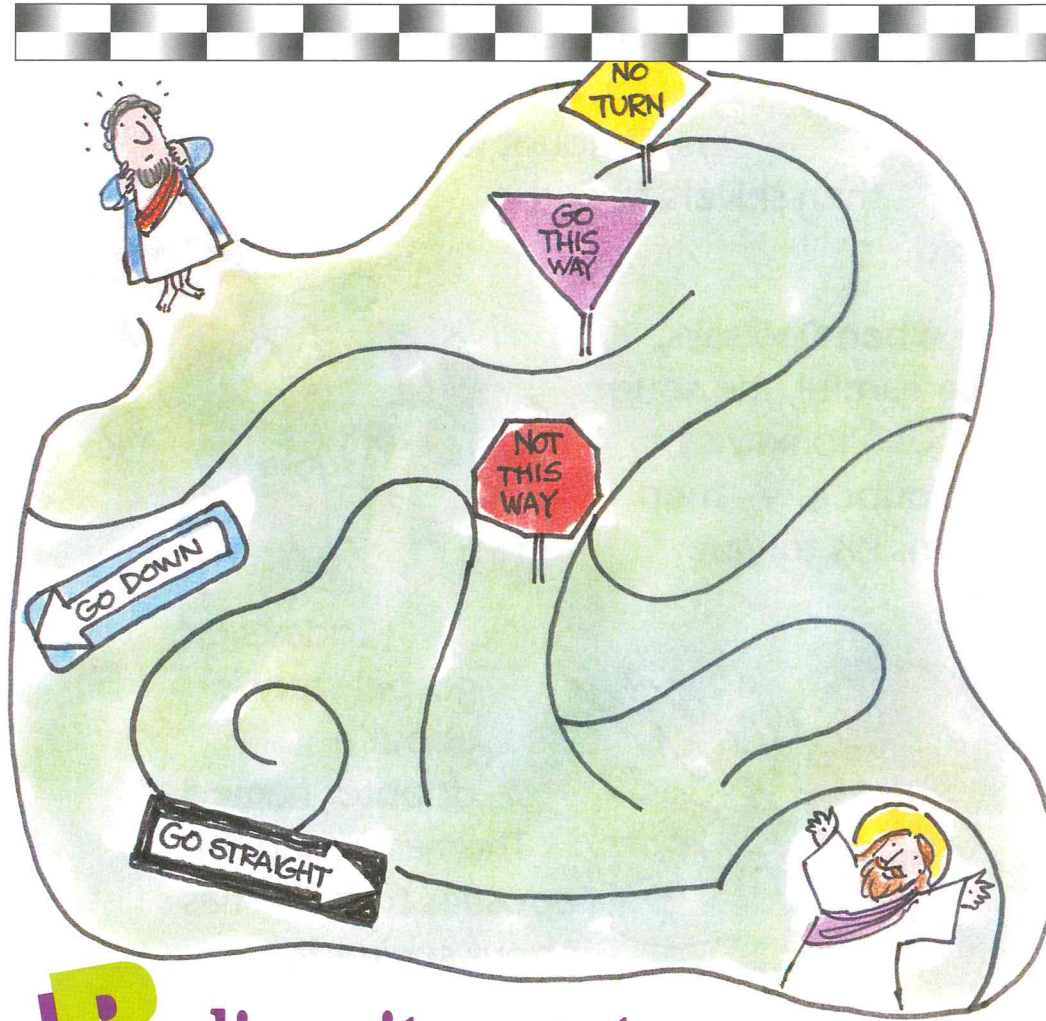
2 Open your "Show and Tell and Believe" game by reading the Gospel of John 20:24-29.

4 Close by discussing how certain things of the world can help us to understand and believe the things of heaven.



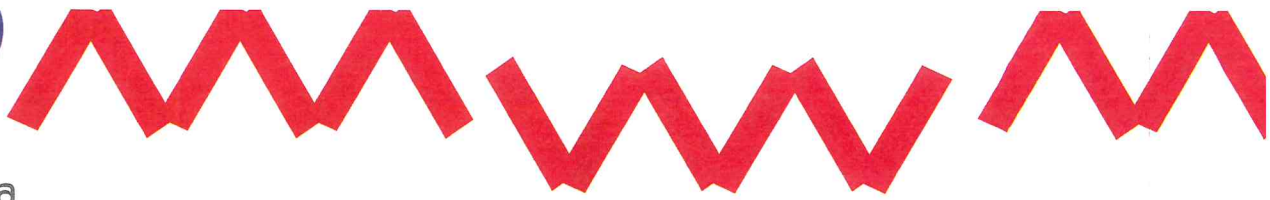
explaining GOD'S WORD

Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy) (B) • John 20:19-31 • April 7, 2024



Believe it or not! Can you help Thomas find his way through this maze to Jesus? If you believe in the directions you are given, you and Thomas will both find Jesus.

"I doubt it!"



This is Tommy. Tommy is a doubter. Doubters learn everything the hard way.

When Mom says, "Wear your sweater, it's cold out," Tommy says, "I doubt it" —

then shivers from the cold.

When Dad says, "Be careful, the soup is hot," Tommy says, "I doubt it" — then burns his tongue.



Today's gospel story is about a doubter named Thomas. When the apostles told Thomas about seeing Jesus risen from the dead, Thomas did not

believe them. Thomas had to see Jesus for himself before he would believe.

Jesus said, "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed." That means YOU! You have not seen Jesus, but you believe in him. You listen to his words. You know he lives in your heart. That's FAITH — the best gift God can ever give.

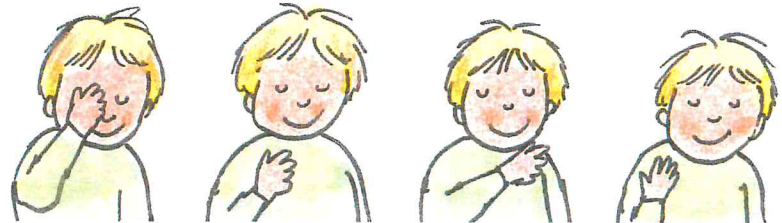


We Believe

There is a prayer-sign that you make before you talk to God. It is called the "Sign of the Cross." It tells God you believe all that Jesus taught us. Fill in the missing words.

In the name of the _____,
and of the _____,
and of the _____ . Amen

Word list: HOLY SPIRIT FATHER SON



Family Page

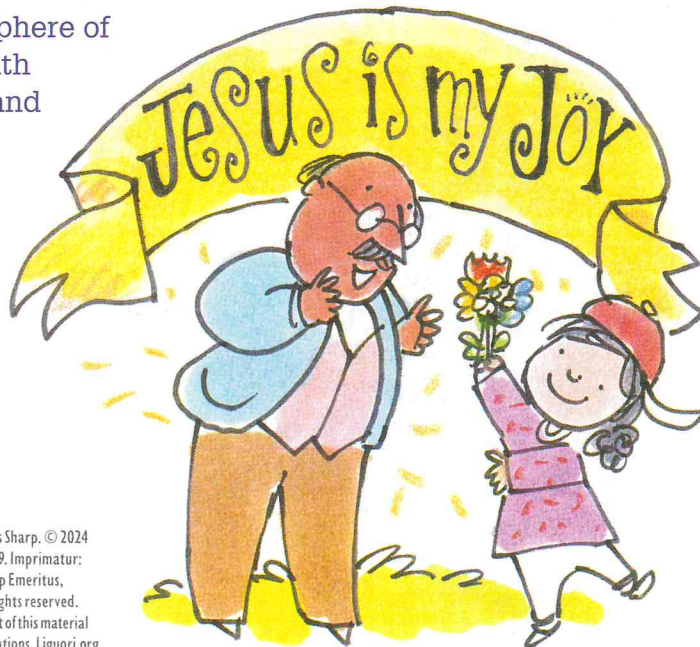
From the sufferings of the cross came the joy of resurrection and the continuing joy of the Holy Spirit. Use the motto, "Jesus Is My Joy," to emphasize the message in the following ways:



- After a family prayer, have each person choose a secret Joy-Mate for the week: sister, brother, mother, father, grandparent, or friend.
- Plan small daily surprises for your Joy-Mates: a bouquet of wild flowers for Grandma; a child's self-portrait for Dad; an offer to do the Joy-Mate's chores for a day.
- Enhance the atmosphere of joy in your home with banners, balloons, and

streamers — anything that reflects the delight of being children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus.

- Let your happiness show in all you do. Plan your week around it — set aside time for games, discussions, and celebrations. It is a wonderful time to be Christian!



explaining GOD'S WORD

Third Sunday of Easter (B) • Luke 24:35–48 • April 14, 2024

JOY!



This week's gospel is one of joy. Color this rainbow for your own happy surprise!

Sharing Joy

Jenny's grandma lives far away. It had been a long time since Grandma's last visit. Jenny missed her very much.

One day, Jenny was thinking of Grandma when suddenly — SURPRISE! Grandma rang the doorbell. Jenny thought she was dreaming. After dinner Jenny ran to tell her friends the good news about Grandma's visit.

In this week's gospel story, Jesus' friends are sad because Jesus had died on the cross. Then suddenly — SURPRISE!

Jesus was with them. They wondered, "Was it a dream — was it a ghost?" Jesus asked for something to eat. Ghosts don't eat, do they? This was no ghost, this was no dream — this was really Jesus.

Like Jenny, Jesus' friends wanted to share the good news with the world, but Jesus said to wait for the Holy Spirit.

Today the Holy Spirit helps us all to live in the joy of Jesus' love.

Happy Words Game

Can you fill in the blanks of these little rhymes with words that show joy?

When Grandpa comes to visit me,
I'm just as happy as can be.
He cheers me up when I am sad.
He reads me stories and makes me _____.

What a surprise was our brand new pup.
He barked all night and woke me up.
He splashed my face when he took his bath.
He's so much fun, he makes me _____.

When my friend and I go out to play,
we have the most wonderful time all day.
We play together all the while.
My best friend always makes me _____.

GLAD LAUGH SMILE



Family Page

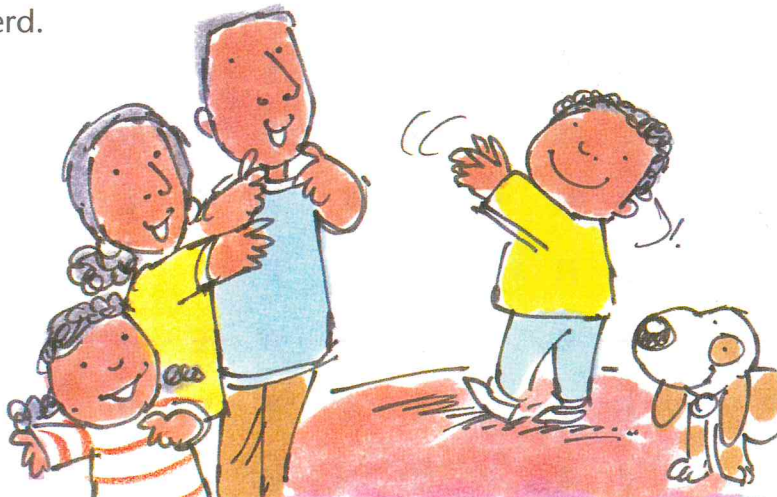
Since today's children are unfamiliar with the image of a shepherd, set aside some time to drive home this week's message.



explaining GOD'S WORD

Fourth Sunday of Easter (B) • John 10:11–18 • April 21, 2024

- 1** . First make a list of ways we can follow Jesus: prayer, storytelling, kind deeds, sharing, visiting the sick, going to Mass, forgiving others, and so forth.
- 2** . Play follow-the-leader with a twist. Choose one person to be the leader. The leader must take something from the list and try to get the others to guess what he or she is doing to follow Jesus. He must do this without talking.
- 3** . Whoever guesses what the leader is doing gets to be the leader. It is his or her turn to mime a way of following Jesus.
- 4** . Write a prayer telling how the family follows Jesus and adding the hope that one day the whole world will follow the Good Shepherd.



You Can Help J·e·s·u·s

Did you ever play follow-the-leader?
You do whatever the leader does;
you go wherever the leader goes.
It's just like being sheep
and following your shepherd.

In this week's gospel story,
Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd.
Like a shepherd cares for his sheep,
Jesus cares for you and leads you to God.



You can be a good shepherd too;
you can lead others to Jesus.
Talk about God's love to your neighbors.
Tell Jesus stories to your friends.

If you lead people to the Good Shepherd,
the Good Shepherd will lead them
to God.

Hidden Words

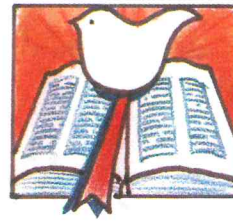
Did you find the sheep on the front of this bulletin? Now see if you can find these words from this week's gospel.

Word list:

SHEPHERD		SHEEP		LIFE		FOLD		HEAR			
VOICE		FATHER		FLOCK		LEAD		LOVES			
A	X	B	Y	F	Z	C	F	L	O	C	K
E	G	I	H	A	J	V	O	I	C	E	F
K	M	O	Q	T	R	F	L	F	P	N	L
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	E	B	A	C
H	E	S	U	E	W	E	Y	M	X	V	T
E	A	M	C	R	F	E	H	G	E	D	B
E	R	I	K	M	N	L	E	A	D	L	J
P	O	Q	S	L	O	V	E	S	T	R	P

Family Page

Jesus said “I am the vine, you are the branches.” Love is the fruit we bear. Here is a prayer to help your family be more fruitful. Add your own petitions to make it more personal.



explaining GOD'S WORD

Fifth Sunday of Easter (B) • John 15:1–8 • April 28, 2024

PRAYER FOR LOVE

Lord, we want to be strong branches on your vine. Help us to love one another and to encourage the fruit of love to grow.

When our neighbor is hungry or cold and needs our helping hand,

Lord, help us to love.

When a friend is lonely and needs cheering up,

Lord, help us to love.

When we feel angry because of something someone has done or said,

Lord, help us to love.

When we fight among ourselves,

Lord, help us to love.

Lord Jesus, thank you for calling us to be your followers. Help us always to remain strong and loving branches on your vine.

Amen.



Fruitful Branches

In this week's gospel story, Jesus speaks about vines and branches. Here are branches from four vines. Can you name the things that grow on them?



The Little Vine that Grew

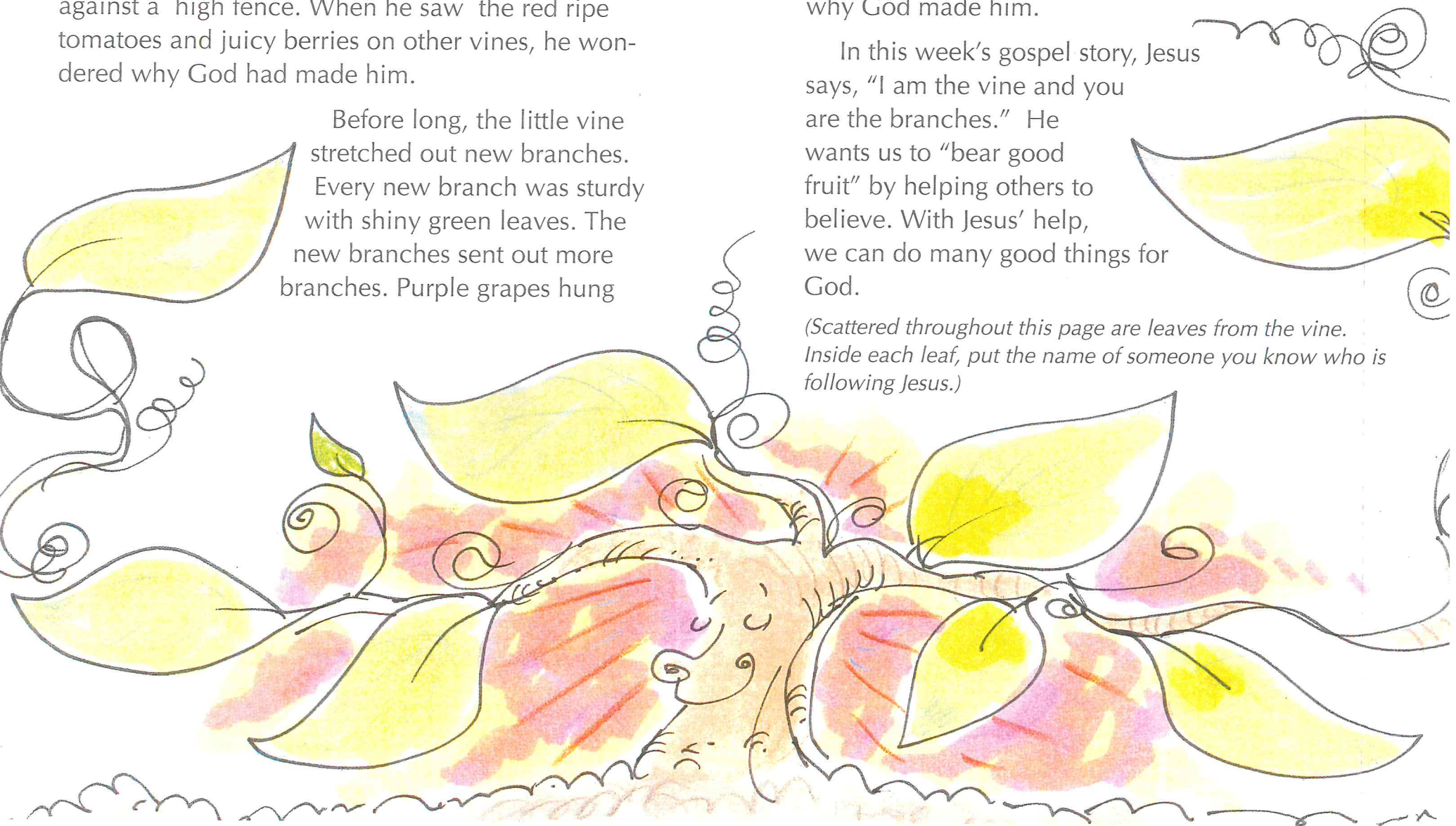
Once there was a little vine with shiny green leaves. But the vine had no fruit. He grew all alone against a high fence. When he saw the red ripe tomatoes and juicy berries on other vines, he wondered why God had made him.

Before long, the little vine stretched out new branches. Every new branch was sturdy with shiny green leaves. The new branches sent out more branches. Purple grapes hung

from every branch. People came to pick the grapes for jellies and juices. At last the little vine understood why God made him.

In this week's gospel story, Jesus says, "I am the vine and you are the branches." He wants us to "bear good fruit" by helping others to believe. With Jesus' help, we can do many good things for God.

(Scattered throughout this page are leaves from the vine. Inside each leaf, put the name of someone you know who is following Jesus.)



Family Page

Whom did God choose to take care of you — mother, father, aunt, grandparents, big brother or sister?

Let's take a day to celebrate the love of the person who takes care of you. Here's a gift you can make to say thank you to that special someone.

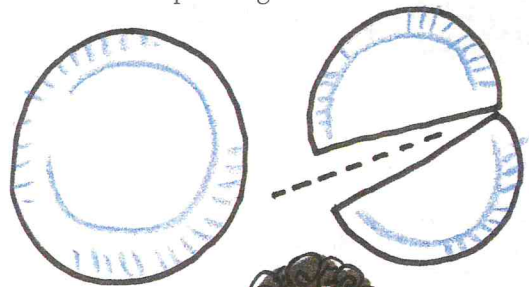
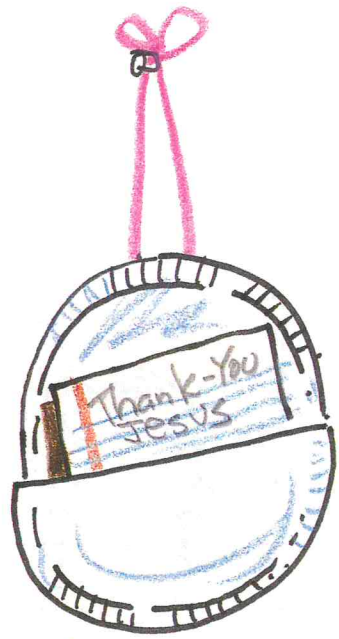


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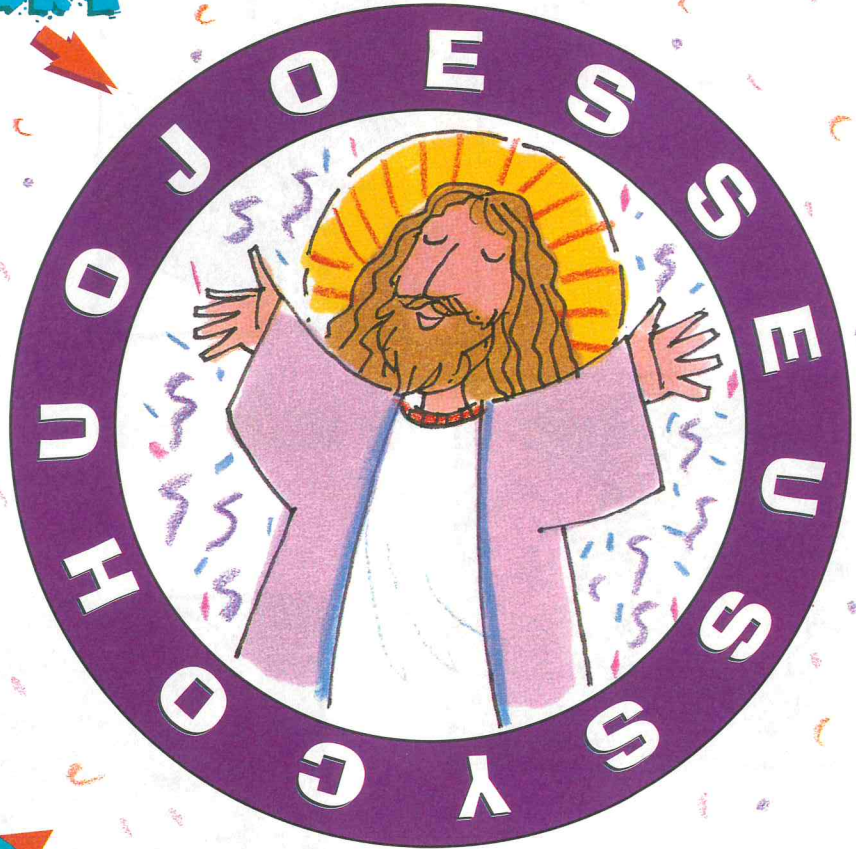
Sixth Sunday of Easter (B) • John 15:9–17 • May 5, 2024

- 1** You will need magic markers or crayons, two paper plates, paste or glue, and a small piece of yarn or string.
- 2** Cut one of the paper plates in half.
- 3** Decorate the front of the whole plate and the back of the half plate.
- 4** Now glue the outside edges together, facing each other. If you have no glue, you can staple them or punch holes around the edge and string yarn through the holes to "sew" the plate together.

- 5** Now you have a "pocket" for potholders, letters, or recipes. Punch a hole in the top and put a small piece of yarn or string through it for hanging.
- 6** Write a special prayer of thanks to slip inside the pocket before you wrap your gift.



START

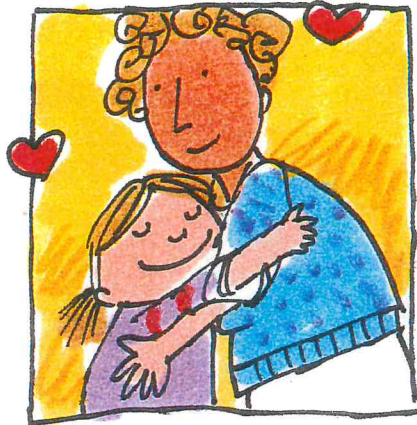


Read around the circle, skipping every other letter, and see what message is in today's gospel.

YOU ARE CHOSEN!

In this week's gospel story, Jesus says, "I have chosen you." Imagine being chosen by Jesus to be his special friend. Jesus chose you because he loves you. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, fast or slow, tall or short. Jesus chose you to do a special job for him. He chose you to love others just as he has loved you. Here is your special commandment from Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you."

YOU ARE CHOSEN TO LOVE OTHERS.



YOU ARE CHOSEN TO SPREAD JOY.

YOU ARE CHOSEN TO LEARN ABOUT JESUS.



YOU ARE CHOSEN TO SHARE.



YOU ARE CHOSEN TO BE A HELPER.



YOU ARE CHOSEN TO WORSHIP GOD.

