

# This is My Body

an illustrated  
**LENT**  
FOR FAMILIES



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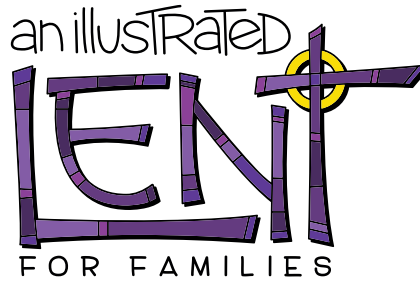
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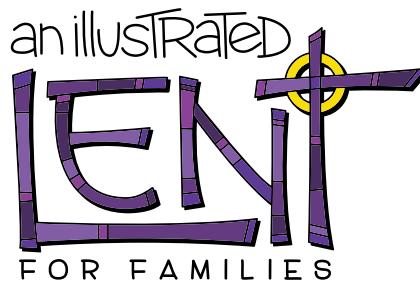
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## THIS IS MY BODY

We are thrilled to provide families with a resource for engaging their children in faith formation at home during Lent. Thousands of families around the world have used our Illustrated Lent for Families and Illustrated Advent for Families, and we're excited to share this edition with you.

*An Illustrated Lent for Families: This is My Body* explores how Jesus lived in his body on earth and invites us to take care of—and embrace the goodness of—our own bodies. Each week highlights a different story from Jesus' life and connects it to shared human experiences—like growing up, taking naps, or drinking water. By engaging with these stories through a broad lens of embodiment, *This is My Body* seeks to inspire curiosity, wonder, and awe in all ages.

Our Lent devotionals are written for all ages. We believe you'll find appropriate questions and discussion topics in each devotional for your children, no matter their age. At the same time, feel free to tweak content and questions to work for your family. You don't need to do all the activities for it to be a meaningful experience. Take a look at the devotionals, see what you think will work best for your family's schedule, and find time each week to gather together.

- **Scripture:** The scriptures are selected Gospel passages about the presence of God through the life of Jesus.
- **Reflection:** We offer a brief reflection on each of the scripture texts. It might make sense for you to read this section to your family, or you may want to read it for yourself and see what questions or themes resonate.
- **Discussion and Coloring Page:** This is a chance for some family discussion. We love coloring here at Illustrated Ministry, and we find some of the best conversations happen while coloring and doing something creative together as a family. We suggest discussing the questions offered while coloring the week's coloring page.
- **Activity:** The weekly activity invites your family to experience prayer together. As with all our suggestions for spiritual formation, please adjust or customize the activity for your family. We hope you find something that works in your context and opens you toward spiritual growth.
- **Prayer:** Finally, each week's devotion ends with a short prayer. You can read the prayer or invite your children to repeat after you. This prayer is a simple ritual for ending your family's weekly devotion time, which you can also use throughout the week.

**Media Kit:** We have also provided a media kit that includes variations of the *This is My Body* logo, as well as some promotional images you can use in newsletters, social media, and your website. You can download the media kit here: [illustrtdm.in/MediaKit-ThisIsMyBody](https://illustrtdm.in/MediaKit-ThisIsMyBody)

As you use these resources, we would love to hear what was helpful and what suggestions or comments you have for improvement. We desire to create quality resources for your family's faith formation, and we appreciate your feedback. You can always reach us at [info@illustratedministry.com](mailto:info@illustratedministry.com) or find us on the following social networks:

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Our Facebook Group is a wonderful community. If you're looking for ideas and suggestions for using this resource, you can request to join here:

[fb.com/groups/illustratedmin](https://fb.com/groups/illustratedmin)

We also love to see photos and hear stories about how you are using our products. When you post photos or comments online, please use the hashtag #illustratedmin or tag us in the photos so we can see them. That allows us to be part of the conversation and you to be part of our online community. Additionally, checking the hashtag on various social networks is a great way to see how other families and churches are creatively using our resources.

Peace be upon you,

Illustrated Ministry



## Best Practices for Sharing Illustrated Ministry's Resources

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If you purchased this product by selecting Personal Use, this file is for personal and individual family use only. You can use it as many times as you or your family desires, but we ask that you do not share this file.

If you purchased this product by selecting Ministry Use (Church Size: ### members), we've found that there are three good ways to share our files with your community.

- **Email:** Depending on the size of your congregation, we encourage you to email files to those who want to use the resource. Another option is to put an announcement in your bulletin, asking those interested in receiving the files to email the person with access to the resource.

*Note: Please do not include attachments or links to download our files in any emails/newsletters that are posted publicly online with services like Mailchimp, Constant Contact, etc. Links of this nature are searchable by Google, and the files become accessible to the general public.*

- **Posting Online:** We generally discourage posting our files online because they become accessible through Google searches. We do not want the general public to have access to our products free of charge. One option is to put the files on a password-protected page of your website, or use a private Facebook Group. Please remember to take the files down after you've finished using them.

*Note: Please do not post the password in a bulletin or newsletter that is posted publicly online.*

- **Print:** Most congregations who purchase our digital files choose to print out the materials. Printing the materials is probably the easiest way to share the resources with your community.

Thanks for understanding, and we appreciate your support!

Illustrated Ministry

A decorative graphic featuring a horizontal dotted rectangle. At the top-left and bottom-right corners of this rectangle are two solid teal circles. The word "Devotions" is centered within the dotted rectangle in a purple serif font.

# Devotions

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## • • • • • WEEK ONE • • • • •

### Jesus Grew Up

Scripture: Luke 2:41–52

#### Reflection

- How many stories can you remember about Jesus as a baby or a grown-up? What about when Jesus was a child?
- The Bible has a few stories about baby Jesus and even more about grown-up Jesus, but hardly any about the child Jesus. Does this mean Jesus skipped childhood, puberty, and adolescence? Of course not! Jesus was human, and humans grow up.

Growing up is awkward. Your body grows taller, and your thoughts and emotions become more complex. But, along with the new developments happening to your physical body internally and externally, you also begin to know yourself better—learning what you enjoy and finding ways to be fully yourself, even if that is different from your family.

In this story, Jesus explores who he is—not just as “Mary and Joseph’s child,” but as himself. Instead of traveling back to Nazareth with his relatives, Jesus follows his curiosity and stays behind in Jerusalem... without telling a grown-up.

While Jesus was old enough not to hold his mother’s hand while he traveled, he wasn’t quite old enough to spend three days unsupervised in another city.

Growing up is not like crossing a finish line in a race; it’s a journey full of twists and turns that happen throughout life. Some milestones are obvious, like losing a tooth or entering puberty. In contrast, others take you by surprise—like realizing your little child is capable of leading others instead of being led by others. When a panicked Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus in the temple, completely calm and really confused at his parents’ reaction, they all learned a valuable lesson. Children learn and grow, and grown-ups continue learning and growing too.

Wherever you find yourself along this journey, remember you are not alone. Humans have been growing up since the first humans took their first breaths, and never once has the journey been easy and smooth. Growing involves learning, and learning can be awkward. It happens to everyone. Just ask your grown-up; they probably have a good story to tell.

#### For Discussion

- In what way(s) did Jesus, Mary, and Joseph grow up in this story? How do you think this growing up felt?
- Children, what do you love about being a child? Grown-ups, what do you love about being a grown-up?
- Children and grown-ups, what is one thing you want your family to know about you?

## Activity: What Was Jesus Like?

- It takes a long time to grow from a baby to an adult—more than 20 years! There's a lot that happens inside and outside your body along the way. You grow teeth, lose teeth, and grow more teeth. You learn to communicate with words, sounds, and gestures. Your muscles get stronger, your bones grow longer, and your thoughts become more complex. You learn how to live and play with those around you. You pay closer attention to what you like and don't like. And most notably of all, you go through puberty—when your entire body develops and changes from your childhood body into the body that carries you through adolescence and into adulthood.

It's strange to think so many years of Jesus' life are crammed into one sentence in verse 52: "And Jesus grew in wisdom, in years, and in favor with God and people alike." What if we dared to imagine Jesus as a kindergartener or a teenager? In this light-hearted activity, think about your own growing up experience—whether that was years ago or you're still in the middle of it—and imagine what Jesus was like as a child growing up.

Use scissors to cut out the imagination questions from the activity page. Fold the pieces of paper in half, and place them in a jar or bowl. Take turns drawing a question from the jar/bowl, and give everyone a chance to wonder, imagine, and answer however they like. Imagine answers to every question at one time, or choose a couple to reflect on each day this week. However you decide to engage in this activity, be sure to embrace the giggles, awkwardness, and conversations these questions might spark.



## Materials

- ☐ Activity page
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Jar or bowl



## Fun Fact

Did you know babies are born with nearly **300 bones**, but adults only have **206**?

As your body grows longer and stronger, some of your bones fuse together to make larger ones.

## Prayer

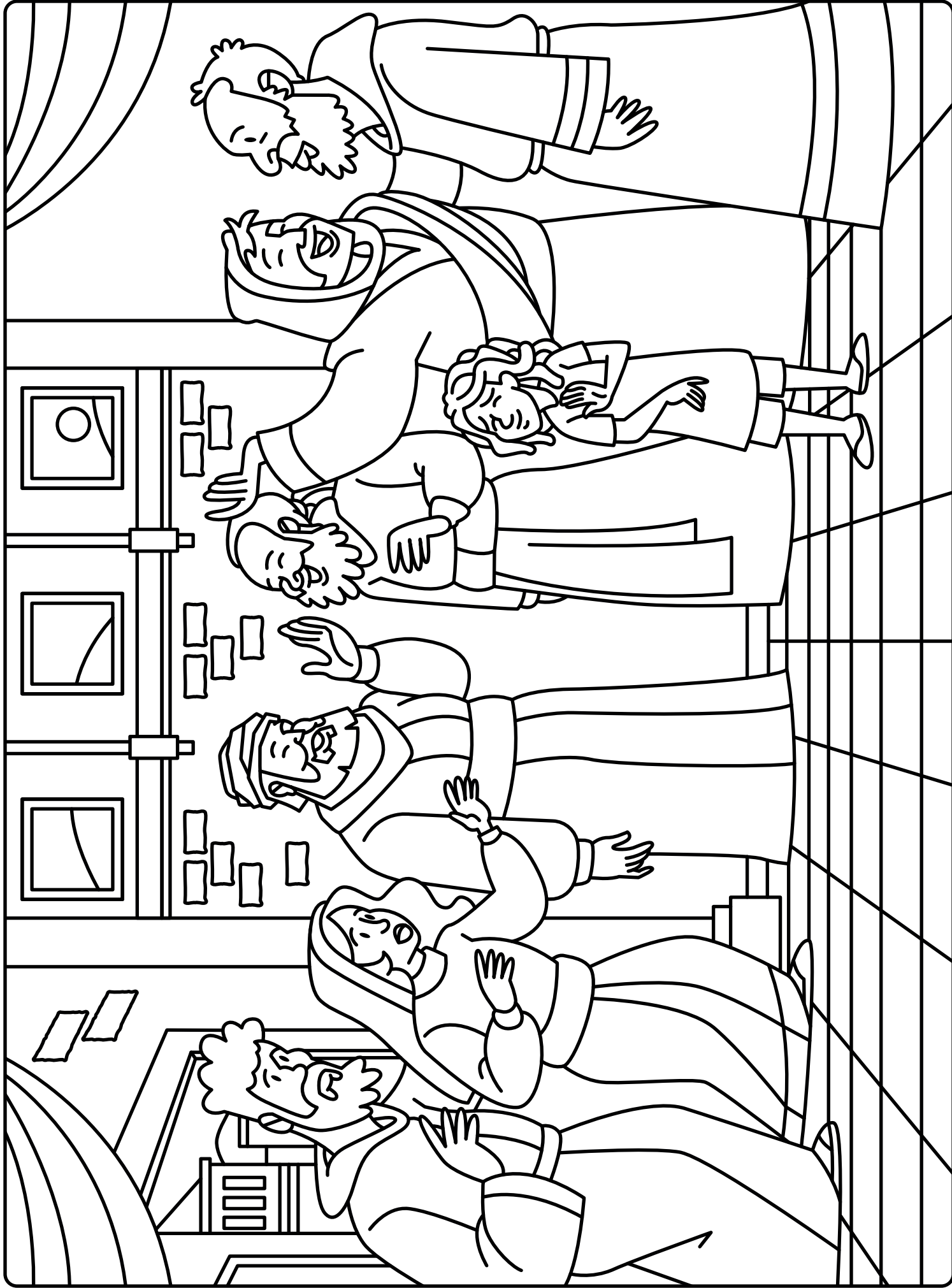
- Dear God, Creator of all living things, thank you for our bodies and
- how we are made to grow. With every awkward moment and brave
- step, may we find comfort in knowing Jesus grew up in a body like
- ours. Amen.

# I WONDER WHAT WAS JESUS LIKE?

Cut along the dotted lines. Then, fold the pieces of paper in half. Place them into a jar or bowl. Draw one question at a time, and have fun imagining!

<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What kind of games did Jesus play with his friends?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What was Jesus' favorite food?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What did Jesus' laugh sound like?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus like to sleep in or wake up early?</p>
<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What did Jesus want to be when he grew up?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus get pimples?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What was Jesus' first word?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What was Jesus' favorite color?</p>
<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus have bad dreams?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus feel nervous meeting new people?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What did Jesus pray about?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What kind of stories did Jesus like to listen to?</p>
<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What did Jesus sound like when he sang?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus have body odor?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What was Jesus' favorite kind of weather?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What was Jesus' favorite joke?</p>
<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus snore?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>What did Jesus like to learn about?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus ever feel insecure or awkward in his body?</p>	<p>I WONDER</p> <p>Did Jesus get sick?</p>
<p>Write your own!</p>	<p>Write your own!</p>	<p>Write your own!</p>	<p>Write your own!</p>

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## • • • • • WEEK TWO • • • • •

### Jesus Took Naps

Scripture: Luke 8:22–25

#### Reflection

- What do you need for a good night's sleep? Do you need a night light, or do you prefer complete darkness? Do you need a sound machine, music, or total silence? Do you stay cool with a fan or stay warm and cozy under a pile of blankets? Would you get good sleep on a fishing boat being tossed about in a wild storm?

It's hard to imagine anyone sleeping through a storm like that (especially if your friends are yelling and water is splashing everywhere), but Jesus was sleeping through it.

*How could Jesus sleep through this?*

*Did it take the disciples a long time to wake him?*

*What was Jesus like when he woke up?*

*Did he have drool dried on his face or messy hair?*

*Was he grumpy or groggy when he calmed the storm?*

*Did he fall back asleep after this?*

*Why did Jesus take a nap on the boat in the first place?*

These are all fun questions to wonder about because, just like you, Jesus was a human with a body that needed sleep. When you sleep, your body doesn't fully pause; it's hard at work refreshing and recharging your vital systems, so you're ready for another day of living. Without good sleep, your body can't function properly.

Jesus showed kindness to his body by choosing to rest when he was tired—even if it made no sense to the people around him. He often snuck away from crowds to grieve or eat, woke up early to be alone and pray, and took naps when he was sleepy, even on a boat in the middle of a storm. These seemingly small acts were actually quite powerful and still are today. In cultures that expect every moment of your day to be filled with work, rather than play or rest, taking a nap can be an act of protest. Getting a full night's sleep is a way to celebrate and honor how God made you.



#### For Discussion

- What is the silliest place you have ever taken a nap?
- Do you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep? Why might that be?
- Think about a time when you didn't get enough sleep. What did it feel like to go to school, work, or play the next day? Compare that experience to a time when you did get enough sleep.

## Activity: Family Bedtime Routine

- When you fall asleep, your body slows down to begin recharging and repairing your critical systems, like your immune, digestive, and cardiovascular systems. Your brain, however, hops on a wild rollercoaster ride of activity, releasing several hormones and chemicals that help your body grow.

Throughout the night, your brain moves through four stages of sleep about every ninety minutes. These stages range from light to deep sleep, with most dreaming happening in REM sleep (rapid eye movement). You can tell someone is in REM sleep because their eyes dart back and forth under their eyelids during this stage. With so much happening inside your body, it's no wonder getting enough sleep each night is important!

One way to practice prioritizing sleep as a family is to create a family bedtime routine. Start by listing everything you need to do to get ready for sleep. Grown-ups, kids, and teenagers have different needs at bedtime, so decide if your family needs one routine or multiple routines. If you already have an established bedtime routine, now's a great time to review it.

Using your list and the activity page, color and cut out the steps you want to include in your family bedtime routine. Tape or glue them onto a separate piece of paper in order, then decorate it, and make it your own! To make your routine an interactive checklist, place it inside a transparent plastic sheet protector, and use a dry-erase marker to mark off steps as they're completed each night. Try out your bedtime routine this week; then, talk about how it went. Do you feel more or less rested? What worked? What didn't work? What would you like to change, take out, or add to your routine?

## Materials

- Activity page
- Blank paper
- Scissors
- Tape/glue
- Coloring utensils
- *Transparent plastic sheet protector (optional)*
- *Dry-erase marker (optional)*

## Fun Fact

Did you know you spend about *one-third of your life* sleeping?

That's about *122 days* each year!

## Prayer

- Creator God, you wove rhythms of rest into creation from the very beginning. You designed our bodies to need and enjoy sleep. When
- our bodies are tired, help us notice, slow down, and rest, even when
- others might not understand. Amen.



# Family Bedtime Routine

Color and cut out the steps for your family bedtime routine.

Brush your teeth



Wash your hands



Put on pajamas



Stretch your body



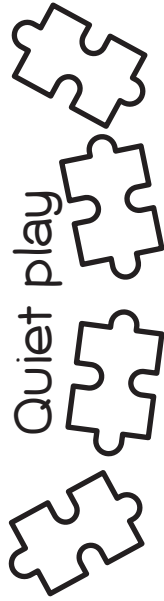
Read a book



Go to the bathroom



Quiet play



Take a bath



Take a shower



Cuddle time



Cuddle time



Have a snack



Put screens away



Say goodnight



Turn on music



Write your own!

Write your own!

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## • • • • • WEEK THREE • • • • •

### Jesus Got Thirsty

Scripture: John 4:1–29

#### Reflection

● *Note: If you have young children, we encourage you to read the scripture passage in entirety beforehand and choose which sections—if any—you'd like to omit.*

● Can you name some basic things humans need to thrive? (nutrient-rich food, clean drinking water, safe shelter, a loving community, etc.)

Jesus had a human body with all these basic needs. He ate when he was hungry, slept when he was tired, and drank when he was thirsty. Sometimes, when Jesus noticed his body needed something, he took naps alone or ate food with friends. Other times, he saw it as an opportunity to connect with people he didn't have much in common with.

As the story mentions, Samaritans and Jews did not get along. Although they were geographical neighbors, shared common ancestors, and both followed the Torah, these two communities disagreed on many things—like where to worship. Their relationship was so tense that many Jewish

travelers would go out of their way to avoid walking through Samaria. Yet, here was Jesus, at a well in Samaria, asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water.

What do you think it was like for the Samaritan woman when she saw a Jewish rabbi sitting near the well? Did she avoid eye contact or move to the other side of the well? Was she curious or confused when she noticed he didn't have a bucket for water? She could have stayed silent or walked away to avoid an awkward situation, but she didn't. Like Jesus, she was thirsty and needed water.

Jesus and the Samaritan woman were different in just about every way, but Jesus recognized they were both humans in need of water and chose to make a connection. In moments when we choose to gather around basic needs, all the extra divisions, labels, and prejudice seem to melt away. We remember we're all human, and we all need safe, clean water to drink.

#### For Discussion

- If you could make a well full of any kind of thirst-quenching beverage, what would it be? Why?
- How do you think the Samaritan woman felt when Jesus started talking to her at the well?
- Have you ever connected with someone over a basic need? Have you shared your snack with someone who was hungry or sat with someone who was sad? What was that moment like?

## Activity: A Clean Water Experiment

- Every living thing has needs, from the tiniest leaf to the largest whale in the sea. One tool human beings use to understand how we can thrive is called Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This tool is shaped like a pyramid with different levels. The bottom level lists basic survival needs, like food and water. As you go up the pyramid, the needs get more complex, moving from safety, to love and belonging, and all the way up to creativity and becoming the best people we can be. Look it up online, and discuss which levels are most important to you.

Without the bottom level of the pyramid, human beings cannot move up to the higher levels! Imagine trying to invent something when you're extremely hungry or don't have clean air to breathe. If we believe Jesus wants each of us to flourish in body and soul, then it's important for all people on earth to have access to what meets their basic needs, like clean water. Let's do an experiment to see the difference between clean and dirty water.

Fill three or four cups with water from a water source, like a sink or bottle of water. In each cup, add something to the water: food dye, pepper or spices, or items from nature like leaves, rocks, or dirt. Once each of your cups has something mixed into the water, place a coffee filter in an empty cup so it sits about halfway down into the cup so water can be filtered as it's poured. Bend the rest of the coffee filter edges over the top of the cup and hold it securely with one hand as you pour one cup's water through the coffee filter. What does the water look like after it has been filtered? How does it smell or feel? What does the coffee filter look like? Record your observations on the activity page. Repeat the filtering process for each of your cups.

When you're finished, share your observations. Brainstorm ways your family can help keep local water sources clean and/or help people worldwide have better access to clean water.



## Materials

- ☐ Activity page
- ☐ Cups or bowls (clear if possible)
- ☐ Food dye
- ☐ Pepper/spices
- ☐ Paper coffee filters
- ☐ Water source



## Fun Fact

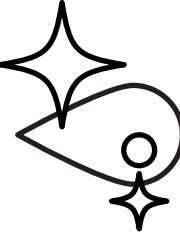
Did you know the part of your brain responsible for recognizing thirst is called the *lamina terminalis*?

It can sense when your body is running low on water and initiates feelings of thirst.

## Prayer

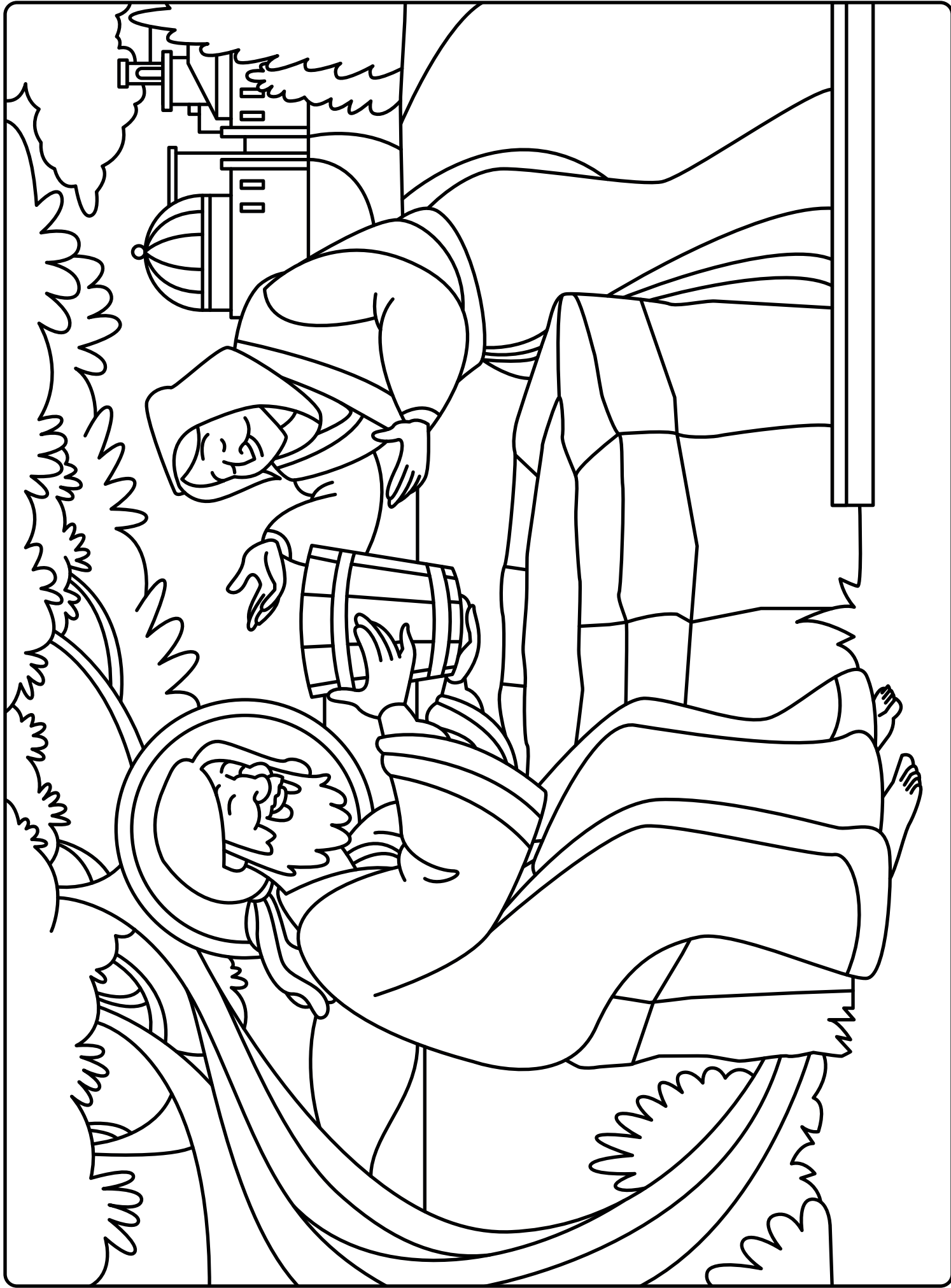
- Dear God of living water, thank you for creating a planet full of resources for all living things. Let us be strong protectors of the land and water, so all of your creation can flourish. Amen.
- 
-

# a Clean Water Experiment

	WHAT WAS ADDED TO THE WATER?	WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO TOUCH?	WHAT DOES IT SMELL LIKE?	WHAT CHANGES HAPPENED TO THE WATER AFTER IT WAS FILTERED?
CUP 1 Our control: Clean water. (Does not need to be filtered.)				No filter used.
CUP 2				
CUP 3				
CUP 4				
CUP 5				

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## • • • • • WEEK FOUR • • • • •

### Jesus Advocated for Himself

Scripture: Luke 5:12–16 and Luke 8:42b–48

#### Reflection

- What do these two stories have in common? How are they different?
- Both stories are examples of Jesus using his body to welcome, heal, and show love to people around him, but there is also an important difference between them.

In the first story, the man with leprosy, a very contagious disease, asked Jesus if Jesus was willing to heal him, and Jesus responded with an enthusiastic, “Yes!” In the second story, the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years did not ask Jesus if he would be willing to heal her. She instead chose to touch the hem of Jesus’ robe, and Jesus stood up for himself by saying, “Who touched me?” The difference between these two stories can be summarized in one word: consent. Consent means asking if something is okay with someone; it also means clearly communicating “yes” or “no” when someone asks.

In these stories, it seems Jesus knew the limits of his body—what he wanted and needed—and Jesus made choices about his body to take care of, and protect, himself. In the first story, when a large crowd gathered around Jesus to be healed, Jesus chose to leave and find a place where he could be alone. Jesus also communicated his choices about his body to those around him, and if someone didn’t understand those choices, Jesus used his voice to speak up for himself.

You have a body like Jesus had a body, and you get to make choices about your body. Sometimes you like to be touched, and sometimes you don’t like to be touched—even by someone you love. Everyone is different and wants different things at different times. And like Jesus, you can communicate your choices with others. If someone asks for a hug, you get to say “yes” or “no.” If someone doesn’t understand your choices, you can be assertive by saying what you need or by asking your grown-up to speak up for you.



#### For Discussion

- What are some things you like to do with your body?
- Sometimes your grown-ups make choices for you, like when it’s time to go to bed or brush your teeth because it’s their job to keep you safe and healthy. What are some choices your grown-ups make for you?
- Make a family plan for what to say and do if someone doesn’t understand your choice about your body. What can you say? Who can you go to for help?

## Activity: The Consent Communication Game

- Asking for what we need can feel challenging, even awkward, but practicing using our voices to protect and stand up for ourselves is so important! As your brain and body grow, your desire for certain forms of contact (like hugging or handshakes) might change, and that is okay.
- Having the confidence to express what you need can help strengthen relationships with your family and friends.

Let's play a game to practice using assertive voices and body language to express our needs. Gather in a circle around the chosen item. During the first round, have one person ask another in the circle to pass them the item. If the first person can't reach it from their seated position, they can say, "I can't reach it." Then, someone who can reach it from their seated position can volunteer to reach and pass it to the original asker. Keep taking turns by placing the item in various spots within the circle. This round helps teach us that not everyone will be able to give us what we need, but there are others who can.

In the second round, you'll no longer be able to use your voice. How can you ask someone to pass you the item? You'll need to be creative, using facial expressions, body language, or a drawing! The person you ask can show they cannot reach it by shaking their head no, demonstrating with their body how they cannot reach it, etc. It's helpful to practice reading other people's body language so we can interpret what they need or want, even without words.

During the third round, you can only use your eyes. As you take turns asking for someone to pass the item with only your eyes (and eyebrows), notice how many different emotions you can communicate without words or gestures. After you finish playing the game, answer these questions together.

- Which round did you find most challenging? Why?
- Have you ever expressed a need for something and the person you asked wasn't able to help you? How did you feel?
- Have you ever expressed a need for something and someone helped you? How did you feel?
- What are some example sentences we can use to express what we need or want?

### Prayer

- Dear God, who speaks into our lives, thank you for giving us the
- strength and confidence to say what we need and want. Help us use
- our strong voices and body language to communicate clearly with
- others. Amen.

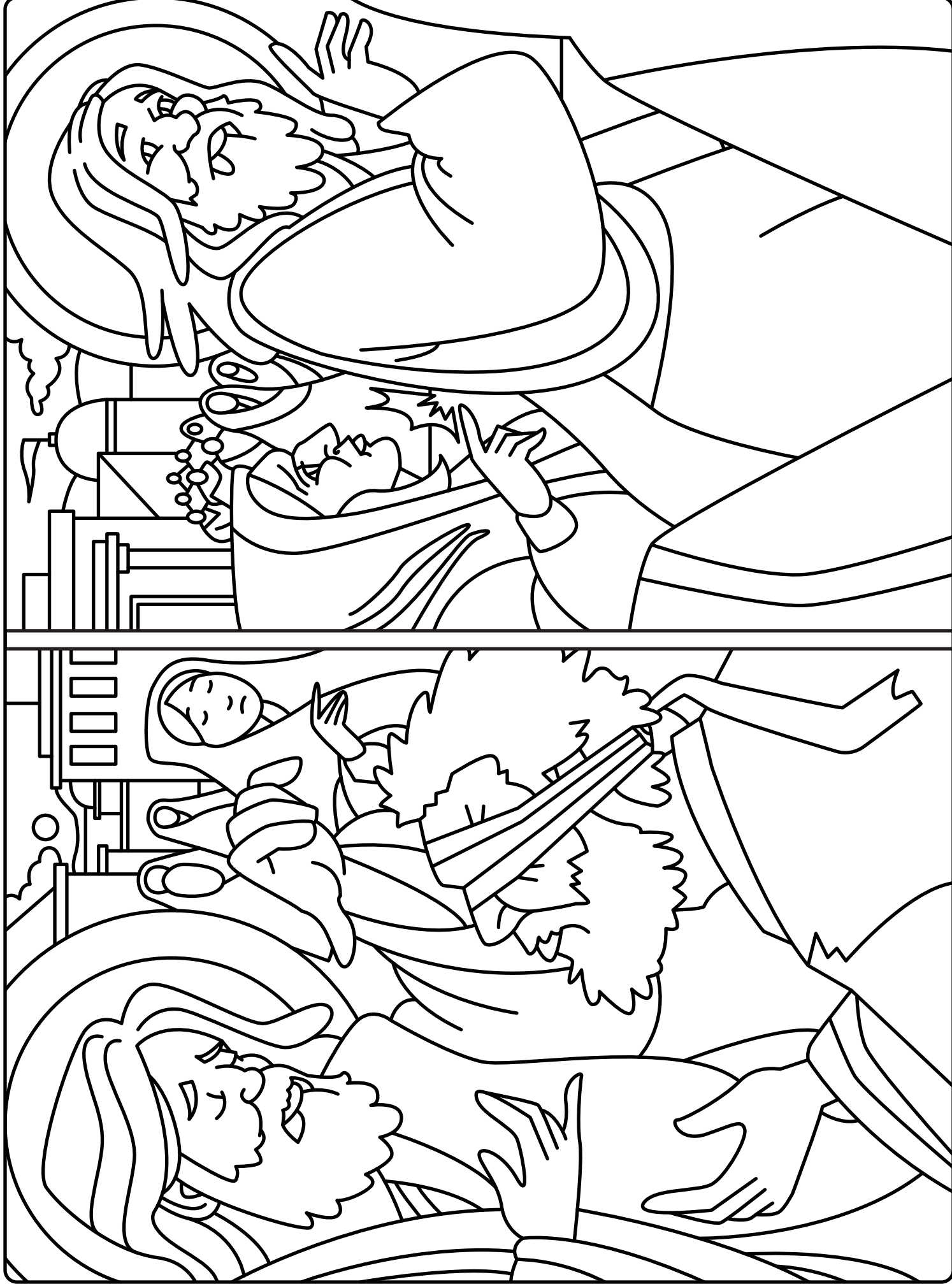
## Materials

- Stuffed animal or random item
- Writing utensils
- Notecards

## Fun Fact

Did you know your skin is responsible for sensing touch? The receptors in your skin sense pressure, texture, size, warmth, cold, and pain.

The receptors then send these signals to your brain through your nervous system.



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## • • • • • WEEK FIVE • • • • •

### Jesus Got Hungry

Scripture: Matthew 21:18–22

#### Reflection

- There's a word in the English language that perfectly describes this story: *rannygazoo*. This silly-sounding word means foolish nonsense, practical jokes, and tricky schemes. If you see a fig tree full of leaves, you expect it will have ripe, juicy figs for you to snack on.

Yet, what does a hungry Jesus find hiding in the leaves of this tree? Zero delicious figs to snack on. Now our story has an empty stomach, a withering curse, and a great, big rannygazoo.

It might seem dramatic and over-the-top to curse a fig tree for not having fruit. Yet, at the same time, the disappointment and frustration Jesus felt on an empty stomach is a feeling to which every human can relate.

Food is essential to your body; it nourishes and energizes your muscles, bones, and organs—every part of you! If you go too long without eating, your brain loses energy, making it hard to make rational decisions and causing you to feel irritated, annoyed, or “hangry.” *Hungry + Angry = Hangry*.

Hangry feelings can be surprising. Suddenly, it feels like your body is out of control. But what if this is your body's way of getting your attention to let you know it's running low on energy and needs fuel? Like you, Jesus was a human who got hangry when he needed a snack! Everyone gets hangry.

The lack of food, water, or movement can sometimes produce hangry-like feelings. The next time you feel big, hangry feelings, try asking yourself: When was the last time I ate? Drank water? Moved my body? Took a deep breath?

If it's been a while, try giving your body what it needs, like a snack or a drink of water, to see if that helps. If it does, hooray! If not, that's okay. Either way, you have listened to your body.

Taking care of your body will fill you with the energy you need to explore and talk about your big feelings.

#### For Discussion

- What is your favorite food?
- Share about a time when you felt “hangry.” What happened, what did it feel like, and how did you take care of your body?
- Not everyone has access to food when they are hungry. This is called food insecurity, which can make things like going to school or work feel overwhelming. How can you show compassion to those who are hungry in your community? **Compassion:** *I see your hurt, I feel your hurt, and I help ease your hurt.*

## Activity: Create-Your-Own Bacterium

- Often, we think of bacteria as a bad thing. We're instructed to wash our hands for at least 20 seconds, cover our mouths when we cough or sneeze, eat food that is properly prepared, drink clean water, and avoid double-dipping food or sharing drinks—all good things! But did you know that some bacteria are incredibly important for human health? We actually *need* good bacteria to help us break down food and keep our gut healthy. When you're born, your intestines only have small quantities of bacteria inside them, but as you grow, more and more bacteria are introduced into your body. These little helpers make sure your internal systems are working smoothly. There's even a medicine called penicillin that has saved millions of lives, which was created using, you guessed it, bacteria!

Today, we're going to create some bacteria of our own. Imagine what a bacterium might look like, and plan out characteristics of your bacterium you think would make it a super-helper. Does your bacterium have wiggly legs? Does it squirt something out of its outer shell? Can your bacterium dance or sing? Using paper, writing utensils, and other materials like glitter glue, markers, or paint, start drawing and decorating your bacterium.

After you're finished creating your bacterium, give it a name! Then, cut them out. Share your drawings, the names of your creations, and what makes your bacteria superheroes. What are some other things, like bacteria, that we often think of as bad but which are often also good?

If you have extra time, research ways to help increase good gut bacteria. Consider looking up and answering the following questions. What foods are known to help good gut bacteria flourish? How does fermentation work to help gut bacteria, and which foods are fermented? What is a probiotic?



## Materials

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Drawing utensils
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glitter glue (optional)
- ☐ Paint (optional)



## Fun Fact

Did you know that one big nerve connects your gut to your brain?

It's called the vagus nerve, and *90% of its fibers carry gut signals to our brain*. These gut signals then get interpreted as emotions.

## Prayer

- Dear God, who loves us at our best and our worst, thank you for
- providing for our needs. Help us have grace for one another and find
- ways to meet the needs of our communities. Amen.





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## • • • • • WEEK SIX • • • • •

### Jesus Shed Tears

Scripture: Mark 14:12–42

#### Reflection

- This is the story of Jesus' last meal with his friends, but to the disciples, it probably felt like another Passover meal full of celebration, laughter, storytelling, and giving thanks.

So it might have felt confusing when Jesus broke the bread saying, "This is my body," and poured a cup of wine saying, "This is my blood." But this wasn't the only unexpected thing Jesus did that night.

If you haven't heard the ending before, the next part of the story may make it seem like Jesus was not a very good friend. During the meal, Jesus accused one of the disciples of betraying him. After the meal, Jesus told all the disciples they'd disappear from him and pretend they never knew him.

Later, in the garden, Jesus got mad at Peter, James, and John for falling asleep in the middle of the night when he needed his friends. If you were one of the disciples, how would you feel hearing Jesus' words?

Since we are readers and listeners of the story, not participants, we know Jesus was holding some big feelings by himself. Jesus felt nervous about dying. These were some of his final moments with his friends; yet, he felt alone and wished his friends understood what he was going through.

In the garden, after their meal together, Jesus fell to the ground and begged for there to be another way, for a different outcome.

Big feelings can be confusing, causing you to feel out of control; you may feel like yelling at people you love or saying things you will regret. Remember, you never have to hold all your emotions by yourself. God knows what it's like to have big feelings and is big enough to hold them with you.

Not only that, you are surrounded by people who love you, care about you, and want to know what you're going through. You are loved, your feelings matter, and you are never alone.



#### For Discussion

- What do you think it felt like to sit at the table for this meal? Do you think the disciples noticed Jesus' big feelings? Who else around the table might have had big feelings?
- Share about a time when you experienced big feelings. How did those feelings show up in your body? (crying, buzzing chest, shaking hands, warm skin, etc.)
- Sometimes it's hard to ask for help. Who helps you when you have big feelings? What can you say to them to start the conversation?

## Activity: Family Feelings Chart

- Did you know that the average person has 400 emotional experiences daily? That is a lot of feelings! It is very normal to feel anger, sadness, joy, and excitement all in one day—or even one hour.
- Sometimes, feelings can be so big and intense that we don't know what to do with them. When our emotions overwhelm us, it can help to have a plan in place for how to handle them together.

As a family, draw some faces or images on the left side of your activity page representing emotions you each feel throughout the day or week. Make sure to identify a range of emotions.

Then, starting at the top with the first emotion, discuss how you can support each other when that emotion feels too big to handle alone. For example, if excitement is the first emotion, what could you do when people in your family get so excited about something they become impatient while waiting? What do you need? Could you sing a song together or take a walk to pass the time? Could you draw a picture of the exciting experience to come?

Write or draw possible responses in the box on the right side of the paper. Then, trace the path from the emotion to the responses and actions you plan to take when that emotion feels too big. Go through the list together, and devise a plan for each emotion.

When finished, decorate your chart, and hang it in a space where everyone can see and access it.

The next time someone in your family feels overwhelmed by an emotion, see if your feelings chart can help you process and work through it together!

## Materials

- Activity page
- Drawing utensils

## Fun Fact

Did you know your body produces three types of tears?

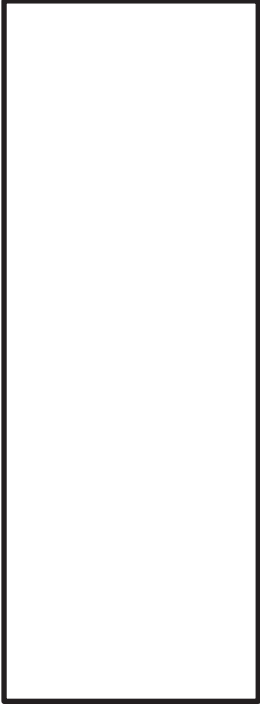
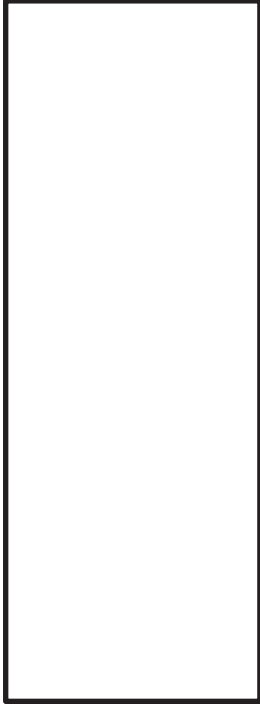
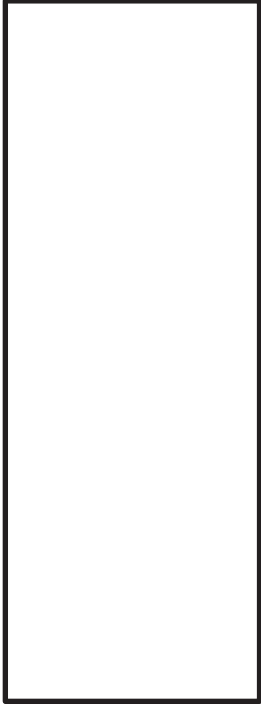
Whether you're chopping onions (*reflex*), feeling big feelings (*emotional*), or just going about your day (*basal*), these tears help keep your eyes healthy, clean, and hydrated.

## Prayer

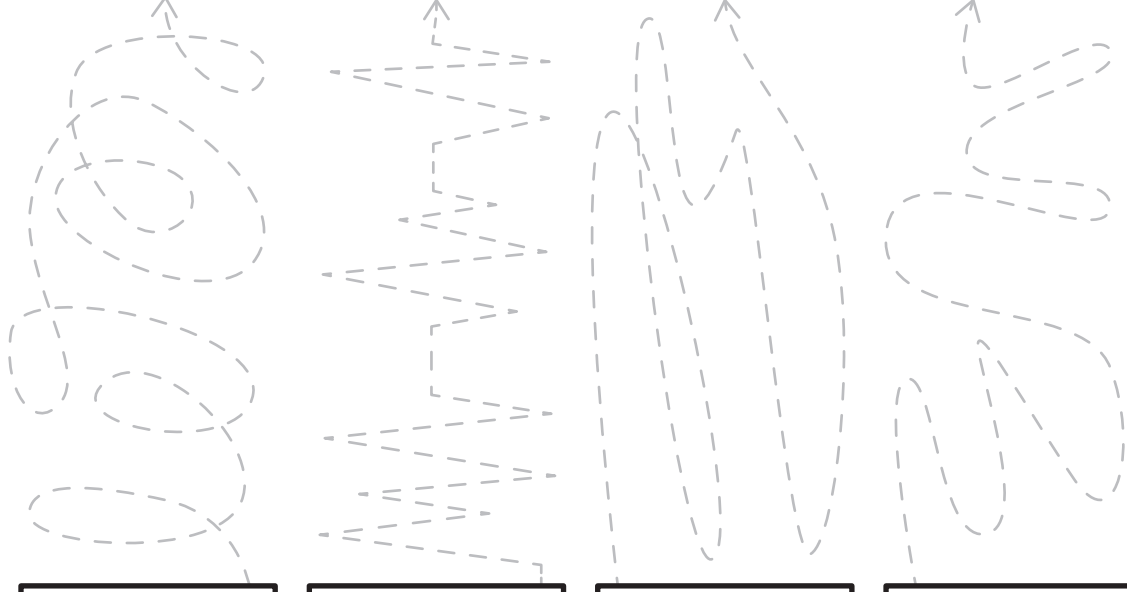
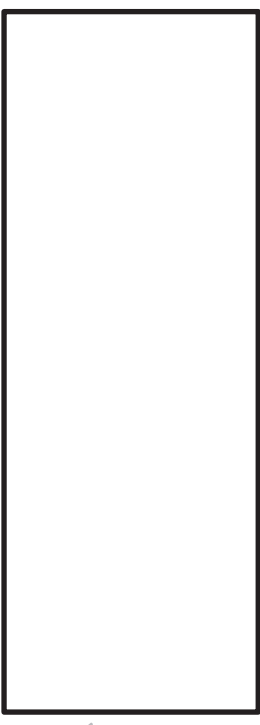
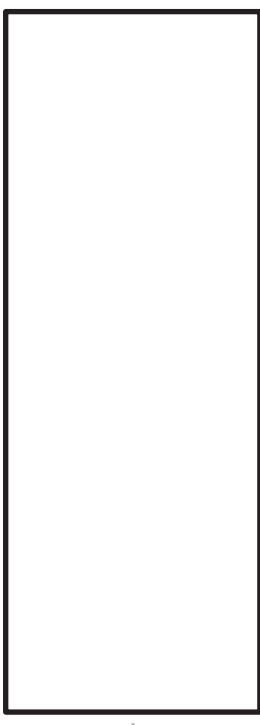
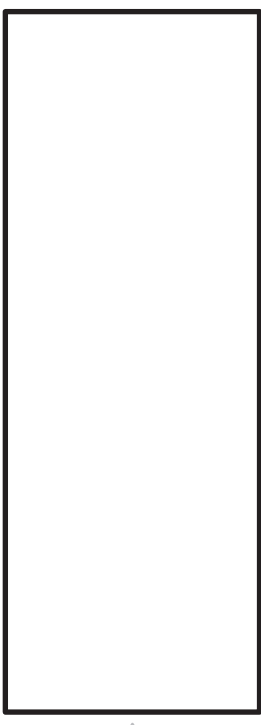
- Dear God, we are so grateful you rejoice when we are joyful and cry with us when we are sad. Help us be there for each other as we
- process the joys and sorrows of our lives. Amen.

# FEELINGS: OUR FAMILY PLAN

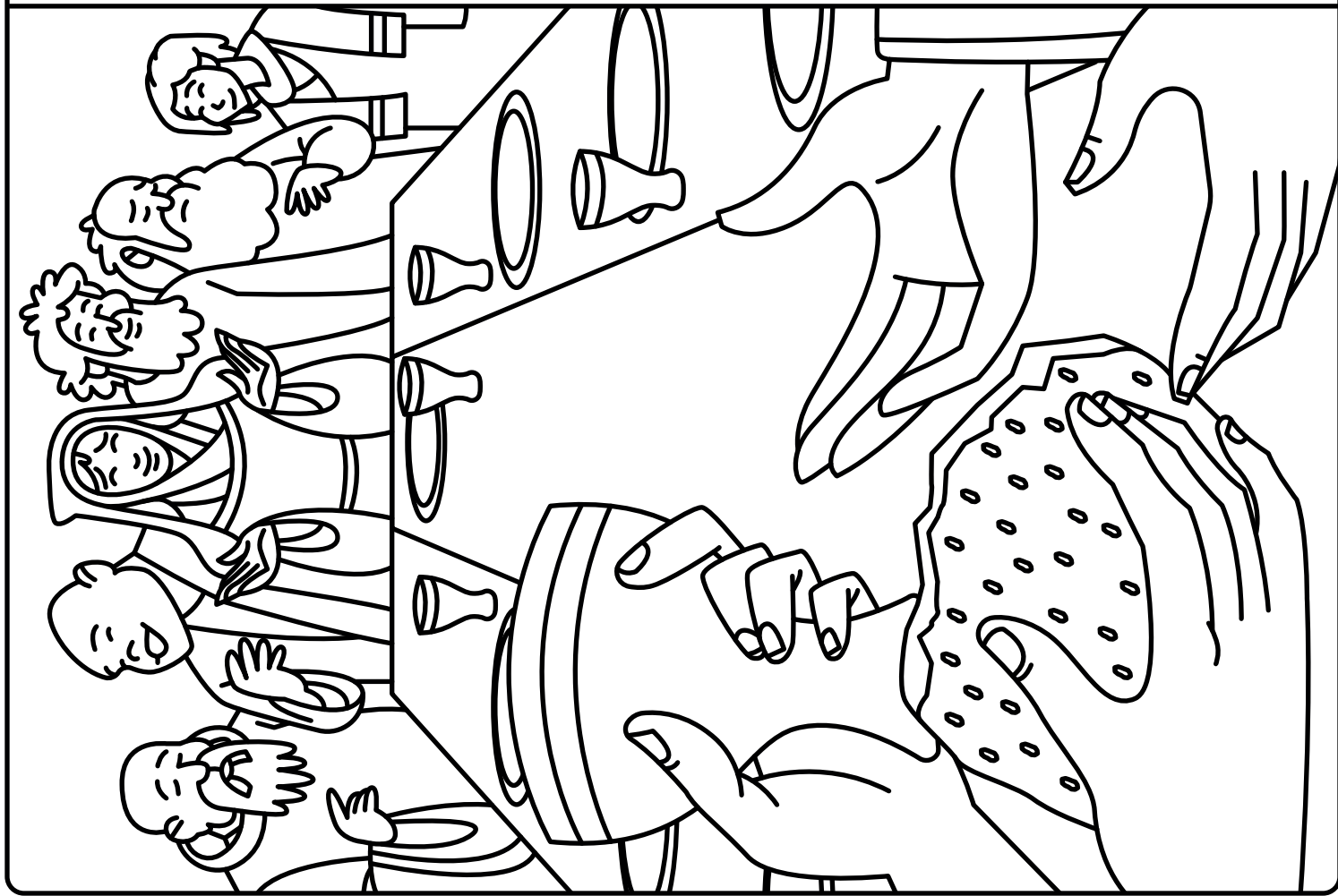
EMOTIONS



RESPONSES / ACTIONS



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## • • • • • WEEK SEVEN • • • • •

### Jesus Came Back to Life

Scripture: John 21:1–14

#### Reflection

- On Easter, we celebrate and remember the resurrection of Jesus—how Jesus came back to life! This story is not the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection. He first revealed himself to Mary of Magdala after she found his tomb empty.

Then, he appeared to the disciples while they were locked in a room hiding from the Temple authorities. Now, he shows up with a familiar miracle and a warm, nutritious breakfast.

It's interesting to read through these stories and notice clues about what Jesus' body was like after coming back to life. When you examine these clues, what do you notice?

**Clue #1:** When Mary visited the tomb, it was empty. She thought someone had stolen Jesus' body and left behind the linens he was wrapped in.

**Clue #2:** When Mary saw Jesus, she thought he was the gardener. She only realized it was Jesus when she heard him say her name.

**Clue #3:** When the disciples were hiding in a locked room, Jesus suddenly appeared among them. How did he get in?

**Clue #4:** When Thomas was curious and wanted to examine the wounds in Jesus' body, he stuck his fingers into Jesus' hands and side. Thomas could feel his wounds!

**Clue #5:** When Jesus saw the disciples with an empty net after fishing all night, he filled their net with fish and prepared a delicious meal to share with his friends.

No one knows the exact details of Jesus' post-resurrection anatomy, or even how the resurrection happened, but it's interesting to think about. Since Jesus kept his body—some form of it, anyway—perhaps these clues point us toward God's thoughts about human bodies.

Who you are—how your body looks, feels, and functions in this world—is good and beautiful. The way you show up and express yourself is something to celebrate! You are alive, and your body is wonderful.

#### For Discussion

- Why do you think Jesus kept his body after he was resurrected?
- What do you love about your body?
- Do you have a favorite memory of a meal you once ate? What did you eat? Who did you eat with? Why is that memory special to you?

## Activity: Family Feast

- Have you ever thought about how almost every holiday celebrated around the world involves some type of food or meal? From the Chinese Moon Festival to the Hindu celebration of Diwali, and many, many others,
- human beings come together around the table to feed their bodies and souls in community with one another. Jesus did the same thing with his followers before and after his death on the cross. He valued eating nourishing food and enjoying time together with the people he loved.

We're going to make a family feast today! Give each member of your family a few pieces of paper. Each person will draw and color a few of their favorite foods on one side of the paper. Make sure your drawings are large enough to cut out when you're finished. On the other side of your cutouts, write or draw a memory of a time your family enjoyed an experience together. It could be anything from a trip to the beach to a favorite bedtime routine to something that turned out unexpectedly. What are your favorite memories of being together?

Cut out your feast foods, and gather together. Place the food cutouts in the center with the writing on the bottom. Take turns picking up food cutouts and reading what other family members have written. Try to avoid picking up your own food! When you're finished, plan out some things you'd like to do as a family in the future. If you have extra time, talk about the following questions.

- What do you think Jesus' favorite food was?
- If you could make any meal for your family knowing everyone had to try it, what would it be?
- Can you think of any bumpy family experiences that turned out beautifully?

## Materials

- Pieces of paper
- Coloring utensils
- Scissors

## Fun Fact

Did you know that even if you were upside down, your food would still travel into your stomach?

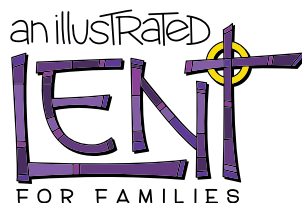
This is due to a process called *peristalsis*.

## Prayer

Dear God, how beautiful it is that Jesus shared meals with the people he loved and you are with us as we share meals today. Help us to cherish the time we have with our loved ones. Amen.



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