

UPSIDE DOWN

JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT



UPSIDE DOWN

MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

UNIT 1 – PRE-K

God has called us to live UPSIDE DOWN lives. When the world around us tells us that we should look out for number one, that it's better to have more of, well, everything, Jesus teaches us the opposite. In His Sermon on the Mount, **Jesus teaches us God's way**. This unit dives into Jesus' Sermon on the Mount where He teaches us that God blesses the poor, the humble, the pure of heart. We learn that we should love our enemies instead of hating them. We find that God wants us to give in secret, not with fanfare. Finally, we discover that our treasures should not be the things of this earth. The things we hold most dear should be things that have eternal value, things that build His Kingdom. This month's UPSIDE DOWN lessons teach kids how **Jesus teaches us God's way**. And God's way is always the best way! Our Focus Verse wraps it up nicely, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9 (NIV)

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, *Find the 8 Page, Jesus' Beatitudes for Happiness Page*, Crayons

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Heart Stickers, *Love Your Enemies Page*, Angry Face Stickers, Crayons

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, *Money Memory Match Cards*, Play Money, 6" Felt or Fabric Squares, Ribbon, Paper, Crayons

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, *Storing Up Treasures in Heaven Page*, Small Bug Stickers, Crayons

THE BEATITUDES

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 5:1-10 (NLT)

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches us God's way.

FOCUS VERSE

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:9 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | *Find the 8* Page | *Jesus' Beatitudes for Happiness* Page | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- If you could choose one thing to buy from the store, what would you buy? Why?
- What are some ways God has taken care of you or your family?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

While we have a lot to teach our students about worship, we can learn from them too. Pay attention to how your kids worship and praise God. Ask the Lord to show you what these children can teach you.



GOOD LEADERS ARE ROLE MODELS, BUT GREAT LEADERS ARE WILLING TO LEARN FROM THOSE AROUND THEM—EVEN FROM CHILDREN.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather everyone for prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“God, help us focus on You. We believe that You are here with us. Prepare our minds and hearts for what you want to teach us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son, Amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “Last month, we learned about Jesus’ birth and how different people welcomed Jesus as the newborn King. That was a good series, but I am also excited about this month because we have a whole new group of lessons called Upside-Down. Can someone tell me what ‘upside-down’ means?”

Yes! When something is 'upside-down,' it is backwards and not normal; it is upside-down! For the next few weeks, we will be learning about an upside-down world—God's world and His way! Are you ready to hear about God's world? [Wait for responses.] Great! Let's put up the puzzle piece." Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, "Let's play a game that will help get us ready for our story!"

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Find the 8 Page* (1 per child) | Crayons |

Say, "Today, we are going to play a game that we are calling *Find the 8*. Who knows what an eight looks like? Great! Who thinks they can find all the eights?"



DRAW AN EIGHT ON A PIECE OF PAPER AND HANG IT NEAR THE CHILDREN WHO DO NOT KNOW WHAT AN EIGHT LOOKS LIKE. YOU CAN ALSO SAY THAT THE EIGHT IS THE NUMBER THAT LOOKS LIKE A SNOWMAN.

GAME GOAL: To find and circle all of the eights on the *Find the 8 Page*.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Give each child a *Find the 8 Page* and a crayon.
- Tell each child to find and circle all the eights they see on their page.

MODIFICATION: If this game goes too quickly, have the kids create an outline of the number eight with blocks, crayons, pipe cleaners, ribbon, etc. or find eight of the same things in class (eight pairs of scissors, eight same-colored crayons, eight pencils, eight blocks, etc.).

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job finding the number eight! Remember that number because we are about to read an upside-down teaching by Jesus when He talks about eight things that are not normal. Let's learn about it."

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, "In today's story, Jesus is about to start an upside-down teaching called His 'Sermon on the Mount'—or His teaching on a mountain! This sermon was Jesus' first big teaching, and it is very upside-down! Before we read, we need to know that God's way is not always like our ways, and that is OK! Let's learn about the eight upside-down things [the Beatitudes] Jesus says that will make people truly happy." Read Matthew 5:1-10 (NLT).



HAVE THE KIDS COUNT EACH BEATITUDE OUT LOUD AS YOU RECITE ALL EIGHT OF THEM.

TELL THE STORY IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR READ THE PASSAGE BELOW

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

³ “God blesses [has kindness on] those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

⁴ God blesses those who mourn [saddened], for they will be comforted.

⁵ God blesses those who are humble [self-forgetful], for they will inherit the whole earth.

⁶ God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice [goodness], for they will be satisfied.

⁷ God blesses those who are merciful [kind], for they will be shown mercy [kindness].

⁸ God blesses those whose hearts are pure [clean or good], for they will see God.

⁹ God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted [wronged or mistreated] for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.”

Say, “Wow! Those eight things are important to remember. Jesus is teaching us the way that we will be most happy.”

Ask, “Did you know that **Jesus teaches us God’s way**? If we follow what God says, Jesus tells us we will be truly happy! Jesus doesn’t say that the people who have the best clothes or best toys are happiest, does He? No! **Jesus teaches us God’s way**, and it seems very upside-down. [Reread who Jesus says is happiest—Beatitudes]. **Jesus teaches us God’s way**, and God’s way is always the best way.”

TRANSITION: Say, “Aren’t you happy that God sent us His Son, Jesus, to teach us God’s way?”

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Discuss the story: Say, “Let’s see what you can remember about today’s story.”

1. Jesus taught us a better way. Whose way does Jesus teach us to follow?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God’s way.**

2. How many Beatitudes did Jesus teach us in our story today?

Response: Jesus taught about eight Beatitudes.

3. What made God’s eight things upside-down?

Response: We usually think that people who have the best toys or best clothes are the happiest, but that is not how God’s way works. We are happiest when we love God.

4. If someone asks you who the happiest people are, what will you tell them?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. What do we learn about Jesus in this teaching?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God’s way**, Jesus teaches upside-down ways, Jesus is a great teacher, Jesus tells us that the happiest people are those who love God, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "This has been a great discussion! Thank you for helping me answer these questions. Now, let's work on a craft that will help us remember Jesus' eight things—the Beatitudes—and how **Jesus teaches us God's way.**"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Jesus' Beatitudes for Happiness* Page (1 per child) | Crayons |

Say, "For today's craft, we will be looking at who is really the happiest. We can use this activity to help us remember God's way because God's way is always the best way."

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child a *Jesus' Beatitudes for Happiness* Page and crayons.
- Before the kids color the activity page, talk about what God says about each image on the worksheet. (Reread each Beatitude and have the kids point to the matching picture.)
- Once the kids finish coloring, ask them which Beatitude is their favorite and why.



USE THIS ACTIVITY TIME TO CLARIFY THE BIG IDEA AND ENSURE THAT THE KIDS UNDERSTAND THAT **JESUS TEACHES US GOD'S WAY.**

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job with your *Beatitudes of Happiness*! Remember, Jesus used the Beatitudes to teach us God's way."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Our memory verse for this month goes right along with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Listen closely to the words God says in this verse. These words are for us!" First, read the verse multiple times, and then have the kids repeat the verse after you.

"As the heavens are higher [arms up] than the earth [arms down], so are my ways [point a finger toward heaven] higher than your ways [point a finger toward yourself] and my thoughts [point a finger toward heaven] than your thoughts [point at your own head]." Isaiah 55:9 (NIV) (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: Talk about what the verse means. Here are some questions to get you started:

1. Why are God's ways higher (or better) than our ways?
2. This verse talks about God's thoughts. What do you think God thinks about? (Remind the children that one thing we know God thinks about is how much He loves each one of us!)

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Jesus surprised everyone with God's upside-down ways—the Beatitudes. God's ways are not like our ways; they are so much better! This week, let's ask God to make us more like His Son, Jesus, and remember, **Jesus teaches us God's way**, which is always the BEST way. Let's pray that God makes us happy!"



PAUSE AND TAKE ABOUT 15-30 SECONDS LET THE CHILDREN WHISPER PRAY, ASKING GOD TO MAKE THEM TRULY HAPPY. THEN, BEGIN THE CORPORATE PRAYER TIME.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“God, thank You for giving us Jesus to teach us Your ways. Help us to learn and to love Your ways! Make us people who are like Your Son. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”*

RELEASE –

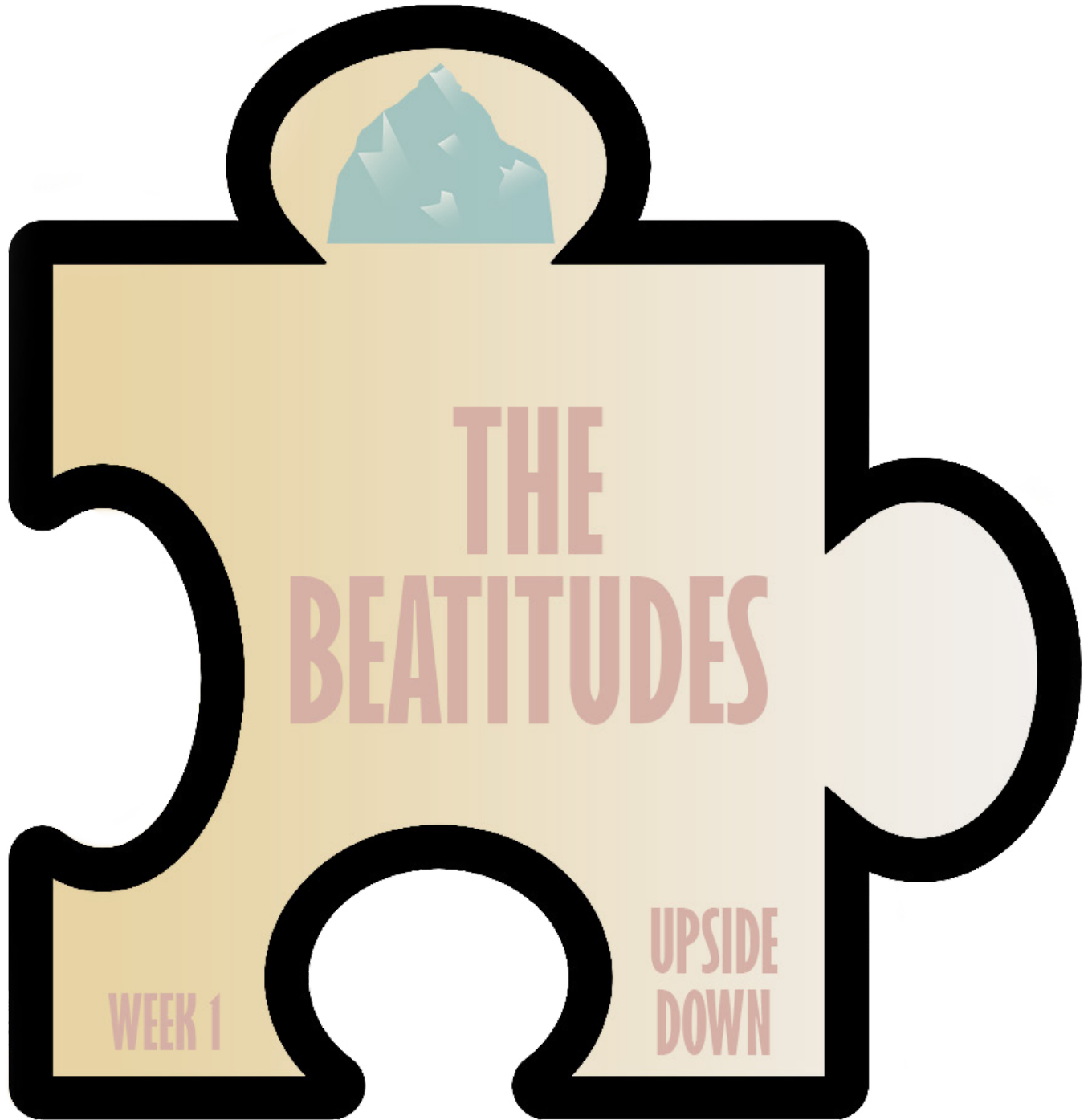
We only get to pour into the lives of our kids for a VERY short time each week. As their leader, capitalize on every opportunity to show these children Jesus and His love for them!



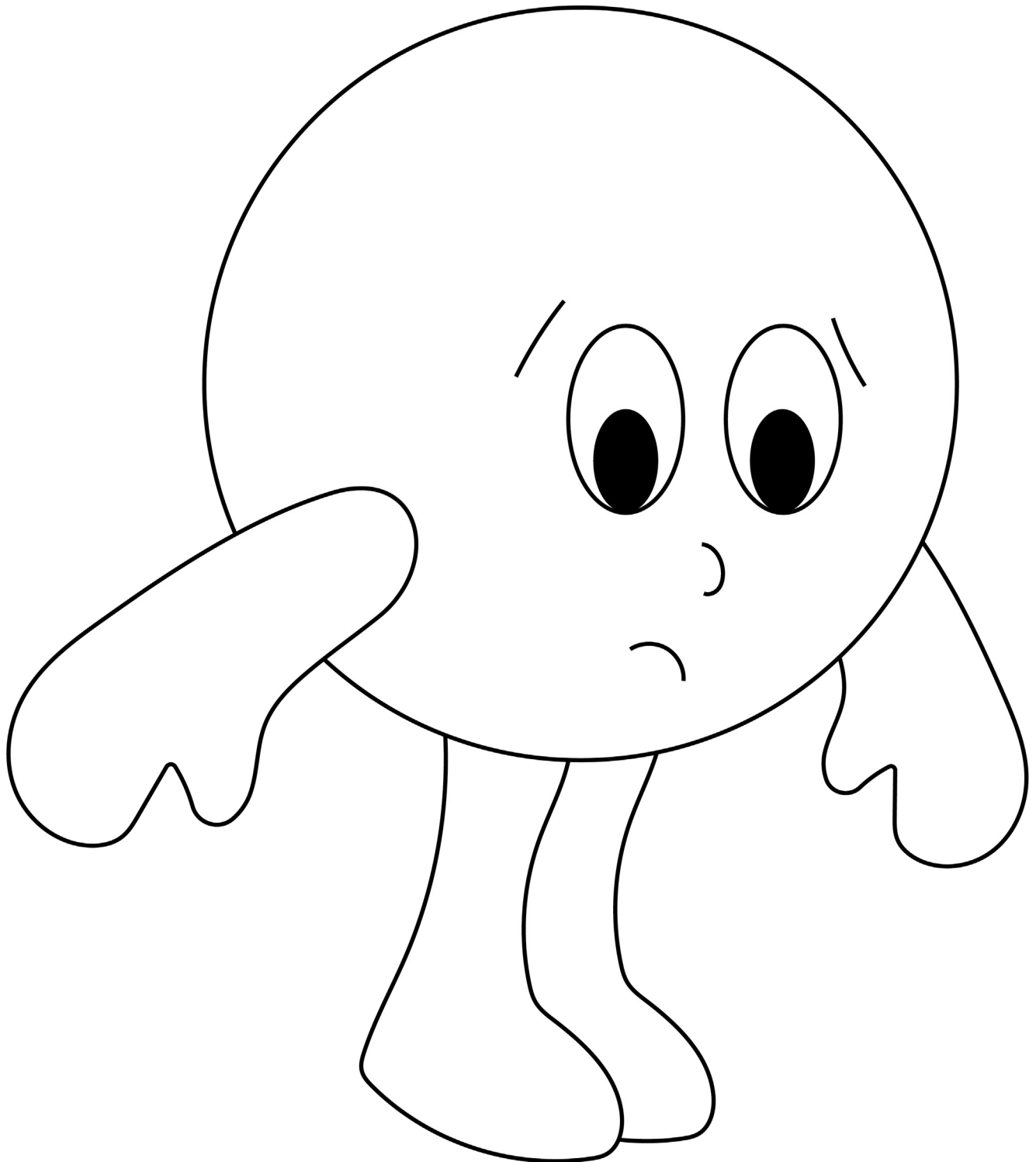
SHOW THE KIDS JESUS’ LOVE, AND ALSO TALK ABOUT HOW HE LOVES THEM UNCONDITIONALLY (NOT BASED ON WORKS OR PERFORMANCE).

PARENT GUIDE EXPLANATION:

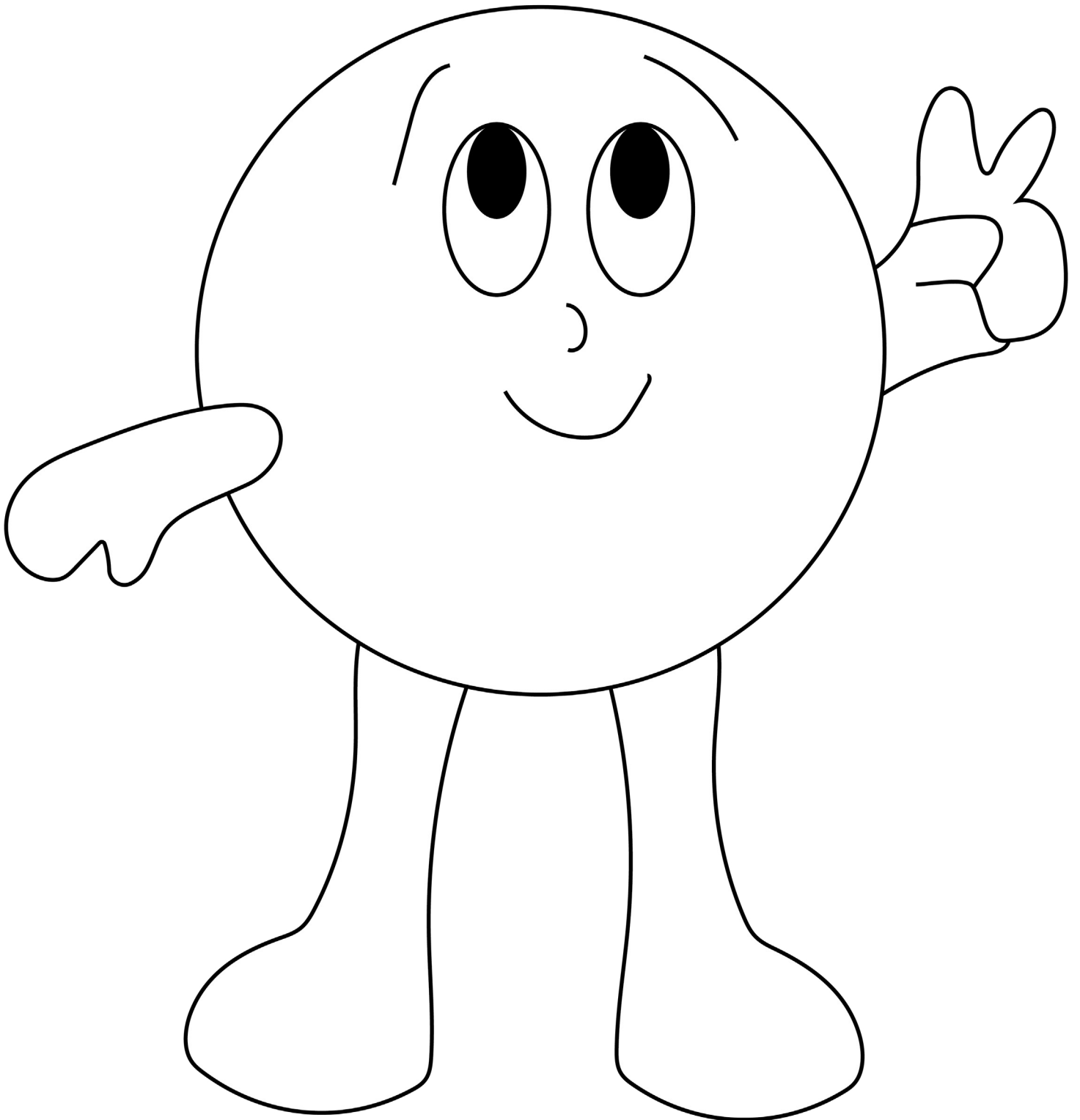
1. Provides engaging questions and activities for family discipleship.
2. Reviews what the children are learning each week.



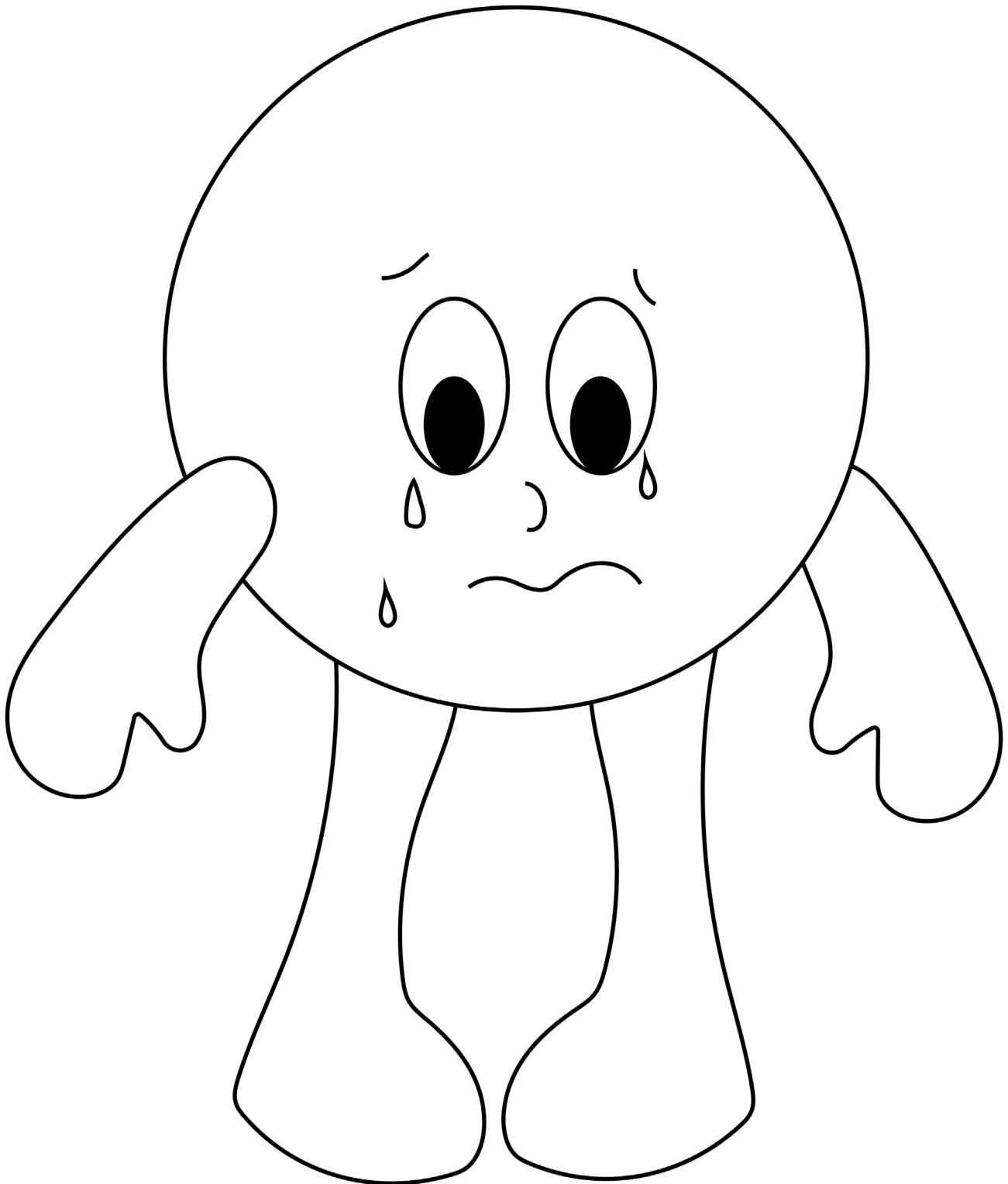
Blessed are the
poor in spirit.



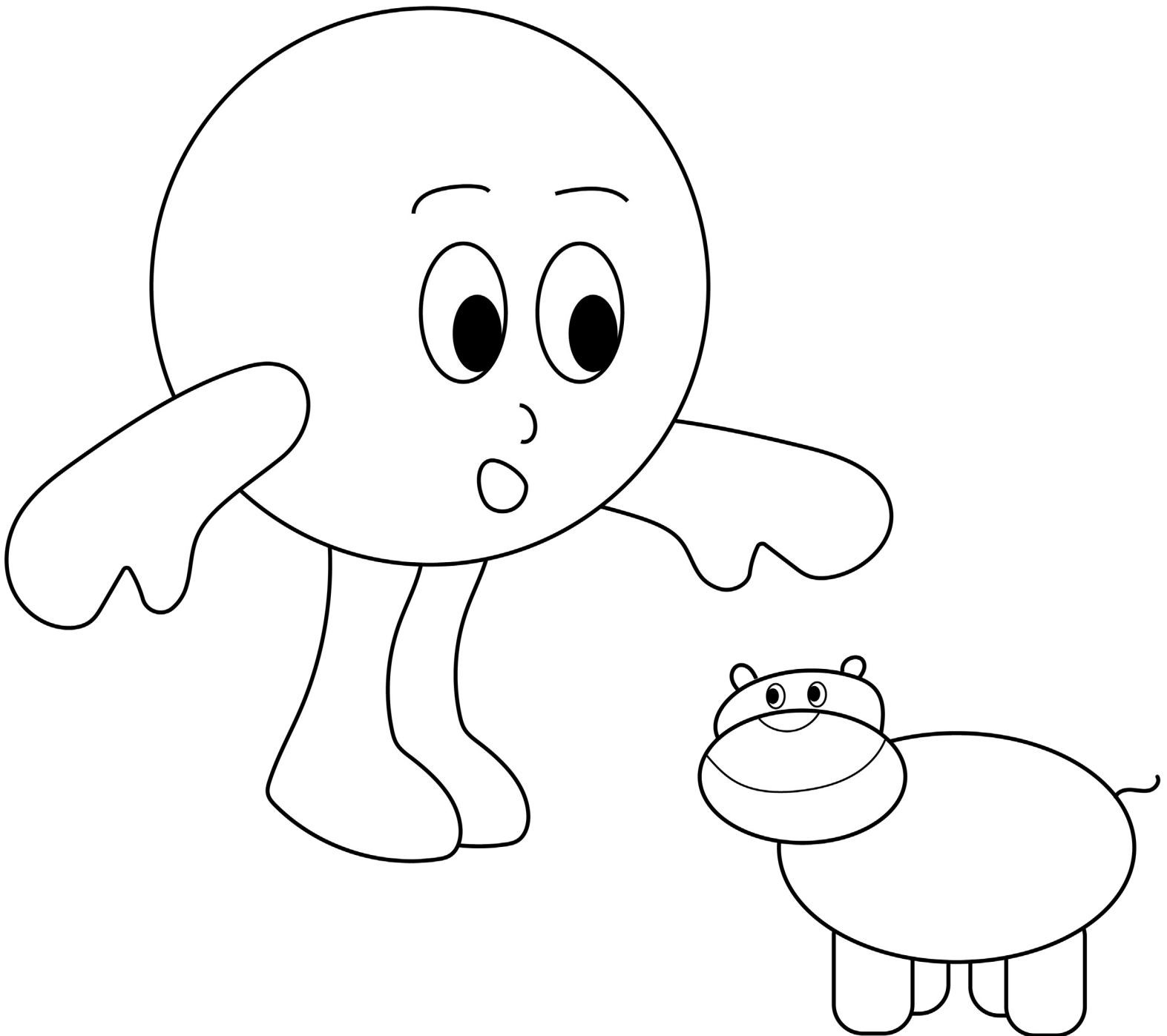
Blessed are the
peacemakers.



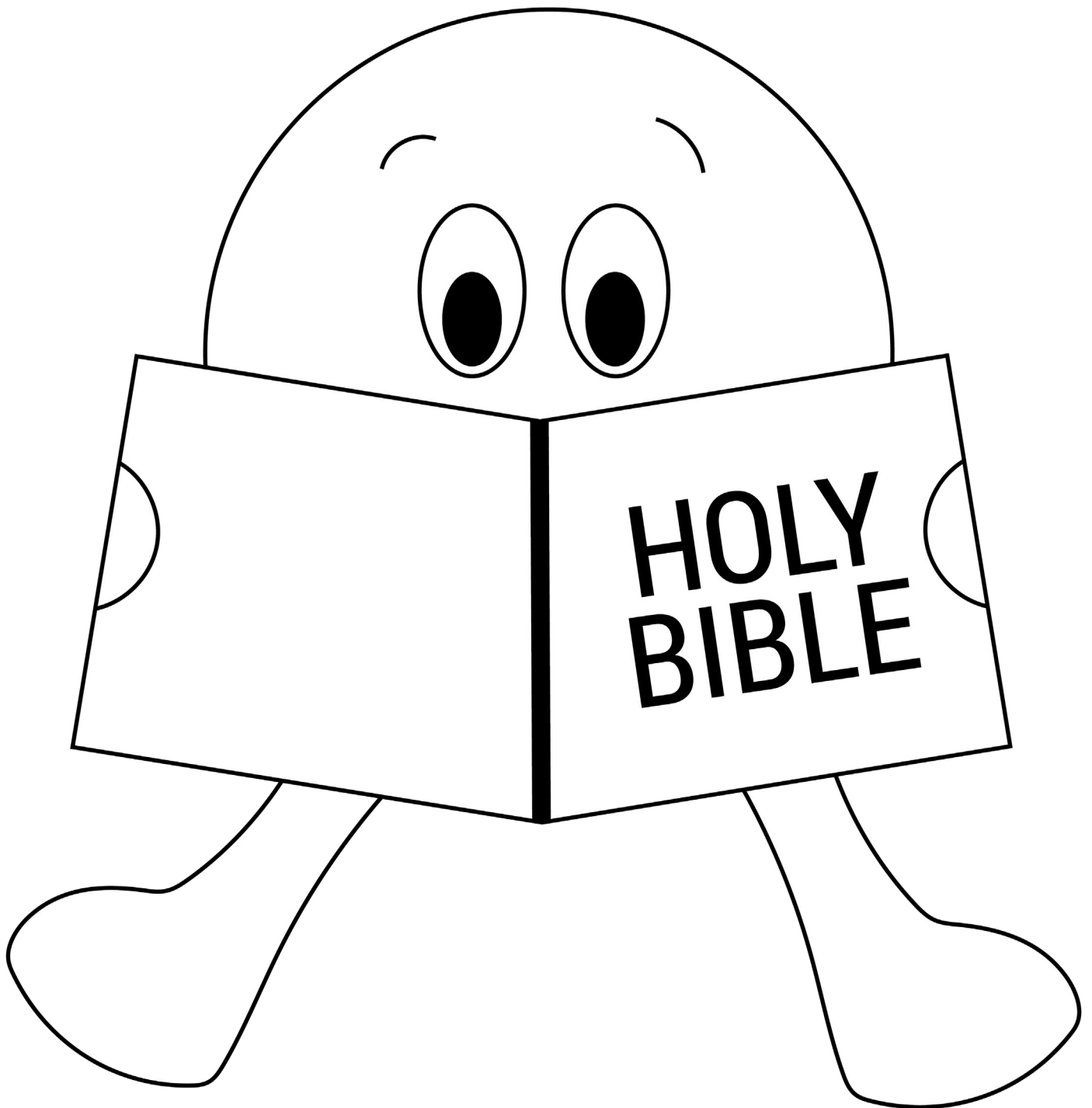
Blessed are they
that mourn.



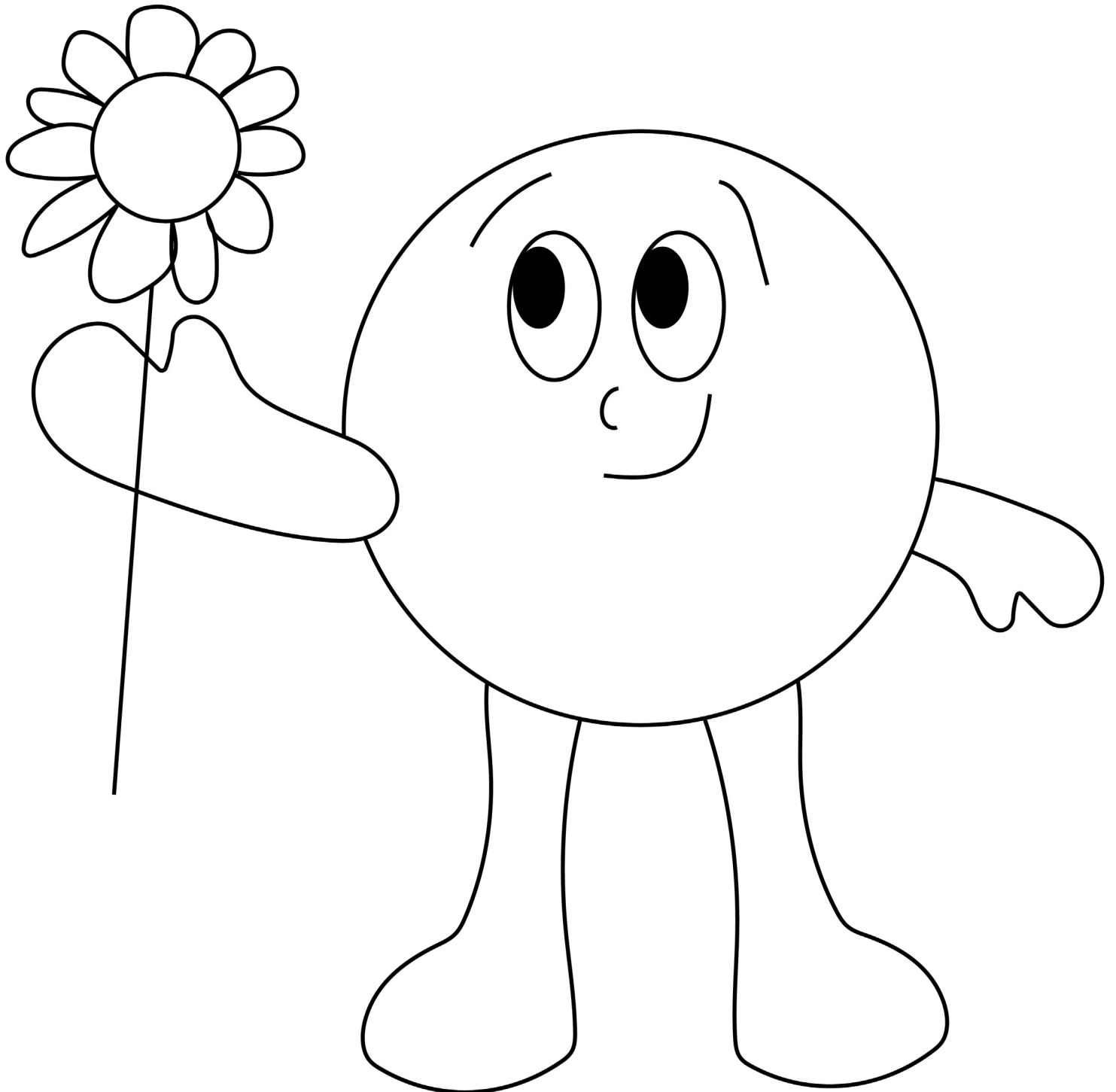
Blessed are
the merciful.



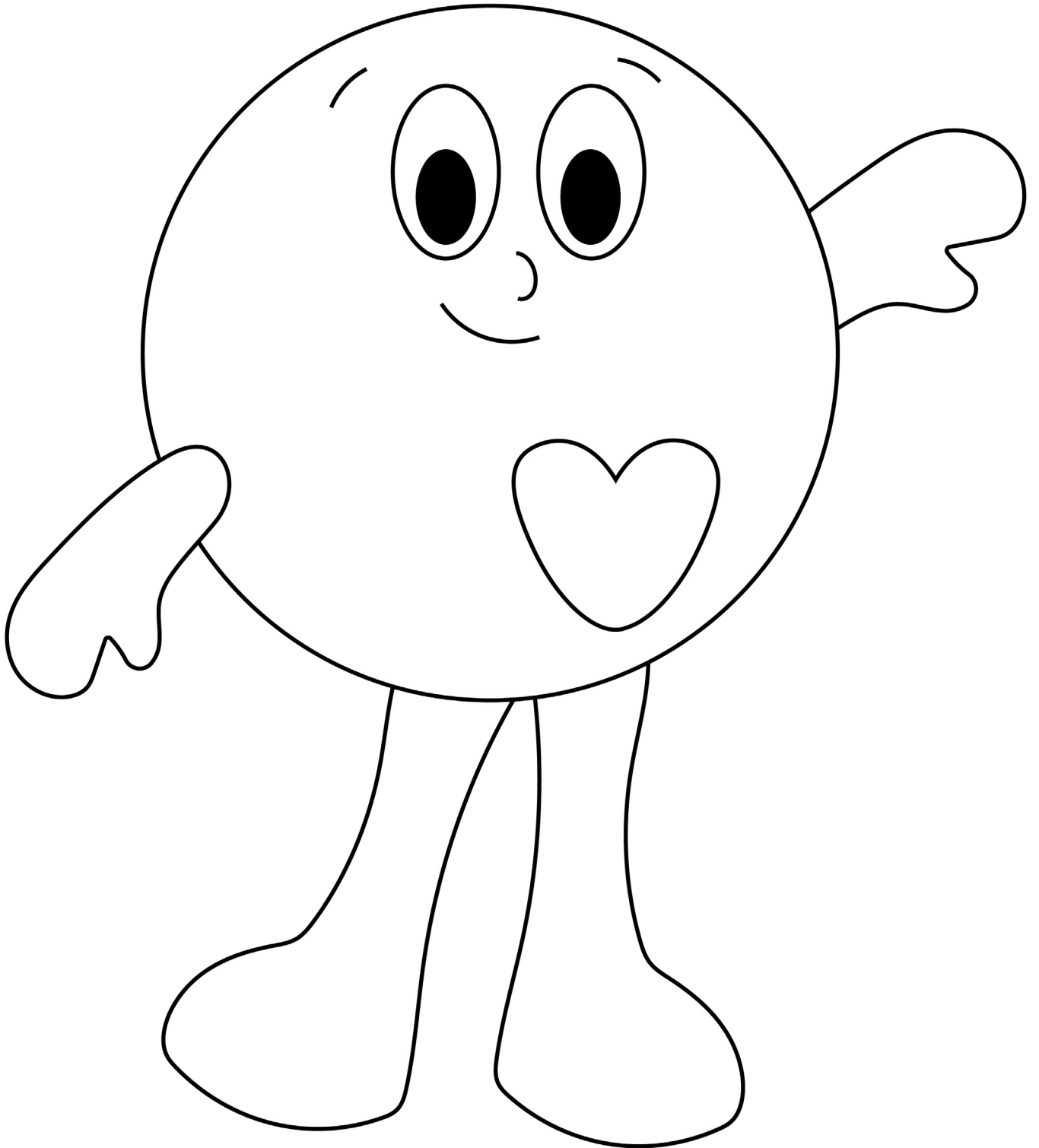
Blessed are they which
hunger and thirst after
righteousness.



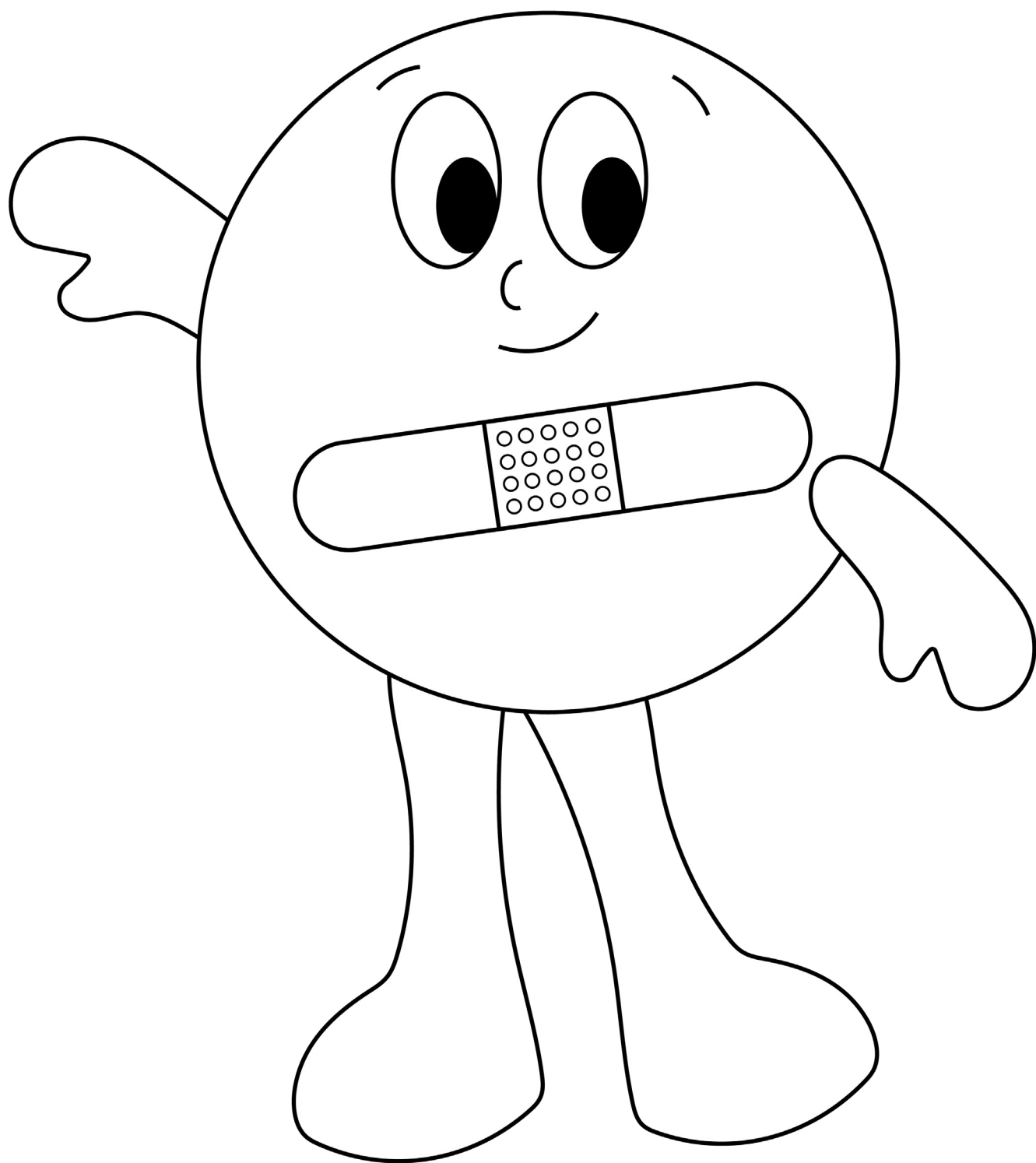
Blessed are
the meek.

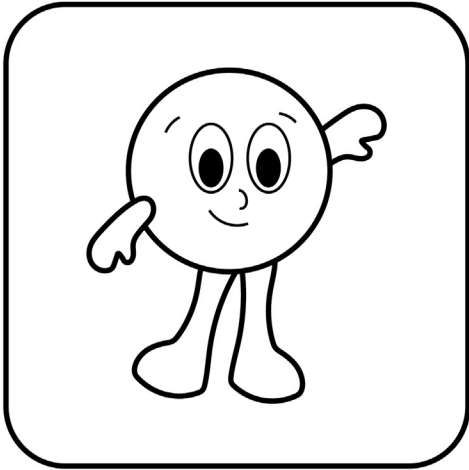


Blessed are the
pure in heart.



Blessed are they
which are persecuted.





8	1	7	1	4
8	8	8	6	9
6	2	8	3	5

2	4	8	8	8	8	6	3
3	8	8	1	3	7	9	4
8	8	5	2	4	5	1	6
8	2	6	1	6	3	5	7
8	8	8	8	9	5	4	1
5	9	4	8	7			
7	2	1	8	2			
9	5	3	8	8			

UPSIDE DOWN

JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT



LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 5:43-44, 46-48 (ICBww)

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches us God's way.

FOCUS VERSE

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Heart Stickers | *Love Your Enemies* Page | Angry Face Stickers | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Name one person you love. Why do you love them?
- What does it mean to love someone?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

God loves to see our devotion to Him in worship. Be sacrificial and be an example in your worship, knowing that your group is looking to you for spiritual direction. They learn more from watching you than from you telling them how to worship!

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather everyone for prayer.



BUILD A HABIT OF PRAYING FOR YOUR STUDENTS. AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE LESSON, SAY EACH CHILD'S NAME ALOUD AS YOU PRAY THAT GOD WILL TRANSFORM THEIR HEARTS.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Lord, we are excited to learn from You today! Thank You for loving us so much that You gave us the Bible so we could know who You are. God, we love You! Amen."*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "This is our second week in the Upside-Down unit! Why do we call these lessons upside-down? [Wait for responses.] Some of the things Jesus taught sounded so strange that they seemed upside-down! Last week, we learned about how Jesus taught the eight Beatitudes in the 'Sermon

on the Mount'—or teaching on the mountain. This week, we have more upside-down commands from Jesus' sermon [teaching]. Remember, **Jesus teaches us God's way**—the best way. Let's put up our new puzzle piece." Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, "Who is ready to play a game that will help us understand our story?"

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Heart Stickers (about 10 per child) |

Say, "Today's game is called *Spread the Love!* Show me you are ready to hear how to play."

GAME GOAL: To pass out all their heart stickers and compliment each person until all their heart stickers are gone.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Give each child at least ten heart stickers.
- When you say "go," tell each child to find someone in the room, give them a heart sticker, and compliment them to "spread the love." Demonstrate this process before you start.
- Once all the heart stickers are gone, the game is over.

CHALLENGE: If the game moves too quickly, have everyone tell one thing they shared with a friend to "spread the love."

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job playing *Spread the Love!* Since we played *Spread the Love*, what upside-down story do you think we will be learning about today? Right! Love! Let's read it together."

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Love and Hate Signs* (1 set per class) |

Say, "In this week's story, the crowds of people are still on the mountain listening to Jesus' sermon [or teaching]. After Jesus taught about the eight Beatitudes, Jesus started talking about loving our enemies! Can someone tell me what an 'enemy' is? An enemy is someone who does not like you. This person may even be unkind to you. Have you ever had an enemy? [Wait for responses.] Me too! Let's read to find out this upside-down way of loving." Read Matthew 5:43-44, 46-48 (ICB).



USE THE LOVE AND HATE SIGNS TO HELP YOU TELL THE STORY.
WHEN YOU SAY THE WORD "LOVE," HOLD UP THE LOVE SIGN. WHEN
YOU SAY THE WORD "HATE," HOLD US THE HATE SIGN.

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemies.'⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you...⁴⁶ If you love only the people who love you, then you will get no reward...⁴⁷ And if you are nice only to your friends, then you are no better than other people. Even people without God are nice to their friends.⁴⁸ So you must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Say, "Wait! Enemies are people who don't like us and sometimes try to hurt us, and Jesus is telling us to love our enemies?! That is very upside-down! Remember, **Jesus teaches us God's way.**"

Ask, "Why do you think Jesus would tell us to love our enemies? Jesus asks us to do something that seems very upside-down to us, but it is not upside-down to God. God loved us when we were His enemies and when we didn't love Him back (Romans 5:10)! God's love for us is so great! Jesus wants us to love our enemies because God did that for us! It is a good thing that **Jesus teaches us God's way**, and God's way is to love our enemies!"

TRANSITION: Say, "Aren't you grateful **Jesus teaches us God's way?**"



BULLYING AND ABUSE (BY ADULTS AND OTHER CHILDREN) ARE ASTONISHINGLY COMMON. PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO TELL THE CHILDREN THAT THEY SHOULD ALWAYS TELL A TRUSTED ADULT IF SOMEONE IS HURTING THEM. WE DO NOT LOVE OUR ENEMIES BY LIVING IN AN ABUSIVE SITUATION. IF A CHILD'S RESPONSE TO THIS LESSON CAUSES YOU TO SUSPECT THAT A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED OR ABUSED, YOU ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO RELAY THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR MINISTRY LEADER. THE IPHC OFFERS HELP IN DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE AT WWW.IPHC.ORG/DISCIPLESHIP/VIGILANT.

DISCUSS – 10 MINUTES

Discuss the story: Say, "Let's see what you can remember about today's story."

1. Jesus taught us a better way. Whose way does Jesus teach us to follow?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God's way.**

2. What is Jesus' upside-down teaching in this story? (Use the love and hate signs for extra help if needed).

Response: Jesus teaches us to love, not hate, our enemies.

3. How do you think loving your enemies will change your heart to be like God's?

Response: Answers will vary.

4. Jesus tells us to pray for the people who hurt us. Why is prayer the best way to start loving our enemies?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. Without saying names, share one way you can love an "enemy" this week.

Response: Answers will vary.

6. What do we learn about Jesus in this teaching?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God's way**, Jesus' ways seem upside-down to us, Jesus wants us to love our enemies, Jesus can help us love people the way God loves people, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Thank you for all of your answers. Now, let's work on a craft that will remind us to love our enemies."

RESPOND – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Love Your Enemies* Page (1 per child) | Angry Face Stickers (5 per child) | Crayons |

Say, "Today, we are coloring a heart that reminds us to love our enemies! Remember, enemies are the people who are not nice to us and don't like us. **Jesus teaches us God's way**, and His way is the best way!"

- Give each child a *Love Your Enemies* Page, five angry face stickers, and crayons.
- Tell the kids to color their hearts, then stick the angry stickers onto the heart. Ask, "Why do you think we are putting angry faces on a heart? (Wait for responses.) Right! Because God wants us to love our enemies—the people who hate us."
- When the crafts are finished, have the children tell their neighbors what they learned from today's upside-down teaching of Jesus.

TRANSITION: Say, "Now, you can remember that Jesus wants us to love our enemies! I am so grateful **Jesus teaches us God's way** because it is always the best way."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It is time to practice the Bible verse we started learning last week. It can help us remember that God's ways are better than our ways. Don't forget, this verse is said like God is speaking it to us." Read the verse multiple times and have the kids repeat the verse after you.

"As the heavens are higher [arms up] than the earth [arms down], so are my ways [point a finger toward heaven] higher than your ways [point a finger toward yourself] and my thoughts [point a finger toward heaven] than your thoughts [point at your own head]." Isaiah 55:9 (NIV) (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: Learning to pray Scripture is a spiritual discipline we can practice our whole lives! Start teaching the children how to do this by praying after each phrase of our memory verse. For example, read the first few words of the verse and then pause to pray a response. You can thank God that heaven is perfect and that we can look to Him (in heaven) when things are hard on Earth. You could also praise God for being the Creator of all things. After you model this prayer, make space to allow the children to say their prayers over the memory verse.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Jesus surprised everyone by sharing God's upside-down love and by telling us to love in upside-down ways too—to love our enemies! It certainly feels strange to love our enemies, but **Jesus teaches us God's way**, and God's way is always the best way! It is also important to remember that we can't love our enemies without God's help. Let's ask for God's help to love our enemies!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, Your teaching was hard for us to understand today, and we need Your help loving our enemies the way You love us. Please help us love our enemies. Remind us to love even when others do not love us back. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

RELEASE —

Use additional time remaining to review the story, pray for specific requests, or replay the ENGAGE game.





Love Your Enemies

GIVING TO THE NEEDY

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:1-4 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches us God's way.

FOCUS VERSE

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:9 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | *Money Memory Match* Cards | Play Money | 6" Felt or Fabric Squares | Ribbon | Paper | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Tell me about a time when you needed something and someone helped you get it.
- Who do you enjoy helping?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

It is a privilege to worship God with the children we disciple. If the kids in your group don't stay in the sanctuary for worship (before coming to class), sing at least one song together each week. You don't need videos or dance moves for it to be meaningful. Worship is not about the latest technology, and it can be as simple as playing music from a phone or encouraging a volunteer to lead worship.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather everyone for prayer.



PRAYER IS A FOUNDATIONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE. TAKE A MOMENT TO EXPLAIN THAT PRAYER IS ONE OF THE WAYS WE GET CLOSE TO GOD. IF POSSIBLE, USE AN EXAMPLE FROM YOUR LIFE TO DEMONSTRATE HOW GOD HAS HELPED YOU GROW IN PRAYER.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Lord, we are so excited to learn from You today! Thank You for giving us the Bible. You must really love us! Help us love You more today. In Jesus' name, Amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “What have we been learning this month? We are learning that **Jesus teaches us God’s way**, and God’s way seems upside-down, but it is the right way. Two weeks ago, we read about Jesus’ eight teachings [Beatitudes] on how to be truly happy. Then, last week, we discovered that Jesus wants us to love our enemies who don’t like us. Why does that teaching seem upside-down? Remember, though, **Jesus teaches us God’s way**, which is always the best way. Now, let’s hang up the next puzzle piece.” Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, “You know what time it is! It is game time!”

ENGAGE – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Money Memory Match* Cards (1 set per pair) |



PRINT THE MONEY MEMORY MATCH CARDS ON CARDSTOCK AND CUT OUT THE CARDS BEFORE CLASS.

Say, “For this game, we will be playing a game called *Money Memory Match*! Who has played a memory game before? Great! Let’s play it with a partner.”



MAKE SURE EVERY CHILD HAS A PARTNER. THE CHILDREN WHO DON’T HAVE MANY FRIENDS MAY FEEL SAD OR EXCLUDED IF NO ONE CHOOSES TO BE THEIR PARTNER. ONE WAY TO COMBAT THIS IS TO ASSIGN PARTNERS AHEAD OF TIME. IF THERE ARE AN ODD NUMBER OF CHILDREN, JOIN IN AND BE A PARTNER TO ONE CHILD.

GAME GOAL: To match up the *Money Memory Match* Cards until all the cards have their matching pair.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Before you begin, choose a child to join you at the front of the class. Model the game for the rest of the children.
- Pair up your children and give each of them a set of *Money Memory Match* Cards.
- Display all the cards in equal rows, face-down.
- One at a time, each partner will flip over two cards. If they match, the child will take both cards, set them aside, and assign a point to themselves. If the cards do not match, they must flip them back over, face-down, and it will be the next partner’s turn.
- Continue this process (back and forth) until all cards have been matched.

CHALLENGE: If you prefer to print fewer copies of the *Money Memory Match* Cards, group your class into three to four groups.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job playing *Money Memory Match*! In our story today, we will hear what God says about our money. Remember, our story is going to seem upside-down and strange! Let’s listen to it!”

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Play Money (1 small handful per class) |

Say, "Have you ever seen people asking for help on the side of the road or living outside? They need help, don't they? We regularly see people who need help, and God wants us to do good things for them. We will read an upside-down lesson this week about how God wants us to be kind to those who need help. Let's listen." Read Matthew 6:1-4 (ICB).

¹ "Be careful! When you do good things, don't do them in front of people to be seen by them. If you do that, then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² "When you give to the poor, don't be like the hypocrites [people who pretend]. They blow trumpets before they give so that people will see them. They do that in the synagogues and on the streets. They want other people to honor [love/be proud of] them... ³ So when you give to the poor, give very secretly. Don't let anyone know what you are doing. ⁴ Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you.

Say, "Wait! Did we read that correctly? Does God's way of giving mean that we don't tell anyone about it? That sounds upside-down!"



THIS IS A GREAT LESSON TO CHALLENGE THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN. OUR DESIRE FOR OTHERS TO SEE OUR GOOD WORKS EXPOSES OUR PRIDE, BUT AS WE GROW IN GIVING SECRETLY, WE LEARN TO BE CONTENT WITH ONLY GOD'S APPROVAL. TO KEEP THE KIDS ENGAGED, HAVE THEM MODEL BOTH THE RIGHT AND WRONG WAY TO GIVE TO THE NEEDY.

Ask, "How does Jesus want us to give and help others? **Jesus teaches us God's way**, and God wants us to give and help others in secret. God doesn't want us to give so that people will think we are good or amazing. We should give so people will think God is amazing! The upside-down part of this lesson is that Jesus asks us to give in secret. Would you try to help others in quiet ways this week? [Wait for responses.] Yes! I know you can. **Jesus teaches us God's way**, and He teaches us to help others in secret. We do this to become more like Jesus!"

TRANSITION: Say, "Aren't you grateful **Jesus teaches us God's way**? It is so much better than our way!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Discuss the story: Say, "Let's talk about the story."

1. Jesus taught us a better way. Whose way does Jesus teach us to follow?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God's way.**

2. Why is giving in secret an upside-down teaching?

Response: We naturally want to be noticed when we help others, but that is not what Jesus taught. Jesus taught to give secretly so that God will get the attention and glory, not us.

4. Is giving in secret an easy thing to do?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. Do you ever need someone to help you with something? How can you help someone else? (Provide examples to get them thinking. For instance, they may need help getting something to eat or tying their shoes. They can help someone else by playing with a friend or cleaning up their toys.)

Response: Answers will vary.

6. What do we learn about Jesus in this teaching?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God's way**, Jesus teaches upside-down ways, Jesus loves when we give in secret, Jesus blesses those who do good things for Him, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job, everyone! **Jesus teaches us God's way!** Now, let's make a craft to help us remember our lesson."

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Play Money (3 coins or bills per person) | 6" Felt or Fabric Squares (1 per child) | 8" Length of Ribbon (1 per child) | Paper (1 blank sheet per person) | Crayons |

Say, "For today's craft, we will be making little bags of money so we can retell Jesus' upside-down teaching about giving in secret. Remember, **Jesus teaches us God's way**, which is always the best way!"

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child three coins, a piece of felt or fabric, and a piece of ribbon.
- Have the kids lay the fabric square flat on the table and place the play money in the middle of the square.
- Once the coins are in the middle, pull the fabric's corners together and tie it closed with the ribbon. (It should look like a small, cinched bag of coins.) You will need helpers to secure the ribbon.
- Then, take turns having the kids use their bags of money to demonstrate and contrast giving OUR way with GOD'S way. Talk about how each method is different.
- Finally, pass out the paper and crayons. Ask the children to draw pictures of how they can secretly give to others. Help the kids see that this teaching is about more than just giving money to the poor – the Bible is clear that we should help others. This passage is about HOW we give to those in need. If the children need help with ideas, have them brainstorm before moving on to the next activity.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job! You can now show your family what you learned and be ready to love and help people this week. Be sure to remind them that Jesus teaches us to give in secret so we will learn to love God's attention most of all. Then, tell your parents our big idea for this month: **Jesus teaches us God's way.**"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "We get to memorize God's Word! What a privilege that is! Please pay attention to the words of the

verse while we recite it. It is important to memorize the verse AND understand what it means. Are you ready to say it?"



IF YOUR CLASS IS LOSING INTEREST IN VERSE MEMORIZATION, INCORPORATE A "CHALLENGE" STRATEGY.

"As the heavens are higher [arms up] than the earth [arms down], so are my ways [point a finger toward heaven] higher than your ways [point a finger toward yourself] and my thoughts [point a finger toward heaven] than your thoughts [point at your own head]." Isaiah 55:9 (NIV) (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: A fun way to remember the verse is by changing your voice at different spots. For example, when you say the word "higher," have everyone make the highest and squeakiest sound possible! Or, when you say, "my thoughts," use an authoritative voice as compared to a quiet, humble voice when you say, "your thoughts."

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Does Jesus' teaching about how to give [in secret] seem upside-down or strange? It does to me! Jesus surprised everyone with His upside-down teachings! This week, we learned that Jesus said we should give in secret instead of giving so others will notice. **Jesus teaches us God's way**, and it is always the best way! Can everyone say, '**Jesus teaches us God's way**'?"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, Your upside-down teachings are hard without Your help. We want to give to others because Your way is always the best way! Thank You for teaching us the right way! In Jesus' name, Amen."*

RELEASE —

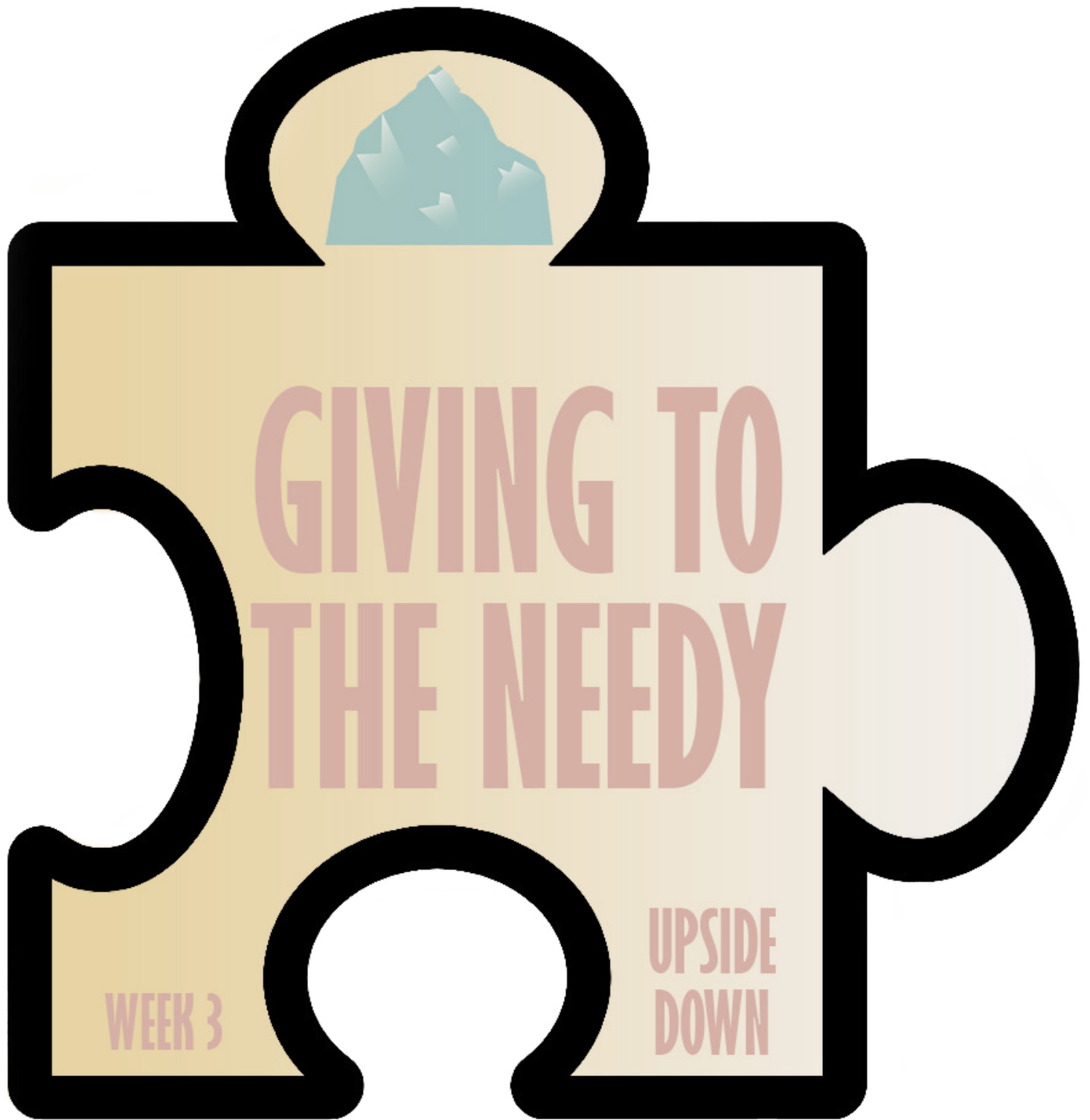
Focus on getting to know the kids in your class when you have extra time. Ask lots of questions, share jokes, or play games together. Relationship-building is an integral (and often overlooked) part of discipleship.



DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF GETTING TO KNOW YOUR KIDS AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM.

PARENT GUIDE EXPLANATION:

1. Provides engaging questions and activities for family discipleship.
2. Reviews what the children are learning each week.





STORING TREASURES IN HEAVEN

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 6:19-20 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches us God's way.

FOCUS VERSE

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | *Storing Up Treasures in Heaven* Page | Small Bug Stickers | Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is one way you can make money?
- What is your least favorite chore to do at home?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Encourage your group to worship differently than usual. For example, if the children usually dance and move around, practice being still. End your time with a reminder that God loves worship!



HELPING KIDS BREAK OUT OF THEIR WORSHIP "ROUTINE," ENCOURAGES THEM TO BE MORE THOUGHTFUL AND ENGAGED AS THEY SING.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray over your class and their learning of the lesson.

SAMPLE PRAYER: "Lord, we are ready to know more about You! Open our minds and our ears to understand You better. We love You, Jesus! Amen."

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "This month, we have learned that **Jesus teaches us God's way**, but sometimes God's way seems VERY upside-down and strange! So far, we have learned that in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He talked about the eight Beatitudes [explain/review] to happiness, that we need to love our

enemies and help others in secret. Aren't these great, upside-down teachings? Now, let's get ready for our last upside-down lesson. Who would like to put up this week's puzzle piece?" Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, "Who is ready to play a game? Great! This week's game will prepare our minds and hearts for God's story."

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

Say, "This week's game is called *Trash or Treasure!* I will say an item, and each person will vote on whether they believe it is trash or a treasure. Trash means the item is not helpful or useful. Treasure means it is valuable or something we need. Our answers will probably be very different, and that is OK! Let's see what our friends think is 'trash' and what they believe is 'treasure!'"

GAME GOAL: To have each person vote on whether items are "trash" or "treasure."

HOW TO PLAY:

- To start, instruct everyone to sit in a circle facing one another.
- Tell the kids that they will be voting with their thumbs on whether the item mentioned is trash (thumbs down) or treasure (thumbs up).
- Remind the kids that it is OK (and expected) for the group to disagree.



YOU WILL WANT TO MODEL A COUPLE ITEMS TO THE CLASS BEFORE BEGINNING.

- Here are some items you can have the kids vote on as "trash" or "treasure:"
 - Cell Phones, Clocks, Doors, Board Games, Video Games, Soccer Balls, Water Bottles, Books, Tissues, Paper, Grass, Pencils, Money, Banana Peels, Cars, Beds, Electricity, Chairs, Leaves, TVs, etc.
- *Try to utilize as many items in the room as possible. This age group will best understand and stay focused if they can see the objects you are referencing.



IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN WHO NEED TO RUN AROUND, DESIGNATE ONE HALF OF THE ROOM "TRASH" AND THE OTHER SIDE "TREASURE." THEN, HAVE THE CHILDREN MOVE FROM ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER DEPENDING ON THEIR VOTE FOR EACH ITEM.

MODIFICATION: If the game moves too quickly, each time you name an item, choose a child to explain why they voted "trash" (thumbs down) or "treasure" (thumbs up).

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job playing *Trash or Treasure!* Now, let's see what God's Word tells us about our treasures."

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Who likes treasure? [Wait for responses.] Yes! Most of us do! Treasure can be money or something else you love; treasure can be your favorite game, a blanket, or even a toy too! Before today, you may not

have even known that you have treasures, but you do—everyone does! Well, Jesus has some upside-down teachings about where our treasure should be. Let's read it!" Read Matthew 6:19-20 (ICB).



"TREASURES" IN THIS PASSAGE CAN MEAN MONEY OR ANYTHING THAT IS VALUABLE TO US.

19 "Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth. Moths and rust will destroy treasures here on earth. And thieves can break into your house and steal the things you have. 20 So store your treasure in heaven. The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure. 21 Your heart will be where your treasure is.

Say, "Wait a second. Did that sound upside-down to anyone else? Jesus says we shouldn't collect and store treasures here on earth."

Ask, "Where did Jesus say we should store our treasure? Jesus says we need to store our treasures in heaven. Let's talk about what that means. Have you ever had a special toy or game get ruined? [Wait for responses.] Yeah, me too! Jesus knows terrible things can happen to our earthly treasures, so He wants us to have our most special treasures in heaven. Can someone guess who the MOST special treasure is? [Wait for responses.] Right! Our most special treasure is Jesus, and we will never lose Him!"



CLARIFY THAT HAVING EARTHLY TREASURES ARE NOT BAD AS LONG AS GOD IS OUR NUMBER ONE TREASURE.

TRANSITION: Say, "Aren't you grateful **Jesus teaches us God's way**? His way is so much better than our ways!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Discuss the story: Say, "Let's answer some questions about our story."

1. Jesus taught us a better way. Whose way does Jesus teach us to follow?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God's way.**

2. Why did we say this teaching (on storing treasures in heaven) is "upside-down"?

Response: We usually think that we should get as much treasure (toys, money, things, etc.) as we can to live happy lives, but that is not what Jesus teaches. Jesus teaches our treasures should be in heaven, and those treasures last forever.

3. What can happen to the "treasures" we store on earth? Where is the only safe place to store our treasures?

Response: Our earthly treasures will eventually be ruined, destroyed, or stolen, so we should store our treasures in heaven.

4. Who is our most special treasure in heaven?

Response: Jesus!

5. Why do you think Jesus taught upside-down, strange truths?

Response: Jesus wanted to teach us God's ways.

6. What do we learn about Jesus in this teaching?

Response: **Jesus teaches us God's way**, Jesus teaches upside-down lessons, Jesus wants our most important treasures to be in heaven, Jesus wants us to seek Him first, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Jesus teaches us God's way, doesn't He? Let's make a craft to help us remember Jesus' upside-down lesson about our treasures!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Storing Up Treasures in Heaven* Page (1 page) | Small Bug Stickers (6 per child) | Crayons |

Say, "For today's craft, we will be thinking about our favorite earthly treasures and our best treasure in heaven—Jesus! Who remembers what happens to our treasures on earth? [Wait for responses.] Right! They eventually get ruined, destroyed, or stolen!"

- Give each person a *Storing Up Treasures in Heaven* Page, six small bug stickers, and crayons.
- In the three boxes on the bottom of the page, have the kids draw three of their favorite earthly treasures.
- In the box at the top of the page, write the word "Jesus" to represent their best treasure!
- Once all the boxes are full, have the kids color the rest of their *Storing Up Treasures in Heaven* page.
- Finally, the kids will stick two bug stickers on each earthly treasure because these are the treasures that can be lost, ruined, or destroyed.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job with your treasures! Who can tell me why we put bug stickers on the earthly treasures and not the treasures in heaven? [Wait for responses.] Right! Because our treasures on earth can get destroyed, eaten, and ruined while our treasure in heaven cannot. Remember, **Jesus teaches us God's way.**"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It is time to practice our memory verse! Who thinks they know the verse? Does anyone want to say it in front of the class? Great! Just as a reminder, our verse is about how God's ways are better than our ways. Let's practice it."

"As the heavens are higher [arms up] than the earth [arms down], so are my ways [point a finger toward heaven] higher than your ways [point a finger toward yourself] and my thoughts [point a finger toward heaven] than your thoughts [point at your own head]." Isaiah 55:9 (NIV) (hold out hands like a

CHALLENGE: To increase retention, have your class partner up and share the verse back and forth.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Jesus surprised everyone with God's upside-down ways! When He taught the Sermon on the Mount,

He showed us how God wants us to live. If we make Jesus our most special treasure, we will not ever have to worry about losing what matters most to us! **Jesus teaches us God's way**, and it is always the best way!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, You're so amazing! We are so grateful that we have You as our most special treasure. Thank You! Amen."*

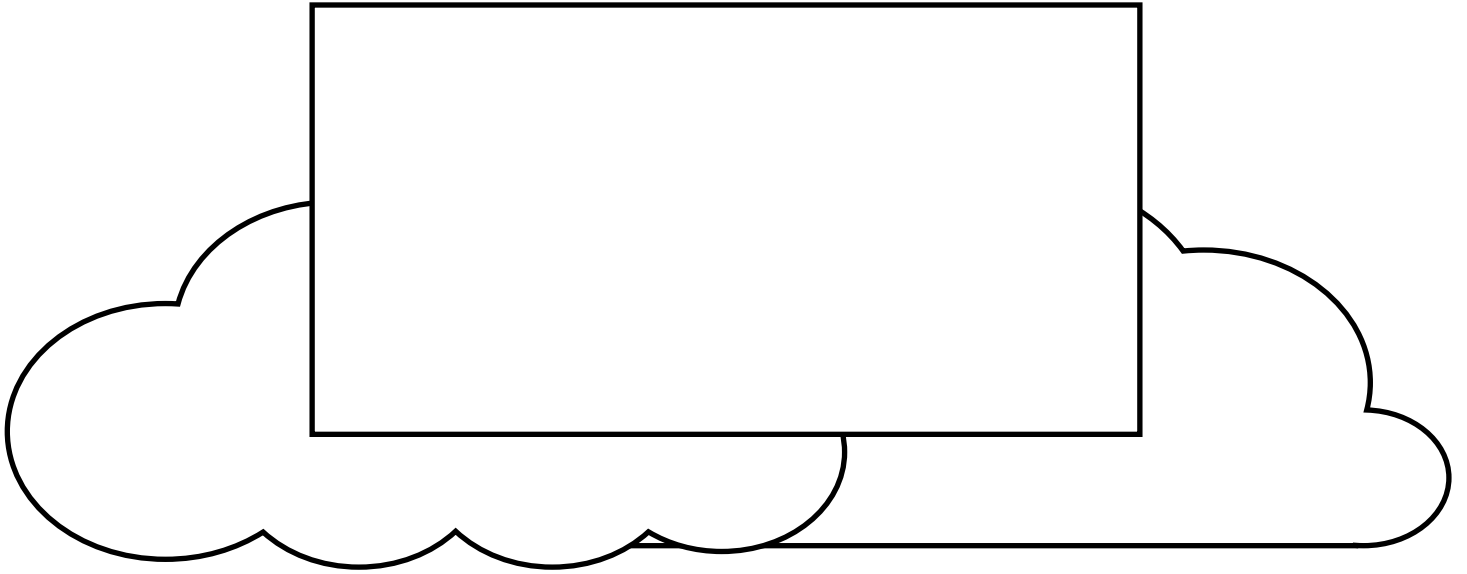
RELEASE –

If you have extra time at the end of your lesson, talk more about the story, finish crafts, or play *Trash or Treasure* with your class again.

PARENT GUIDE EXPLANATION:

1. Provides engaging questions and activities for family discipleship.
2. Reviews what the children are learning each week.

STORING TREASURES IN HEAVEN



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