



CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM





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We’ve found 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 or videos 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 can quickly become accessible to the general public.

Posting Online: We do not want the general public to have access to our products free of charge. We discourage posting our files online because they become easily accessible through Google searches. However, 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

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BREAD OF LIFE CHILDREN'S MINI CURRICULUM

Nourish your soul with *Bread of Life*. When the world feels heavy—divided and uncertain—hearts ache, minds seek peace, and souls hunger for hope. In these moments, while many search for a way forward, the bread of life reminds us of abundance. There is enough love, grace, and hope for all.

Bread of Life highlights how Jesus fed people—not just their bodies but their souls—with good news, redemption, and stories of God's kin(g)dom. From wedding feasts to eating with tax collectors to feeding thousands, people left Jesus' presence with full hearts and bellies. *Bread of Life* provides everything you need to set the table and equip all ages in your congregation and community to be nourished, both in body and spirit.

As we journey through Lent, from the wilderness to the shorelines of Galilee, we will find the sacred in the ordinary—like bread, simple yet essential. This Lent, gather your community together to break bread, savor in the divine generosity of God, and rise to share with the world out of the abundance we have received from the bread of life.

A note on our use of kin(g)dom: At Illustrated Ministry, we previously used the term *kingdom* to move away from patriarchal language and oppressive systems while emphasizing the inclusive, interconnected community of God. All the while, we struggled with our use of *kingdom* because we knew that *kingdom* carried profound political weight in the first-century Roman world. Jesus' proclamation of the *kingdom of God* was a radical declaration challenging the Roman Empire and its systems of power. Therefore, we have chosen to use *kin(g)dom* now to honor both the radical disruption Jesus brought to political and governmental systems and the vision of an interconnected, justice-filled community of God.

Bread of Life offers a variety of products designed to inspire, encourage, and nourish everyone in your community this Lenten season. This resource is designed to work seamlessly with other *Bread of Life* products, but it can also stand alone and be used independently. Feel free to adjust and adapt the material to work for you and your worshipping community.

With the ever-changing model of Sunday school, Illustrated Ministry strives to support churches no matter their size, attendance, and format. This leader's guide is two pages (one-page front and back, if printed double-sided), can be used in various ministry settings, and can be easily shared with and prepared by volunteers—even on short notice. You could use it as your traditional Sunday school curriculum, in a one-room Sunday school model with mixed ages, or in an intergenerational setting. You could also adapt the content for youth ministry and other ministry programs and settings.

Here is what is included each week:

- **Scripture:** One scripture based on the *Bread of Life* theme that the rest of the components are based on.
- **Bible Story Booklet:** A child-friendly paraphrase of the scripture, accessible for all ages, with colorable illustrations that help tell the story.
- **Bible Story Cards:** Full-color illustrations and text from the weekly Bible Story Booklet enlarged to print each panel on an 8.5x11 sheet of paper.
- **Bible Storytelling Videos:** Interactive storytelling videos using full-color illustrations from the weekly Bible Story Booklet. Available to stream or download, you can watch these videos with your kids or use them as a model for your own storytelling.
- **Questions:** Imagining and wondering open-ended questions that connect more deeply with the scripture.

Note: It's okay for leaders and participants not to have answers for each question. Some of the best relational time can be shared, working to find answers together. If you ever feel stuck in the discussion, consider saying, "I don't know, and that's okay. Let's look it up together and ask our pastor about it."

- **Look It Up:** We highlight a moment in history, an interesting fact, or a person who made an impact that connects with the theme. This activity allows participants to explore and connect with the world around them and see how scripture can be lived out.
- **Activity:** We provide a fun mix of activities that help participants think creatively about the scripture through building and design, earth care, social justice, self-care and compassion, social/emotional learning, science, technology, and art.
- **Prayer:** Use this prayer to close your time together. This short ritual creates a sense of community and preparation as participants go out into the world.
- **Invitation to Play:** A guided activity for leaders to younger children to embody the stories through curiosity and sensory play.
- **Coloring Page:** It includes an illustration of a short phrase from the selected scripture that invites reflection on the scripture. Use the coloring page and discussion questions together for an even deeper connection with the scripture and each other.

If you enjoyed this resource, consider checking out our subscription-based curriculum, **Mini Revolutions**, here:

illstrtdm.in/mini-revolutions

MEDIA KIT

We have created a media kit that includes variations of the *Bread of Life* logo, slides, social media graphics, and promotional images you can use online and in church publications. You can download the media kit at the link below:

illstrtdm.in/breadoflife-mediakit

FEEDBACK

As you use this resource, we'd love to hear what you found helpful and meaningful, as well as any suggestions for improvement. Your feedback helps us continue creating high-quality faith formation materials. You can reach us at info@illustratedministry.com or connect with us on the following social networks:

Facebook: fb.com/illustratedmin

Instagram: instagram.com/illustratedmin

Threads: threads.net/@illustratedmin

Blue Sky: illustratedmin.bsky.social

TikTok: tiktok.com/@illustratedmin

YouTube: youtube.com/illustratedmin

Pinterest: pinterest.com/illustratedmin

Our Facebook Group is a growing community. If you're looking for ideas and suggestions for using this resource, you can request to join here:
fb.com/groups/illustratedmin

We love seeing photos and hearing stories about how you're using our products. When you post online, please use the hashtag #illustratedministry or tag us @illustratedmin, so we can be part of your journey. It also allows you to join our online community. Plus, checking the hashtag on social media is a great way to see how other families and churches creatively use our resources.

Peace be with you!

—Illustrated Ministry



Read Scripture: John 6:25-40

Take a moment and read the above scripture. A paraphrase of this scripture can be found in the Bible Story Booklet and is also included in the Bible Storytelling Video, which you can find by scanning the QR code on the right or going here: illstrtdm.in/BreadOfLifeLent1



Questions

1. This story follows the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, when people found Jesus and asked him questions. What question did they ask Jesus?
2. In this story, Jesus calls himself the “bread of life.” What does this title tell you about the type of person Jesus is?
3. What special meals have you enjoyed with a large group of people where you shared bread or other food? Tell us about it!
4. Jesus gave people food to eat, but they got hungry again later. How does Jesus help people in ways that last longer than just one meal?
5. During communion, pastors often recall Jesus’ words, saying, “I am the bread of life,” while sharing the bread. Tell a story about an experience you have had with the Lord’s supper.

Look it Up

Did you know bread is a part of the diets of many cultures around the world? Look up different types of bread from around the world and see how many you’ve tried!



Activity

Materials:

- One envelope per participant (#10 size/business letter or larger)
- Printed activity sheets for Station One
- Scissors
- Writing utensils
- Selection of bread-themed cookbooks
- One or more tablets/internet-connected devices

Before the session, set up the three stations.

During Lent, people often choose a special activity to practice, such as reading a book, learning a new type of prayer, or giving something up. Having this kind of practice helps set the season of Lent apart to focus on our faith and connect with Jesus.

Invite participants to share something about their plans for Lent. Share with participants that the theme, *Bread of Life*, explores stories about bread and breaking bread together. In today's activity, participants will create practices to guide them through this season.

Before dispersing for activities, tell participants what will happen at each station.

Station One: Sharing Bread

At this station, participants will consider ways to fill bellies and hearts in their community. Using the activity pages and their envelope, have participants choose a few of the activities listed in the different bread shapes. Encourage them to choose activities that appeal most to them or that they want to do with their family. Have participants cut them out and place them in the envelope. If they have their own ideas, use the blank bread shape to create their own activity.

Station Two: Praying About Bread

At this station, participants will create a prayer to use as a table grace for Lent. Have participants generate ideas together about what should be included in this prayer, such as offering praise to Jesus, praying for the hungry, giving thanks for the food being eaten, and ideas of their own. Write these prayers on the outside of the envelope. A possible format is:

We thank you, God, for sending us Jesus, the bread of life.

We pray for _____,

and we give thanks for _____.

Amen.

Station Three: Learning About Bread

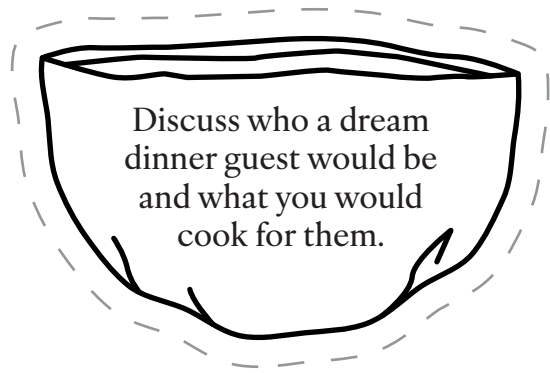
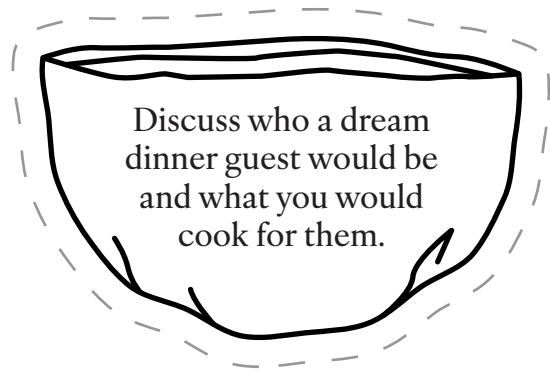
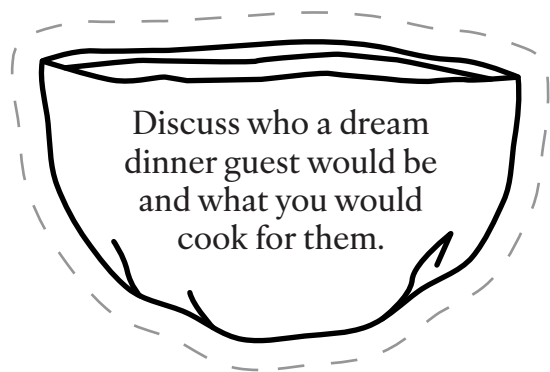
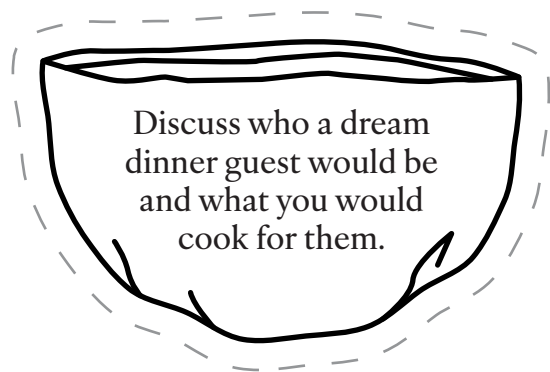
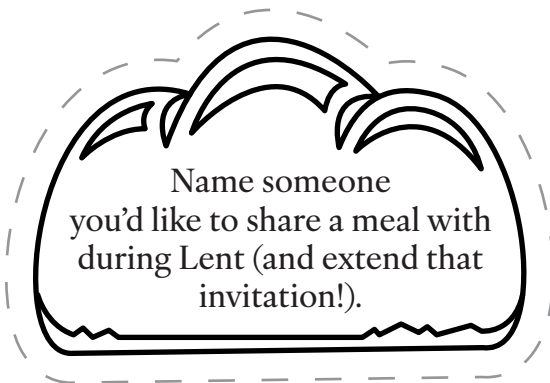
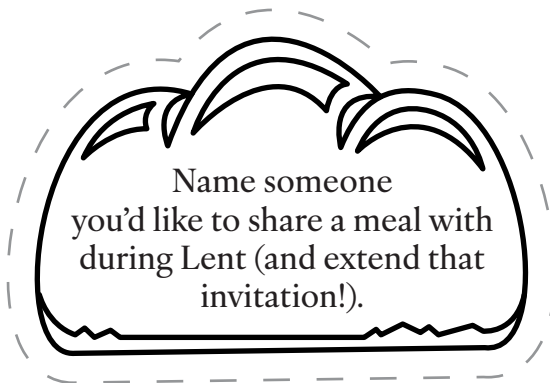
At this station, participants will explore recipes, facts, and terms related to bread. Have the bread-themed cookbooks and internet-connected devices available at this station. Invite participants to do one or more of the following activities:

- Explore the recipe books and/or recipe websites, looking for recipes for their favorite kind of bread or unfamiliar/unique types of bread.
- Look up fun facts about bread, including the history of breadmaking, cultural variations in bread, and more.
- Research some bread-related terms, such as leavening, yeast, gluten, starter, and kneading.
- Find the word for bread in different languages.

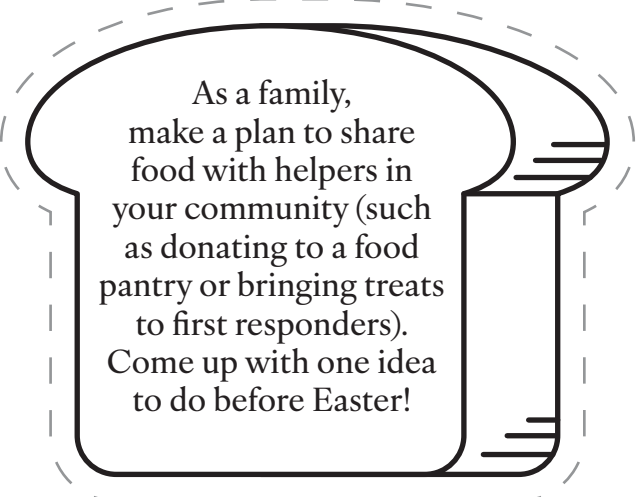


Prayer

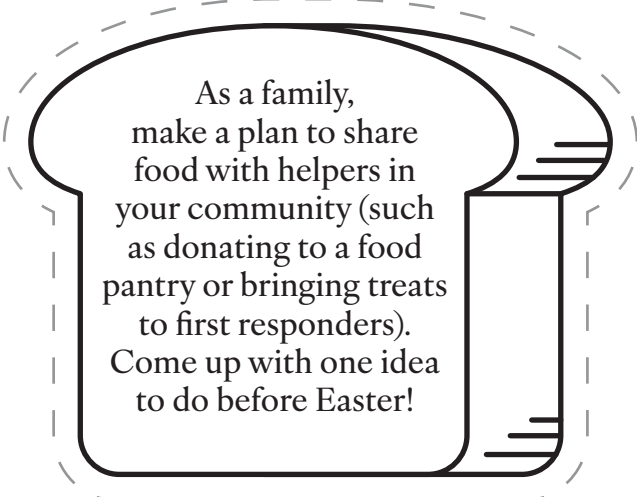
God who fills bellies and hearts, no one goes hungry when we share your abundance. You are the bread of life who nurtures and sustains the world. When our bodies grow tired or our souls become weary, may we be nourished by your life-giving love. Amen.



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As a family,
make a plan to share
food with helpers in
your community (such
as donating to a food
pantry or bringing treats
to first responders).
Come up with one idea
to do before Easter!



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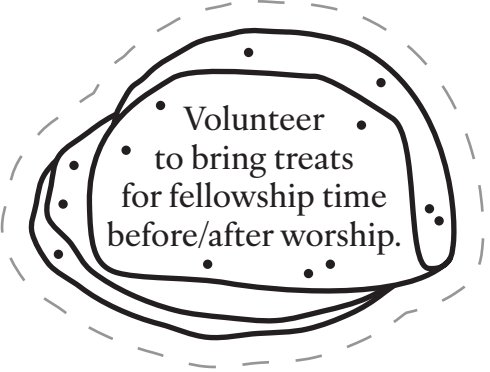
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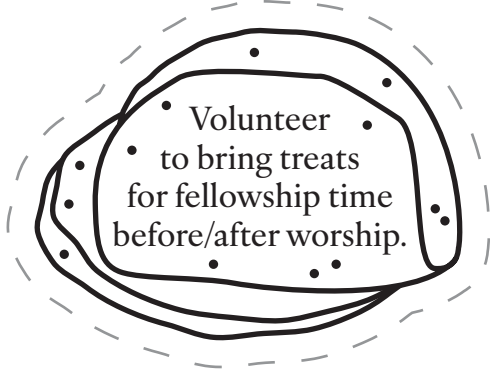
• Volunteer •
• to bring treats •
• for fellowship time •
• before/after worship. •



• Volunteer •
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• Volunteer •
• to bring treats •
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• Volunteer •
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Bring a small gift
of food to a neighbor
or church member
you don't know
very well.

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Tell the story
of a memorable meal
you've shared
with others.

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with others.

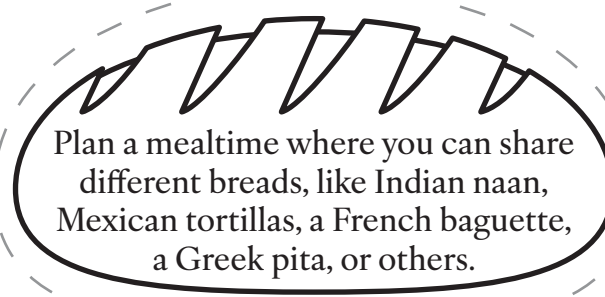
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Plan a mealtime where you can share different breads, like Indian naan, Mexican tortillas, a French baguette, a Greek pita, or others.



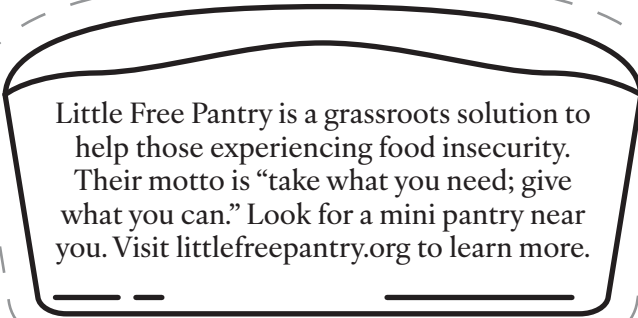
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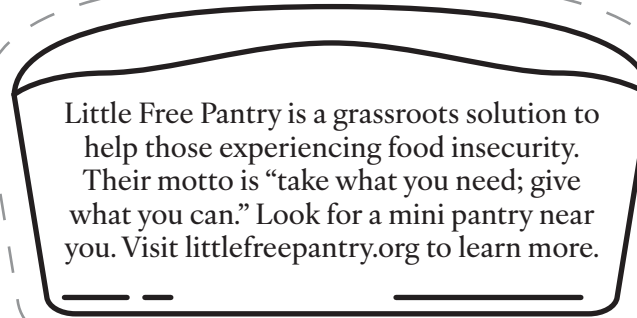
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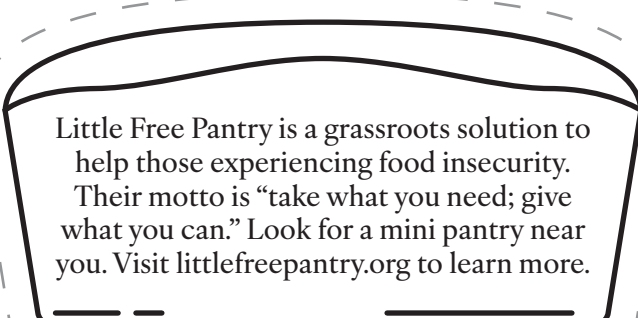
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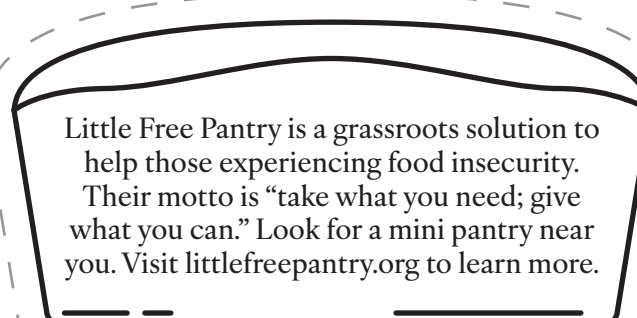
Little Free Pantry is a grassroots solution to help those experiencing food insecurity. Their motto is “take what you need; give what you can.” Look for a mini pantry near you. Visit littlefreepantry.org to learn more.



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Invitation to Play

Invitations to Play are an easy, accessible, and flexible approach to nurturing childhood spiritual growth. By arranging simple sensory and imaginative play materials in an inviting way, Invitations to Play provides space for meaning-making through minimally structured play.

Questions about Invitation to Play? Check out our FAQ page by scanning the QR code or going here: illstrtdm.in/InvitationToPlayFAQ



Set Up materials from the materials list in an area that is appropriate for the type of play. Invite participants to the experience by reading the script to introduce both the main ideas and the materials. Guide participants in ways to engage with the materials. Allow time and space for non-directed play. Then, Reflect by using the suggested prompts and questions to encourage continued engagement with the materials and ideas, especially if individual interest is waning or as a way to gather and close your time together as a group.

Materials:

- Printed or drawn images of types of bread from around the world (e.g., matzah, pita, injera, baguette, rolls, bagel, pretzel, etc.)
- Playdough (for an easy homemade recipe, try: illstrtdm.in/makeplaydough)
- Optional: laminator, brown food coloring

1. Set Up

Make/provide enough playdough for each participant to have a fist-sized ball of dough. Homemade playdough will resemble a light “bread” dough. If you’d like, dye some or all of the dough with brown food coloring to make a darker shade or a few shades of dough. Print or draw images of bread from around the world, each on its own sheet of paper. Laminate, if available. Set out one ball of dough and one image per participant on a table or other easy-to-clean surface.

2. Invite

Say, “Jesus was a teacher, carpenter, son, brother, and cousin. He was many things to many different people. Did you know he also cooked for and fed his followers? He made sure the people he spent time with were not hungry. Let’s share about times you made food for someone?” Allow time for sharing. Say, “Wow. We’ve all helped fill somebody’s tummy!” Say, “Jesus helped fill tummies and hearts. He was many things to many people. He also called himself the ‘bread of life.’” Invite, “Let’s wonder about what that means by making our own bread from playdough.”

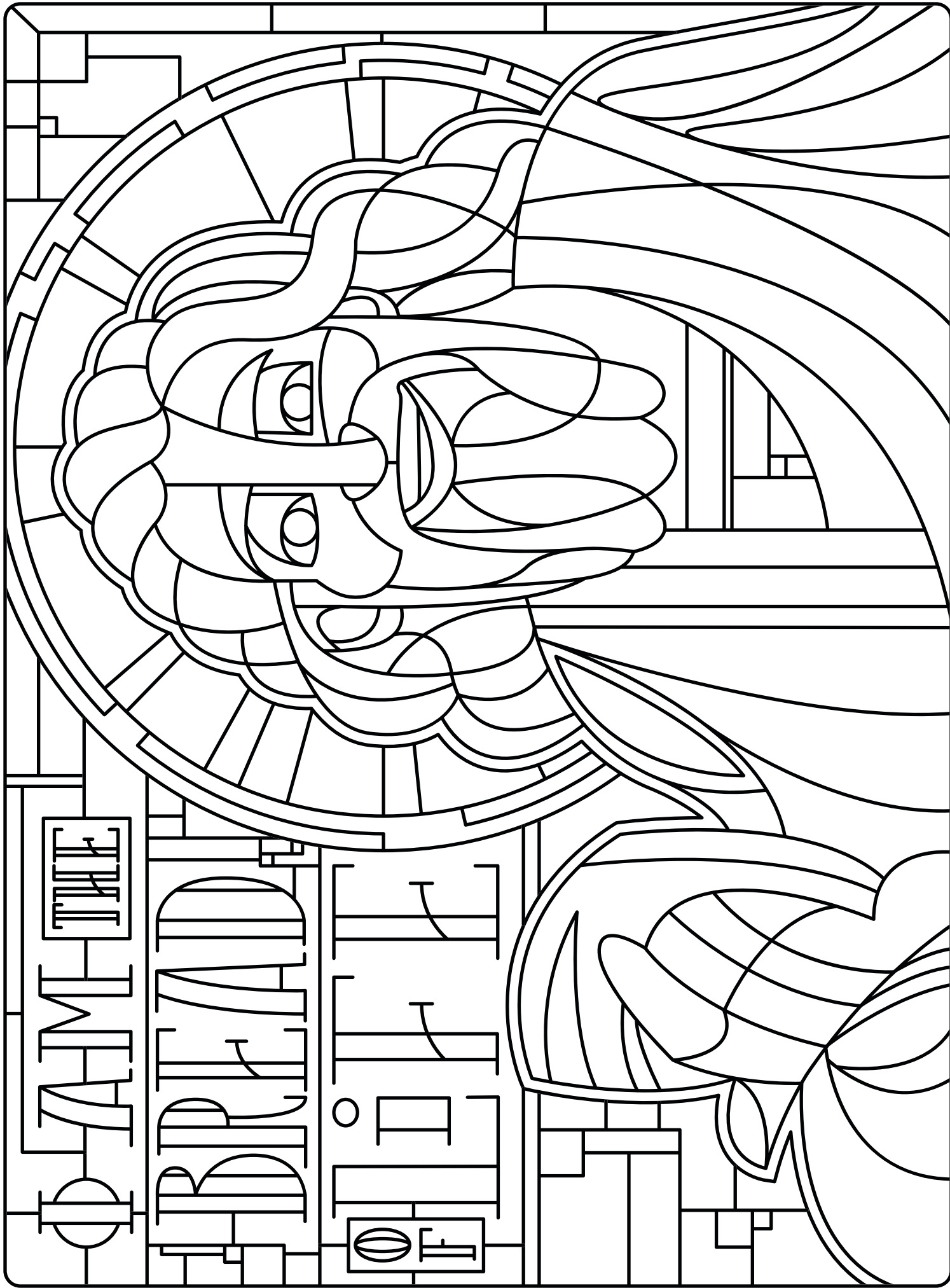
3. Guide

Say, “In front of us are images of bread from around the world. I wonder what kind of bread you can make with your playdough?” If the bread images are laminated, participants can work with their playdough on top of the images. Otherwise, encourage participants to copy the shapes of the bread from the papers on the surface in front of them. Observe, “I see you making bread that is [square, round, twisty, or name of bread].” Encourage participants to make a different type of bread by inviting them to trade images.

4. Reflect

Say, “People around the world need bread. There are so many types of bread that fill people’s bellies. We need food to live and grow. I wonder why Jesus called himself ‘the bread of life?’” If your group needs a more concrete question, ask, “I wonder how Jesus helps people live and grow?” Affirm any responses neutrally, “This could be why Jesus called himself ‘the bread of life.’”

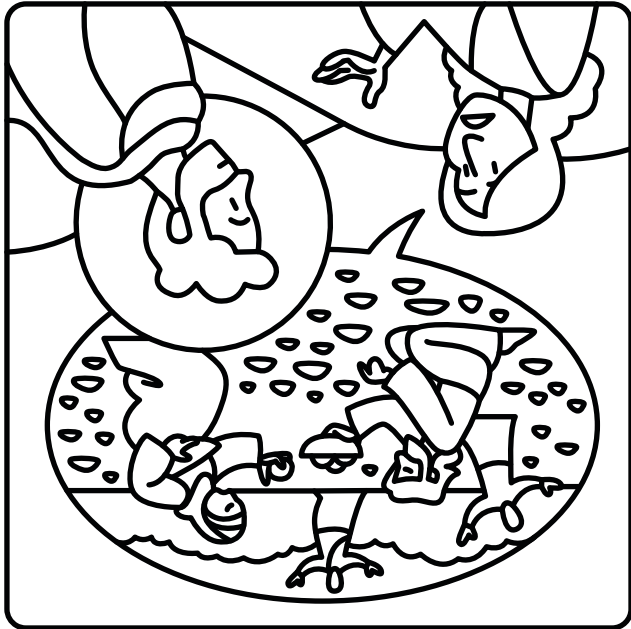
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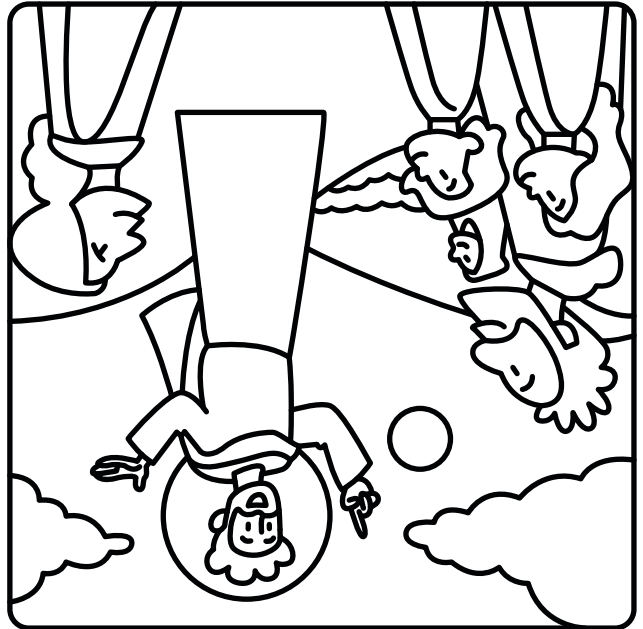
4. Jesus' heart filled with compassion. "It's me," he said. "I am the bread of life sent from heaven. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry; I will never turn anyone away. I came to nurture and nourish the world with God's never-ending, life-giving love."



3. "Tell us, where can we find God's nourishing love?" the crowd responded. "You know the stories of our ancestors; even they had manna in the wilderness. Where is our manna? Where is the life-sustaining bread that rains from heaven?"



1. One day, while teaching in Galilee, Jesus fed a crowd of thousands with five loaves of bread and two fish. The crowd ate as Jesus continued sharing the good news of God's love. By evening, everyone's bellies were as full as their hearts.



2. The following day, the crowd gathered around Jesus again. "Food and nourishment is essential for life," Jesus said. "But what good is a full-belly life with an empty heart? Food spoils and rots, but God's nourishing love never goes bad."

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John 6:25–40



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LENT TWO: BREAD FOR GROWTH



Read Scripture: Luke 13:18-21

Take a moment and read the above scripture. A paraphrase of this scripture can be found in the Bible Story Booklet and is also included in the Bible Storytelling Video, which you can find by scanning the QR code on the right or going here: illustratedministry.com/BreadOfLifeLent2



Questions

1. Jesus tells two parables, or teaching-stories, to help his listeners know more about God's kin(g)dom. What two stories did he tell?
2. There are many ingredients that can make different types of bread. All bread begins with some kind of flour (even gluten-free bread!) and water. Sometimes it contains a rising agent like yeast, but not always. There are flat breads—like tortillas, naan, and pita—that do not use a rising agent. What are your favorite kinds of bread? What ingredients are in that bread?
3. Some breads need a rising agent, like yeast, to become light and fluffy. When yeast is mixed with warm water, it “wakes up”—eatings sugars in the flour, which makes bubbles of gas in the dough. This is how the dough bubbles up and stretches out. How does love in community act like yeast in bread?
4. Share about a time when your actions have shown love for someone else.
5. How does love stretch and grow when it is shared in a community, like a classroom or a team?

Look it Up

You can buy yeast at the grocery store, but did you know that wild yeast lives freely all around us? Look up wild yeast, and discover how you can collect it to make your own bread rise!



Activity

Materials:

- Large piece of white paper
- Construction paper in tan, brown, and cream
- Scissors
- Coloring utensils
- Glue/tape
- Bread dough ingredients for your favorite bread making recipe*

In this activity, participants will explore how something small can turn into something big. To prepare for the activity, draw the outline of a large bowl with dough rising above the rim on a large piece of white paper, representing the community's shared acts of love. Cut out five hearts per participant from tan, cream, or brown construction paper. Prepare a dough-making station with the necessary ingredients.

LENT TWO: BREAD FOR GROWTH



Today's parable compares the act of a woman hiding yeast in bread dough with how God's ways work in the world. Like yeast, acts of love may seem small on their own, but they add up and grow. Like yeast added to bread dough, doing acts of love in our everyday lives often inspires others to respond with love, shaping the community where it is shared. The participants will begin by making some bread dough.

Guide participants to make the bread dough by measuring, adding, mixing, and covering the dough together, emphasizing how they are actively creating something that will grow and change. Once the dough is mixed, cover the bowl with a damp towel, and set it aside in a warm place to rise.

Then, shift the focus to the drawing of the bread bowl and the cut-out hearts. Invite participants to write ways they have shared lovingkindness with others on tan hearts, using ideas of things they said or did. Next, invite participants to write or draw ways others have shared lovingkindness with them on cream hearts. Discuss how they knew that they were loved and how they felt. Finally, challenge participants to write or draw examples of lovingkindness they have seen people share with other community members on brown hearts. Adhere the hearts on the bread bowl drawing, filling it and letting the hearts overflow over the sides of the bowl.

When you have finished, consider how all those acts of love have added up and grown, like yeast making bread rise. When the bowl of bread dough is full and spilling over, celebrate and reflect on all the lovingkindness being shared in their lives.

Then, bring everyone together to observe how the actual bread dough has grown and transformed, spilling over the edges of the bowl (if applicable). Connect this visual transformation to the paper bowl filled with hearts, showing how acts of love multiply and overflow. Conclude with a discussion about how love, like yeast, starts small but can grow into something big and transformative. Encourage participants to continue noticing and sharing acts of love in their daily lives, helping their communities rise and flourish.

**If you need a simple bread recipe, we recommend a recipe from Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day: illustratedministry.com/artisan-bread*

For the purpose of this activity, participants will make bread dough and watch it rise together. They will not see the final product. The Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day recipe, or a similar recipe, is recommended because it does not require touching the dough until baking. The leader can take the dough home, bake it, and bring the baked bread to share at your next gathering, as a gift for your Wednesday night suppers, or for Communion the following Sunday.



Prayer

God of all things big and small, love is what helps your kin(g)dom grow. Like the woman mixing yeast into bread dough, may we generously share love with one another, causing our communities to bubble up with expansive love. Amen.

Invitation to Play

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Materials:

- Printed or drawn image of a loaf of bread
- Printed or drawn image of a flatbread
- Bowls or cups
- Dish soap and water, or bubble solution
- Non-toxic tempera paint
- Straws or bubble wands, pipe cleaners (optional)
- White cardstock or watercolor paper

1. Set Up

Set up one station per participant. Protect surfaces, or set up outside. Add paint, dish soap, and water to a bowl in a 2:1:1 ratio respectively. Use only one paint color, or use a different color in each bowl for more colorful results. If participants have difficulty blowing through a straw, or may accidentally drink from it, use simple bubble wands made from pipe cleaners instead. Set out one straw/wand and several pieces of paper or cardstock per station.

2. Invite

Say, “Breads from all over the world are made from flour, water, and a little salt. With only those ingredients, you can make tasty bread, and it will be flat like a tortilla, pita, naan, crepe, matzah, etc.” Show the image of flatbread. Ask, “I wonder what the difference is between this flatbread and this fluffy loaf of bread?” Hold up the images to compare. Affirm guesses: “That could be why this bread is flat and this bread is fluffy!” Say, “Both have the same ingredients, but this fluffy one also has yeast in it. Yeast makes bubbles in the dough as it cooks, filling the bread with air pockets which make it big and fluffy.” Invite, “Let’s see if we can make bubbles like yeast can.”

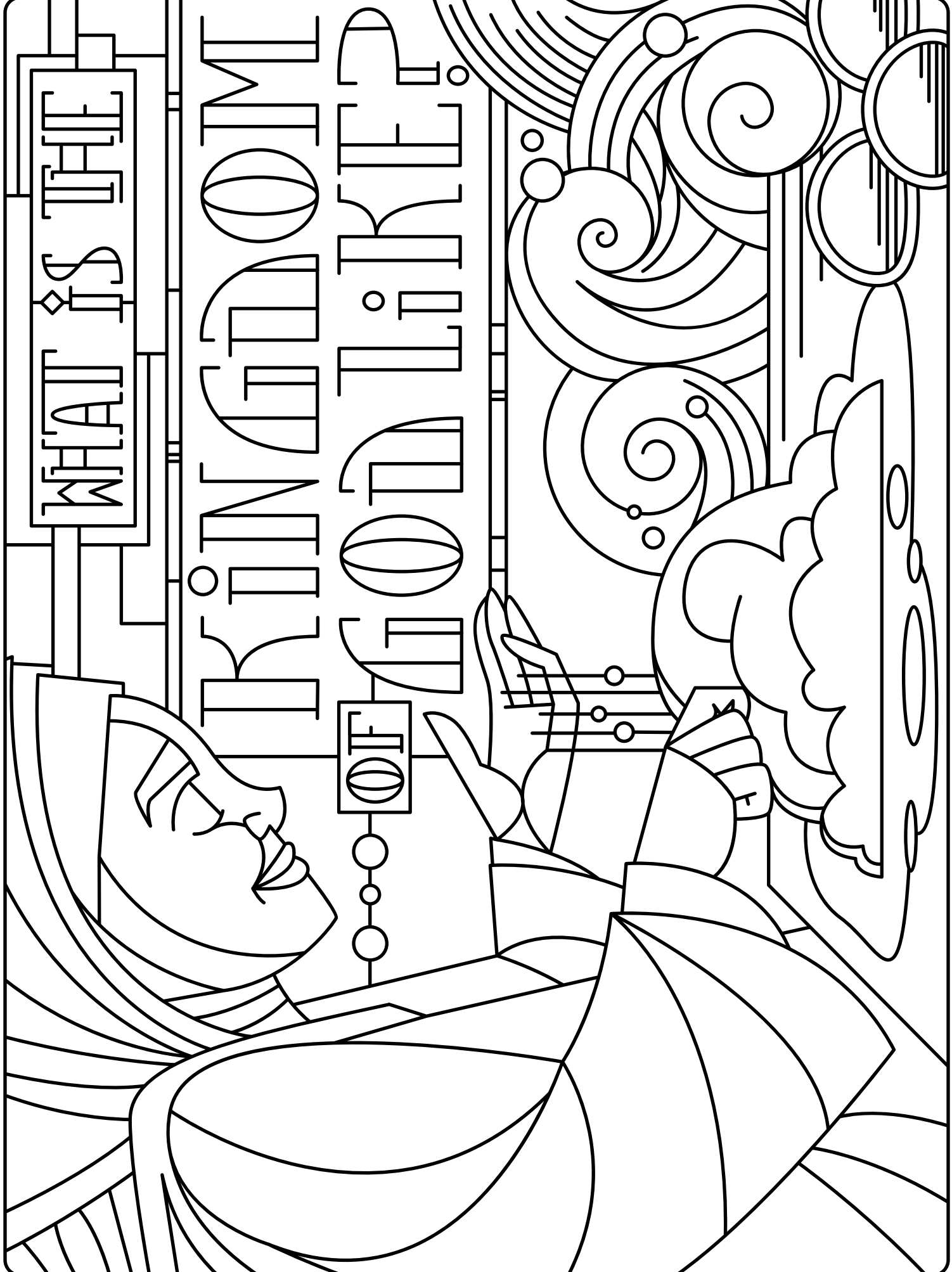
3. Guide

If using straws to blow bubbles, model inserting a straw into your bowl of bubble paint. Explain how you will be careful not to drink from the straw because it will taste bad; you will only blow out to make bubbles. Blow into the paint until bubbles start to overflow the bowl. Model how to put your piece of paper on top of the bubbles to make a print from the bubbles. Invite participants to blow bubbles and make a print. If participants want to add more colors to their print, they can switch places and repeat at another station. If you are using bubble wands instead, model dipping the wands in the bubble paint and blowing bubbles towards your paper. In either method, it is okay if bubbles are on the paper; they will pop and colors will intensify as the paper dries. Repeat as many times as desired.

4. Reflect

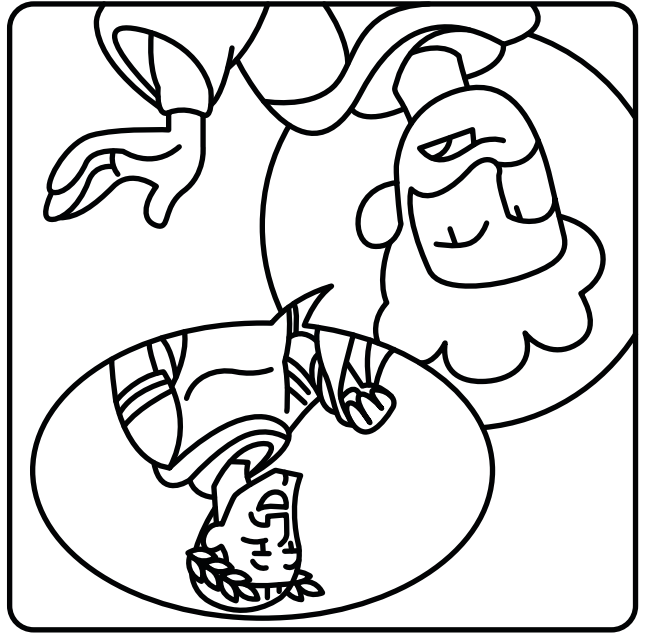
Say, “Once when Jesus’ followers asked him what God’s kin(g)dom was like, he answered that it was like putting yeast in bread dough. The bread grows and grows, just like our bubbles.” Ask, “I wonder how all those bubbles might be like God’s love?” Affirm, “That might be!”

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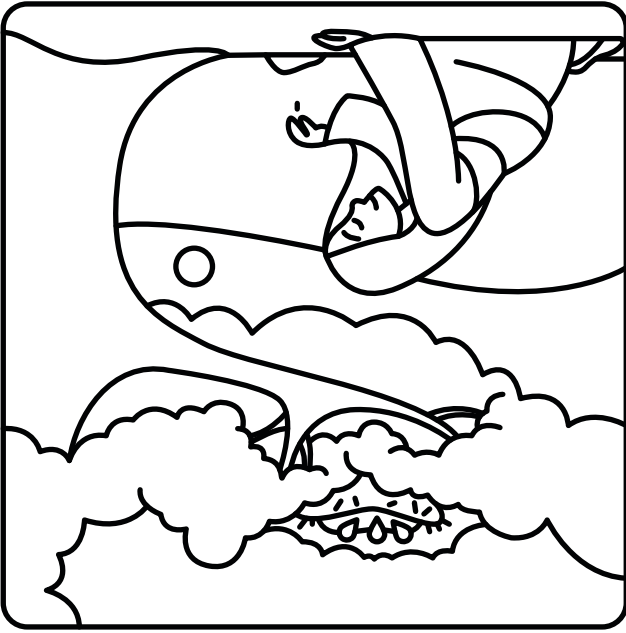


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2. "Hear me when I say the way Caesar rules over us is nothing like the way God rules. Caesar's reign is big and loud, looming over his empire with large displays of power, fear, and intimidation. God's reign is the opposite."



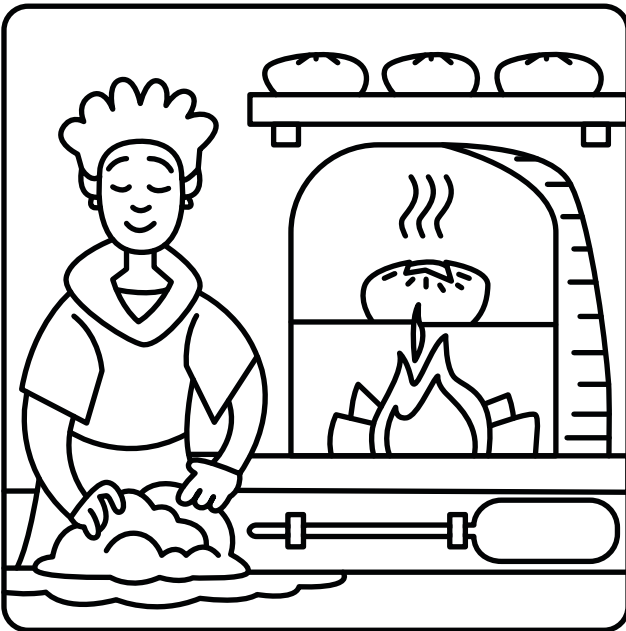
3. "The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed—the smallest of all the seeds! But what happens when you plant and care for a mustard seed? It grows into a tree with leafy branches for all to find shelter and enjoy."



Luke 13:18–21



1. As a storyteller and a teacher, Jesus knew sometimes the best way to learn something new is through a story. These teaching-stories are called parables. Jesus told this parable to explain how love causes God's kin(g)dom to grow.



4. "The kingdom of God is also like a woman adding yeast to bread dough—an important ingredient for a fluffy loaf of bread. Yeast mixed into dough makes it bubble and grow! It expands bread dough to make a fluffy, nourishing meal to share with others."

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LENT THREE: BREAD FOR EACH DAY



Read Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13

Take a moment and read the above scripture. A paraphrase of this scripture can be found in the Bible Story Booklet and is also included in the Bible Storytelling Video, which you can find by scanning the QR code on the right or going here: illstrtdm.in/BreadOfLifeLent3



Questions

1. When you hear the prayer Jesus taught, which part do you like the most? Which part is most challenging to understand?
2. What are some words or phrases (or even an entire prayer!) you use to thank God for food?
3. Think about the bread you eat. Where does it come from? Who makes it possible for bread to be on your table?
4. Jesus includes asking God to give us bread for each day in the prayer he taught. How does bread meet both physical and spiritual needs?
5. If Jesus were sharing words for people to use when they pray today, what words might he include?

Look it Up

Did you know millions of people lack adequate food? Look up the World Food Programme (WFP), and discover why it won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020. This program is one example of seeking justice by ensuring everyone has enough to eat.



Activity

Materials:

- Copies of the version of the Lord's prayer used in your setting
- Writing utensils
- One or more tablets/internet-connected devices

In today's activity, invite participants to explore prayer in two different, but equally important, ways: praying as a conversation with God using words and creativity and praying with our actions as a response to God's goodness.

In a season focused on our faith and Jesus' life and teaching, learning about how Jesus taught us to pray is a wonderful way to connect with how Jesus calls us to live in the world. Today's passage from Matthew's gospel is clear: Jesus tells us we should pray and gives us words to use when we do. The words of this prayer, the Lord's Prayer, are used by millions of people worldwide and have been spoken in hundreds of languages over thousands of years. While it was originally written in Greek,

LENT THREE: BREAD FOR EACH DAY



scholars have translated it into many different languages, sometimes choosing different words and ideas to represent various parts of the prayer.

Give the copies of the Lord's Prayer you prepared to participants, inviting one or more who are comfortable doing so to read it aloud. Invite them to share things they notice about the prayer, noticing the different sections of the prayer (praise for God, asking for our needs to be met, asking for forgiveness). You may want to repeat this a few times, especially if your group has pre-readers. Challenge the group (as a whole or in pairs or small groups) to create their own interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. Encourage creativity using words, song, drama, movement, or art, particularly in groups with younger children. Be sure to allow time to share each interpretation.

Our faith is expressed not only through prayer but also through our actions. We know everyone needs to eat every day, and we also know people struggle to have enough to eat. They may also experience feelings of loneliness because they don't have anyone to eat with. While there are no easy answers to hunger, there are ways to make small differences. Share two different websites (freerice.com/ and thehungersite.greatergood.com/) with participants, and try them out using an internet-connected device, if available. Note that participants can donate food by playing games and clicking buttons without donating monetarily. They can also visit these websites throughout the season of Lent—and beyond—to help make a small contribution toward supporting those who are hungry.



Prayer

God, our loving parent, may your reign of love and justice come to earth and rule here as it does in heaven. May we all have bread to eat each day, sharing what we have so no one is hungry. Amen.

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Materials:

- Letter-sized paper
- Writing and drawing utensils

1. Set Up

Have 1–2 pieces of paper per participant. This Invitation encourages emergent writing, so set out writing utensils with diameters, lengths, and/or grips that suit your group's skills. Remember, larger writing and drawing utensils are easier to manipulate.

2. Invite

Say, "There is a prayer that includes the words, 'Give us this day our daily bread.'" This is a prayer Jesus taught his followers to pray every day. He knew everyone needed to eat every day to have a good and healthy life. On some days and in some places, people might only eat one kind of food all day, like bread or rice. On other days or in other places, people might eat many different types of food in just one day." Ask, "If you could choose, I wonder what you would eat in one day? Let's make a list of your choices. A list of foods is sometimes called a menu."

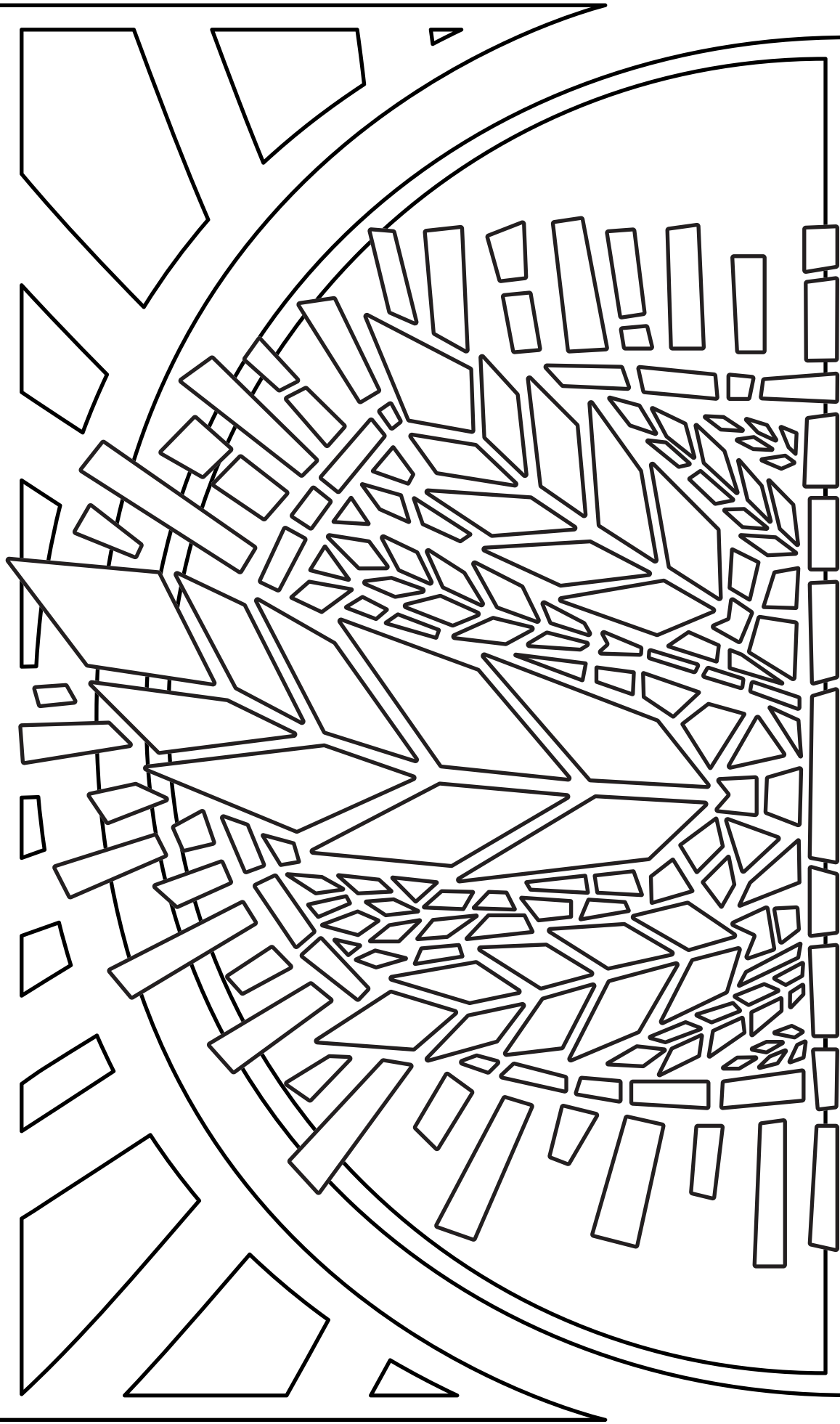
3. Guide

Model folding a piece of paper to make a booklet. Model writing "MENU" on the front. You can support emergent writers by writing in pencil for them to trace, but it is also okay if their letters/words aren't legible. Say, "Not everyone gets to eat multiple meals a day. How many meals would you like to eat each day?" Instruct participants to open their menu and number their pages until they reach their chosen number (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.). Support writing skills as above. Add more paper to booklets if needed. Say, "Now, let's fill in our menus with the food you'd like to eat in one day." Model adding to each page, narrating, "Hmm. What would I eat for my first/second/third meal?" Then, draw or list foods.

4. Reflect

Say, "I see menus full of good foods to eat. All that food would taste yummy, power our brains, and help us move our bodies. That is a lot of daily bread!" Ask, "I wonder what happens if someone does not get their daily bread?" Affirm responses neutrally: "That could happen." Say, "Jesus knew people needed their daily bread, but sometimes they don't get it and are hungry. I wonder what Jesus might want us to do about that?" Encourage, "Those are things we can do so people get their daily bread."

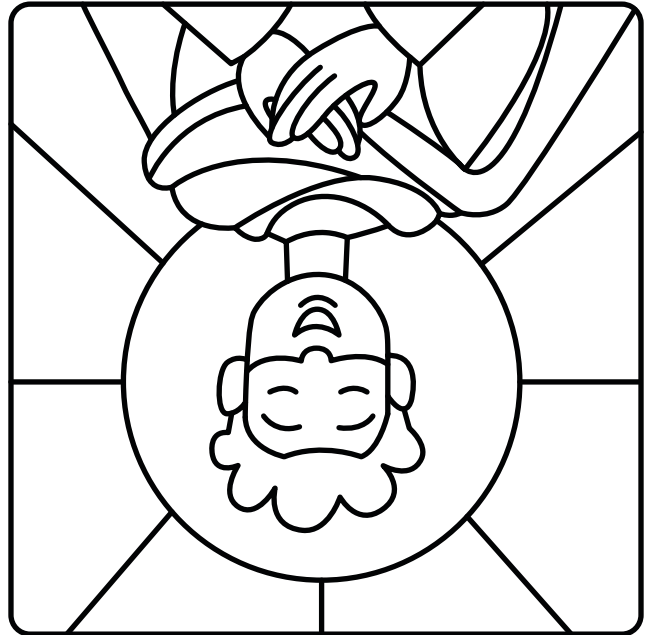
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GIVE US THIS DAY DAILY
OUR BREAD.

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2. "Prayer is talking to God. You don't need loud or fancy words; God welcomes your thoughts, listens to your feelings, and cares about your questions. But, if you want help figuring out how to start the conversation, try this prayer..."

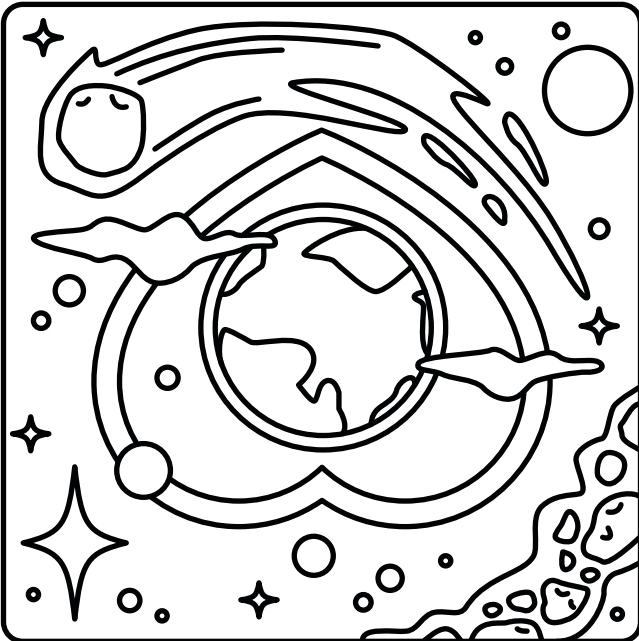


Matthew 6:9-13



1. One day, while sitting on a mountainside, Jesus taught a crowd of curious people many important things like, "Blessed are the hungry!" "You are the salt and flavor of the earth!" and "Love your enemies!" Then Jesus said, "Anyone can pray!"

3. "God, our loving parent who is in heaven, remind us who you are, for your name brings liberation and hope. May your reign of love and justice come to earth and rule here as it does in heaven."



4. "May we all have bread to eat each day, sharing what we have so all are fed. May we pursue repair, not revenge, seek forgiveness when we cause hurt, and offer forgiveness to those who hurt us. God of liberation, lead us into life."

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LENT FOUR: BREAD FOR SHARING



Read Scripture: Luke 14:7-14

Take a moment and read the above scripture. A paraphrase of this scripture can be found in the Bible Story Booklet and is also included in the Bible Storytelling Video, which you can find by scanning the QR code on the right or going here: illstrtdm.in/BreadOfLifeLent4



Questions

1. A parable uses something we know about, like parties, to help us understand God's kin(g)dom. How did people choose their seats at this party? What did Jesus' story suggest they do instead?
2. When we are humble, leaving room for others to move ahead of us, the host may ask us to move up to a better seat. How might a guest feel when invited to move to a better seat? How might the host feel showing how much the guest means to them by offering a guest such hospitality?
3. Why might people in your class, church, or neighborhood be left out of games or not be invited to parties?
4. Think about a time when you went to a new place and didn't feel like you belonged or weren't welcomed there. What made you feel that way?
5. God's table is everyone's table. How can you set your tables (at home, school, picnic tables, playing tables) to be as hospitable as Jesus' table in this parable?

Look it Up

Did you know bread is considered a utensil in France? You're supposed to eat with two hands: a fork in one hand and either a knife or bread in the other to assist food onto the fork. Look up table etiquette in other cultures. How is it similar to or different from how you eat at and prepare your family's table?



Activity

Materials:

- Colored cardstock or scrapbook paper
- Green straws (or green construction paper rolled into thin cylinders, secured with tape), or toothpicks, craft sticks, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or glue dots
- Tape
- Ribbon
- Coloring utensils

Scripture contains many stories of Jesus sharing meals with people. He often gets in trouble with the leaders of his community for inviting people who are usually excluded or overlooked. Jesus models love through invitation, presence, and service.

LENT FOUR: BREAD FOR SHARING



Lent is a good time to practice this kind of intentional hospitality with one another. It is easy to invite people we know but to follow Jesus' model is to make room for everyone around the table. Practicing this hospitality involves more than just feeding our guests; we are present with them and put them in a place of honor. When we meet each other over a meal, we have a chance to talk with one another and hear another person's story. Take a moment to brainstorm what questions you might ask to learn more about someone, including the rhythms of their life. As a group, create a list of your questions.

Today, we'll make a bouquet of conversation hearts. Give each participant two pieces of colored papers, aligned and stacked on top of each other. Draw several relatively large hearts on the top sheet. Then cut out the heart shapes, cutting through both layers at the same time. Now, you have a pair of identical hearts. For younger participants, consider preparing hearts. On one of the hearts, ask each participant to write one of their favorite questions that the group brainstormed.

Use tape to attach the straw to the back of the heart with the question written on it. Then, glue the matching heart to the back, securing the straw inside. Repeat this process for as many question hearts as the participants want to create.

Once several hearts are made, tie them together with a ribbon to create a bouquet of questions. Encourage participants to take their bouquet home and place it in a jar or vase on their table. During a family meal, they can pick a heart, read the question, and use it to spark a conversation that helps everyone learn more about each other.



Prayer

Welcoming God, you invite everyone to gather around your table. There is room and food for all! Wherever we go, help us remember to share bread and love with our friends, family, neighbors—everyone! Amen.

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Materials:

- Butcher paper, or other large paper
- Washable drawing utensils
- Two of each of the following dining supplies: non-breakable small plates, large plates, platters, bowls, cups, knives, forks, spoons, and a few serving utensils

1. Set Up

Roll out and secure butcher paper to a table, or tape down large pieces of paper to cover the table. Set out drawing utensils and dining supplies on a separate surface. Be prepared to wash the dining supplies after the Invitation. Make sure you have at least one dining item per participant.

2. Invite

Say, “One time, Jesus was at a meal, and he noticed people were taking the best seats. This wasn’t a kind thing to do. So, Jesus told them stories and gave them instructions for how to have a great meal.” Ask, “I wonder what might be the first step for a great meal?” Reply neutrally, “That could be a first step.” Say, “Jesus didn’t say what we should eat, but he did say that to be a good host, we ought to invite people who don’t usually get invited to meals. So, a good first step is to invite people.” Ask, “I wonder if the people who don’t get invited to meals have names? I wonder what their names might be?” Accept any real or pretend names, if appropriate, and write them down at seats around the covered table. Invite, “Let’s get the table ready to serve our guests.”

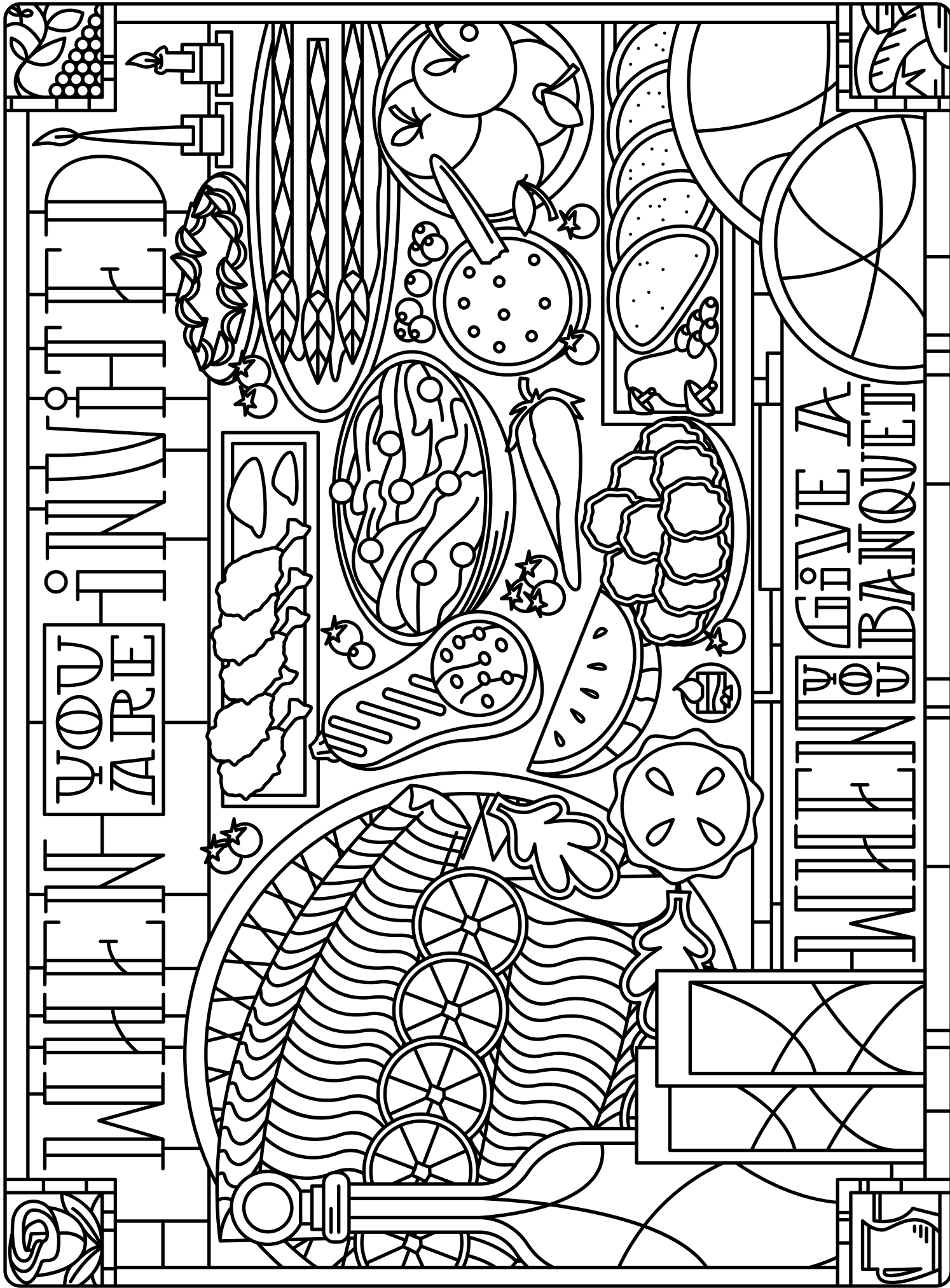
3. Guide

Prompt participants to each choose an item they will “set” the table with for each guest. For this fine motor skill invitation, model placing an object on the table and then tracing around its edges. Plates, bowls, cups, and larger utensils will be easier to trace than smaller or more oddly shaped objects. Participants can keep their chosen item or they can trade items. However, encourage them to continue tracing until every guest “has” at least a plate, a cup, and an eating utensil. Support anyone who asks for help with their tracing skills by offering, with consent, to help hold and guide their writing utensil. Prompt, “Does each guest have what they need?” Allow participants to assess and add what might be missing, including drawing food items if interest dictates. Sit down, or surround the table, when complete.

4. Reflect

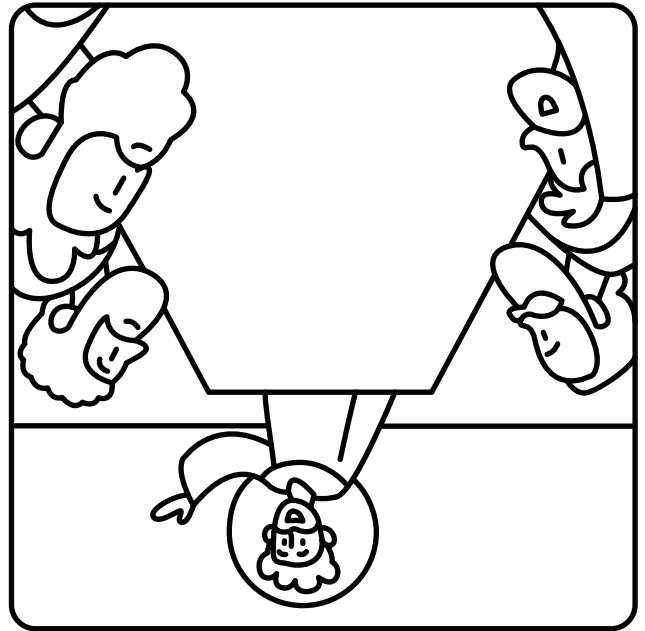
Say, “Wow. Let’s look at this table we prepared for our guests. First, we invited people who aren’t usually invited to our tables. Next, we prepared the table for our guests with time and care.” Say, “This table is pretty small. It doesn’t fit everyone. I wonder who is still missing? I wonder what we could do to make sure there is space for everyone at this table and other tables like it?” If participants make feasible suggestions, such as adding more seats or making the table bigger, ask, “I wonder if anything in this space will help us do that?” If time and resources allow, encourage and support the group to make the changes together. Observe, “Look at what we’ve created together.”

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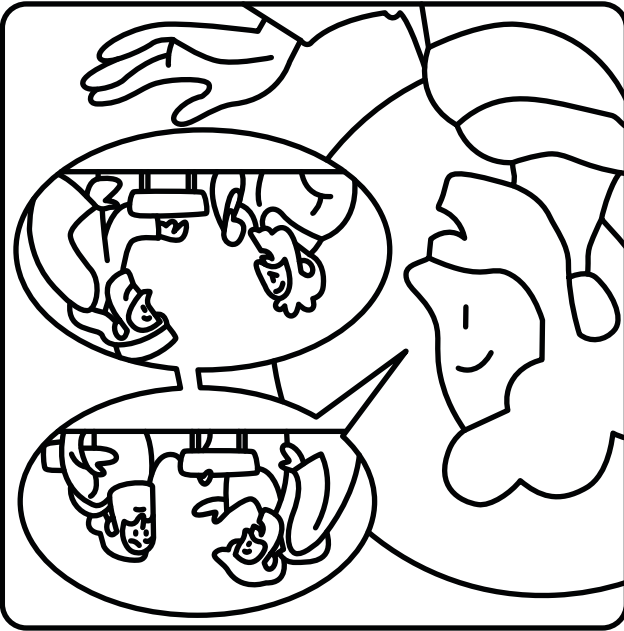
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2. "Imagine someone invited you to a wedding banquet. Where do you sit when it's time to gather around the table: a seat near the host reserved for the most important guests or a seat at the other end of the table?"



1. One day, a very important religious leader invited Jesus to a dinner party at his house. When Jesus arrived, he was surprised by how many guests chose the best seats at the table. So, Jesus shared this story.

3. "Be careful if you choose an important seat; the host might ask you to move so someone more important could sit there. Try choosing a less important seat; then it will feel more special if the host asks you to sit by them."



4. "At God's table, every seat and every guest is important. So, whenever you have a lunch or dinner party, don't just invite your friends and wealthy neighbors. Invite everyone! You might be surprised by the fun you'll have."

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Luke 14:7-14



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LENT FIVE: BREAD FOR COMMUNITY



Read Scripture: Luke 19:1-10

Take a moment and read the above scripture. A paraphrase of this scripture can be found in the Bible Story Booklet and is also included in the Bible Storytelling Video, which you can find by scanning the QR code on the right or going here: illustratedministry.com/BreadOfLifeLent5



Questions

1. Zacchaeus climbed a tall tree to see Jesus over the crowd. Have you ever been blocked from seeing something important?
2. Zacchaeus was considered an outsider in his community because of his job, but Jesus still wanted to eat with him. The Bible contains many similar stories of Jesus eating with outsiders. Why did Jesus do this?
3. Jesus reminds us to share what we have—our resources—with others. This could mean sharing your time, your skills, your money, your food, or even kind words to help someone feel loved. How do you share your resources?
4. Jesus invited himself to have a meal with Zacchaeus. This meal ended up changing the relationship Zacchaeus had with his community. That was a great meal! What elements make up a great meal for you?
5. How does our church community share resources and invite people to join? How do you invite others into your community?

Look it Up

Did you know some restaurants have family meals with their staff before opening and serving dinner? Look up what a family meal is for restaurants! Eating together before opening allows staff to connect while sharing a meal together.



Activity

Materials:

- Five types of small items (e.g., paper clips, ping-pong balls, beads, blocks, pens, pencils, ribbons). *You will need ten pieces of each type of item for a small group or twenty pieces of each type for a large group.*
- Small cups to hold items, one per participant
- Two dice

We have been learning about how Jesus uses food to unite people and to show lovingkindness to those in a community who have been pushed to the outside. Jesus often uses these moments to remind everyone that when we share our resources, we look out for each other and will still have enough for all. When we eat together and share our resources, we can break down barriers and transform lives. For today's activity, we will play a game to explore sharing and redistributing resources.

LENT FIVE: BREAD FOR COMMUNITY



In today's game, participants will have the opportunity to act out sharing and fairness with their own resources. Prepare five types of small items to serve as resources—for a large group, have twenty of each kind available, and for a smaller group, prepare ten of each. Distribute an unequal number of resources to each participant—some might receive only one, while others have many. Ask participants to place their resources in a small cup beside them.

Participants will sit in a circle. When it is their turn, each will roll one die. The number rolled determines their action.

- If a participant has fewer items than the number rolled, they may ask others for resources to reach the rolled number.
- If they have more items than the number rolled, they must give away resources to others until they are left with only the rolled number in their cup.

The game continues in turns, going around the circle until everyone has the same number of items or the group agrees that resources are as balanced as possible. Participants should be encouraged to figure out how to redistribute resources themselves without strict rules.

When the first round ends, pause and reflect with the group. Ask participants about the process.

- Was it easy or hard to share?
- How did it feel to ask for more resources?

Before starting the second round, invite participants to share what they learned from the first round. Encourage them to think about how they might help others more intentionally. For example, they could discuss offering items proactively or deciding in advance how to redistribute resources fairly as a group. As the second round progresses, encourage participants to reflect on how their actions impact the group. You might ask:

- Did you want to give away your items?
- How long did it take for everyone to have enough?
- What did it feel like when resources were not shared equally?
- How do we ensure fairness?
- How do we know when we have enough?

Now that all participants have the same number of resources, ask them how they would like to celebrate. This could include sharing a snack, having a dance party, or simply giving thanks for their shared success. If sharing a snack, continue the conversation about the joy of fairness and the abundance that comes from working together.



Prayer

God of community, through Jesus, you have shown us the life-changing power of a meal shared with others. With courage and compassion, may we notice those around us feeling lonely or left out and practice welcoming and including them. Amen.

Invitation to Play

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Materials:

- Hand soap or sanitizer
- Snack foods and beverages appropriate for your group
- Serving platter
- Plates
- Cups
- Napkins
- Utensils
- Optional: party decorations or materials to make decorations

1. Set Up

Plan the foods or beverages to serve at a “meal.” Consider food sensitivities, the group’s skill level, and the amount of time available. If you have older participants and more time, you could provide ingredients for a simple snack or meal (e.g., sandwiches, a dip, trail mix). Otherwise, provide snacks that can be poured or portioned onto plates or serving platters when participants prepare the meal. Set out plates, cups, napkins, and any utensils you need participants to distribute later. If you anticipate needing more jobs for participants, provide party decorations, or materials for making them.

2. Invite

Say, “In our special book, the Bible, there are many stories about Jesus eating with, and feeding, others. These stories were not just about eating, which Jesus knew everyone needed to do to survive. They were also about how eating together changed people. Did you know sharing a meal can do that? It is especially true when you share a meal with someone you don’t know. I wonder how people might feel before a meal with someone new?” Affirm responses, “That could be how someone feels.” Invite, “Now, we are going to share a meal. Let’s see how we feel after?”

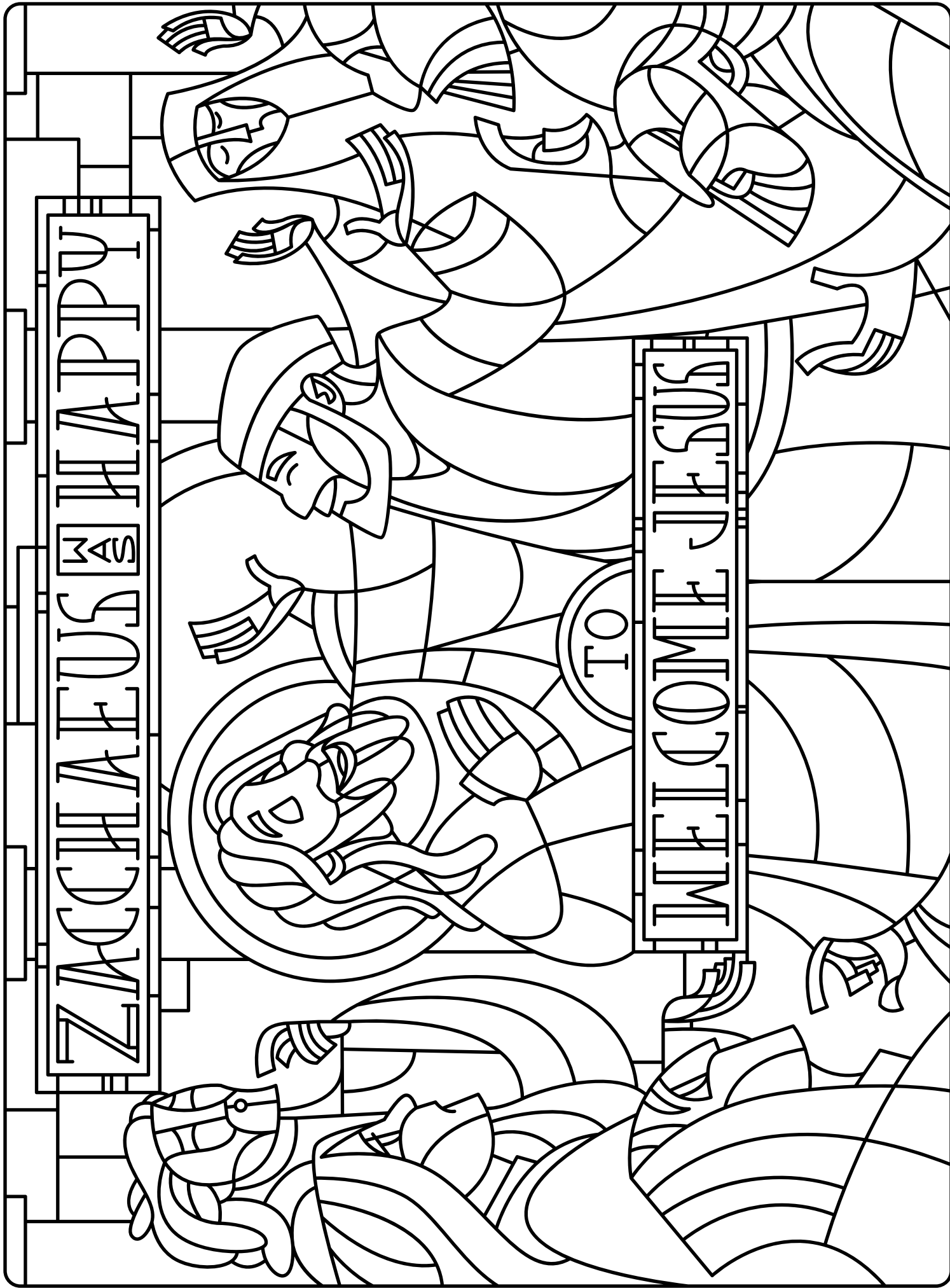
3. Guide

Ask, “What could be the first step for sharing a meal?” Affirm the suggested roles named for jobs: inviting, decorating, shopping, hand washing/sanitizing, cooking, setting the table, etc. Depending on your group’s size, skill level, and available materials, assign the suggested jobs to participants. Guide them in preparing for the meal. Observe, “It looks like everything is ready. Let’s sit down together.” Ask, “What could we do while we enjoy our meal?” Affirm responses and try suggestions together or with the person next to them.

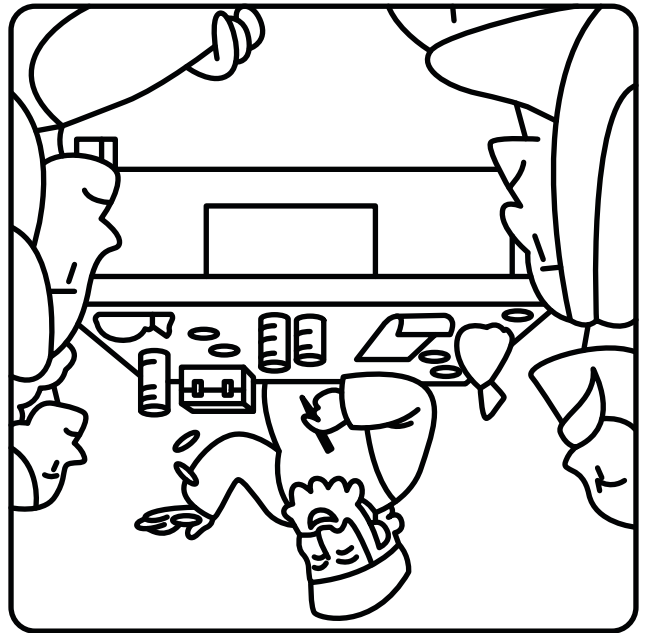
4. Reflect

After the meal is finished, ask, “I wonder if anyone feels different than before, now that we have shared a meal together?” If participants need more encouragement to share, ask more specific questions: “Did you learn a new skill? Did you meet someone new? Did you learn something new about someone? Do you feel less hungry?” Ask, “I wonder if this is how Jesus’ followers felt after a meal together?”

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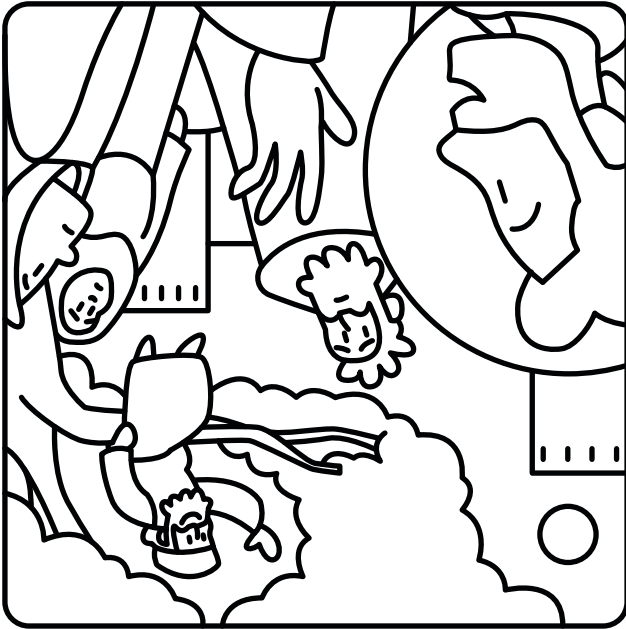
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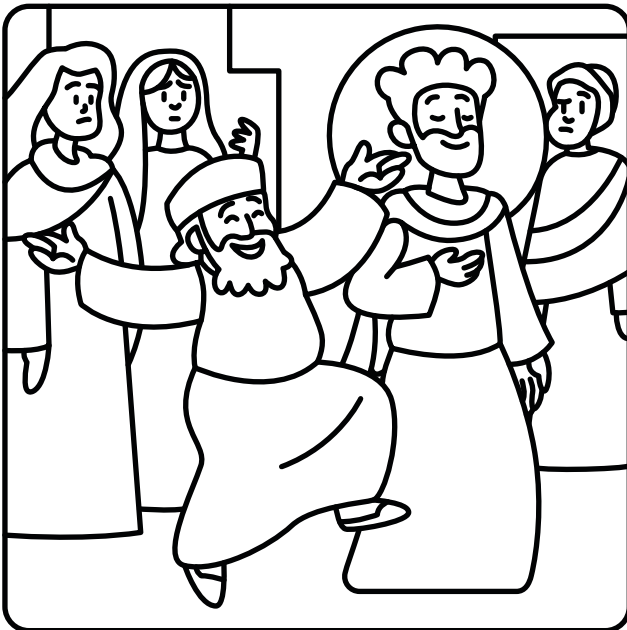
2. Tax collectors were community members in charge of collecting taxes for the Roman Empire, but they often took extra money for themselves. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Zacchaeus was rich. Zacchaeus was an outsider.



1. Jesus and the disciples were passing through Jericho on their way to Jerusalem when a large crowd gathered on the city streets to greet them. Among the crowd was a tax collector named Zacchaeus. He was very excited to see Jesus!



3. Zacchaeus was also short. He climbed a tree to see over the crowd. When Jesus saw him in the branches, he shouted, "Zacchaeus! I'm coming over for dinner!" Down the tree Zacchaeus stumbled, while the crowd complained and grumbled. "Really, Jesus? A tax collector?"



4. Then, standing tall before Jesus and his community, Zacchaeus proclaimed, "Today, I give away half of everything I own! And for everyone I've cheated, I'll pay them back four times more than I originally took!" Jesus smiled. He knew Zacchaeus meant it.

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Luke 19:1-10



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HOLY WEEK: BREAD FOR THE ROAD



Read Scripture: John 12:12-16, Luke 19:28-40

Take a moment and read the above scripture. A paraphrase of this scripture can be found in the Bible Story Booklet and is also included in the Bible Storytelling Video, which you can find by scanning the QR code on the right or going here: illustratedministry.com/BreadOfLifePalmSunday



Questions

1. This is an important moment for Jesus. He knew the harsh rulers were upset with how he challenged the way they ruled over the people. What did Jesus do when he arrived in Jerusalem?
2. The people who welcomed Jesus didn't have fancy things or a lot of time, so they used what they had on hand. What ordinary things did they use to welcome Jesus?
3. The people who welcomed Jesus were hungry for peace and in need of saving from their harsh rulers. What did the people shout when Jesus arrived?
4. The people knew Jesus was special. How do you prepare for a special guest?
5. When we are hungry, we need food, like bread. Sometimes, we say we are "hungry" for peace, grace, or hope. What might help us be filled with peace, grace, or hope?

Look it Up

Did you know there were two parades when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem? Look up the Roman Triumph. This celebratory parade was for a powerful king after a victory. How is this parade like parades you have seen? How is this parade like Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem?



Activity

Materials:

- Large floor space
- Floor markers for a path at least 20 spaces long (e.g., paper squares, paper plates, painter's tape, or fabric squares)
- Writing utensils
- Activity pages
- A spinner, foam dice, or numbered cards
- Optional: decorations for key spots along the journey (e.g., palm branches, Last Supper setup, etc.)

Before gathering, use floor markers to lay out a winding path with at least 20 spaces. Label a **start** space and an **end** space. Randomly place loaf of bread cards from the activity pages, on the spaces, one card per space. Some spaces can have a card and some can remain blank/empty. Use as many or as few as you'd like.

HOLY WEEK: BREAD FOR THE ROAD



Today, we're going to play a big game together about a very special journey! Do you remember how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey while people waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna!"? They were so excited because they believed Jesus would bring them hope and save them from the harsh rule of their government. Jesus had a very long and difficult journey ahead of him, and, just like us, he needed support along the way.

Jesus told his friends he was the "bread of life," meaning he would always give them what they needed—just like bread gives us energy when we're hungry. But bread isn't the only thing we need to keep going, right? We also need love, help from our family and friends, and things like kindness, hope, and joy.

In this game, we're going to go on a journey. Along the way, we'll stop at places where we can collect loaf of bread cards representing things we need to feel strong and loved. These loaves of bread cards will have fun questions for us to answer. Are you ready to start your journey?

Randomly distribute loaf of bread cards along the game board path on blank spaces, one per space. Split participants into small groups of 2–5 participants each. Each team will move together along the life-sized path, collecting a loaf of bread card by answering questions. Invite each team to take turns rolling a die, spinning a spinner, or drawing numbered cards to determine how many spaces to move. If a team lands on a space with a loaf of bread card, pick it up, read it aloud, and have each participant answer the question. Then, they collect the card they picked up. Teams continue moving around the path, answering questions and collecting bread cards until they reach the end. Encourage participants to reflect on how the loaf of bread cards they collected (representing love, hope, kindness, etc.) can sustain them along the journey.



Prayer

God who goes with us, give us bread for the journey. The road that leads to justice is long, and the path of love can be exhausting. When we are hungry, nourish us. When we are tired, sustain us. Amen.

PEOPLE WHO SUSTAIN US

**Who makes you feel loved?
How do they show it?**

PEOPLE WHO SUSTAIN US

Who makes you feel safe?

PEOPLE WHO SUSTAIN US

**Who helps you when
you need it?**

PEOPLE WHO SUSTAIN US

**How do the people who
love you show they care?**

PEOPLE WHO SUSTAIN US

**Who has helped you recently?
What did they do, and how did
it make you feel?**

PEOPLE WHO SUSTAIN US

**Who do you ask for help or
advice when you have a
problem?**

PRACTICES THAT NOURISH US

**What is something you do
that makes you feel strong?**

PRACTICES THAT NOURISH US

**What is an activity that
gives you energy?**

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PRACTICES THAT NOURISH US

What do you do to feel calm or peaceful?

PRACTICES THAT NOURISH US

What makes you feel better when you're having a hard day?

PRACTICES THAT NOURISH US

What do you do when you need to rest or feel refreshed?

VALUES THAT GUIDE US

What is one important value, like kindness or honesty, that helps you make choices?

VALUES THAT GUIDE US

When have you done something brave or told the truth, even when it was hard?

VALUES THAT GUIDE US

What is one thing you think is very important, like love or fairness?

VALUES THAT GUIDE US

What helps you make friends or get along with others?

MOMENTS OF JOY

Tell about a time when something small made you really happy.

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MOMENTS OF JOY

What makes you feel better when you are sad?

MOMENTS OF JOY

What helps you keep going when something is hard?

MOMENTS OF JOY

Share a happy memory you had with other people.

MOMENTS OF JOY

What is a memory that makes you smile or feel strong?

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Materials:

- *Kindness*: mini marshmallow, or other soft candy
- *Acceptance*: fish, or other animal-shaped crackers
- *Joy*: colorful candy
- *Sharing*: graham cracker, or other food that can be broken and shared
- *Openness*: “O”-shaped cereal
- *Love*: mini pretzels, or other heart-shaped food
- Large bowls or containers
- Scoops, spoons, and/or small tongs; one per ingredient
- Small paper/plastic bags, cups, or bowls; one per participant

1. Set Up

If able, check with your group for any food sensitivities, and be prepared to accommodate any dietary needs. Substitute any of the above ingredients as makes sense for your group with more appropriate, familiar, or available foods. Each ingredient will be poured into its own large bowl. Have at least one serving utensil per ingredient. While scoops or large spoons are sufficient, tongs provide a fine motor opportunity and may work better with some ingredients.

2. Invite

Say, “On Palm Sunday, we remember the day Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem, welcomed by an excited crowd. The week that followed, which we call Holy Week, had a lot of ups and downs for Jesus: he taught, had his last meal with his followers and friends, the disciples, and he felt worried. By the end of that week, people were not as excited about Jesus anymore.” Ask, “Will you share about a time you’ve been on a long hike or walk? How did it start? How did it end? Were there ups and downs?” Thank participants for sharing their stories. Invite, “Today, let’s make a snack that will feed both our bellies and hearts, reminding us of what we need during the ups and downs of a long walk, a long week, or our whole life!”

3. Guide

Say, “To make our Ups and Downs Snack Mix, we need many ingredients because we need a lot of support, just like Jesus did during Holy Week. I brought some ingredients to get us started.” Pass out unopened ingredients to each participant. Help participants pour their ingredients into the large bowls. Say, “**The first ingredient is kindness.** Look, it’s soft marshmallows—because kindness is being soft or gentle with yourself or others. Would you like to jump into a bed full of marshmallows if you were having a down day? I would! I’m so silly! Reminding myself it’s okay for grownups to be silly is one way to be kind to myself.” Model adding a scoop of marshmallows to your bag, inviting participants to take their turn one, or a few, at a time, depending on your setup. Repeat for the remaining ingredients, describing each with the suggested scripts, adjusting for any changes or accommodations you have made to the ingredients:

- **Acceptance**: “Acceptance. That’s a big word. Let’s clap it out. Ac-cep-tance. It has three parts! Acceptance means welcoming and liking someone just the way they are. Oh! It’s fish crackers! Fish will welcome you

into their group, called a school, no matter what, just like God does and like we can do for others in life.”

- **Joy:** “Joy is when we are so happy, it bubbles out of us. This colorful candy is so fun and reminds me of all the joy I feel when I have a great day!”
- **Sharing:** “Sharing! Sometimes, sharing means taking turns, and sometimes, it means giving to someone. It can also mean sharing ourselves because God created us so wonderfully and differently on purpose. Then, we get to share our unique gifts to live a good life, and together, all of our unique gifts create a beautiful and good world! Let’s break these crackers apart and share pieces with one another.”
- **Openness:** “Openness. It’s cereal o’s! Hmm. This cereal is open in the center. It can remind us to have open ears, eyes, and hearts during the ups and downs of life to learn and grow—even when it’s hard.”
- **Love:** “Love is our last ingredient. Of course, for our Ups and Downs Snack Mix we need God, who is love and who always surrounds us through the love of others and ourselves. And oh look, these pretzels look like hearts, which is the shape we think of when we think of love!”

4. Reflect

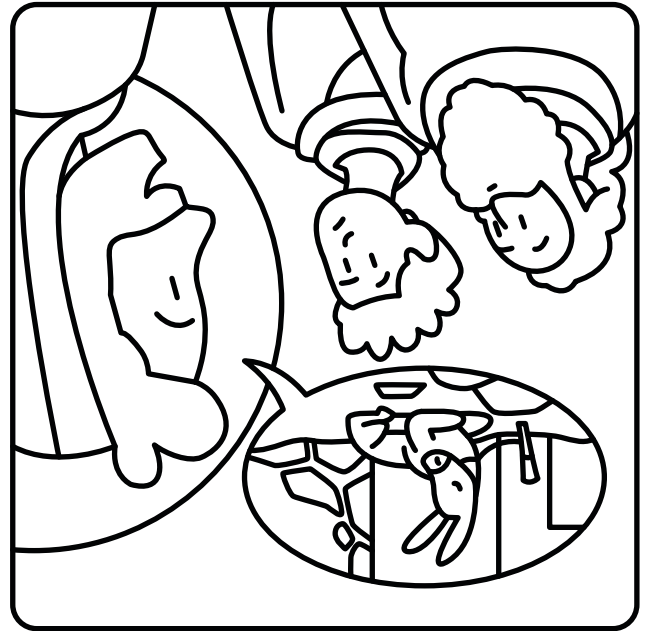
While you guide the Invitation, or in conclusion, ask any of the following questions when appropriate:

- “I wonder what that word [acceptance, joy, etc.] might mean?”
- “I wonder what other food we could have used for [acceptance, joy, etc.]?”
- “I wonder if there are any ingredients you would take away or add to this Ups and Downs Snack Mix?”
- “I wonder which ingredient you will use most during a long hike, a hard week, the school year, your whole life, etc.? I wonder which ingredient Jesus used the most during Holy Week?”

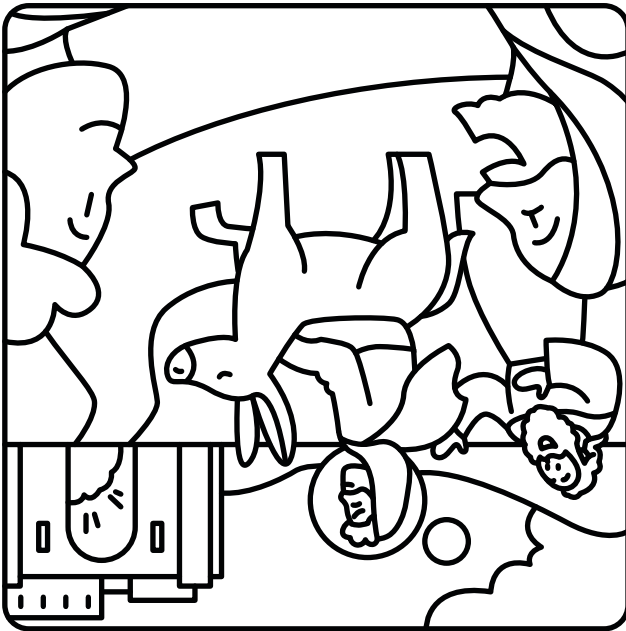


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2. Before entering the city, Jesus told two disciples to walk to a nearby village and bring back a baby donkey. "If anyone tries to stop you," Jesus said, "just tell them God needs to borrow it."



3. The disciples were confused, but they did just as Jesus said. When they returned, Jesus rode the baby donkey up to Jerusalem. As they drew closer to the city, they noticed a crowd had formed. They were celebrating Jesus' arrival!



John 12:12-16, Luke 19:28-40



1. Every year, Jesus and the disciples traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover—a huge Jewish festival filled with storytelling and delicious food. Jesus knew this year would be different, so he wanted to try something new.



4. People had laid their cloaks on the ground like a red carpet. They were dancing, singing, and waving palm branches as they joyfully shouted, "Hosanna! Save us! Blessed is this king who was sent by God!"

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EASTER: BREAD FOR FEASTING



Read Scripture: John 21:1-17

Take a moment and read the above scripture. A paraphrase of this scripture can be found in the Bible Story Booklet and is also included in the Bible Storytelling Video, which you can find by scanning the QR code on the right or going here: illustratedministry.com/BreadOfLifeEaster



Questions

1. The disciples were fishermen, and they were having a bad day. To add to it, they didn't catch any fish until Jesus surprisingly showed up and gave them a little advice. What happened next?
2. Jesus cooked a breakfast of bread and fish on the beach for the disciples. How do you imagine the disciples felt seeing their friend and eating a meal with him again?
3. Jesus knew people still needed him to be the bread of life by filling their bellies with food and their hearts with good news. Even during one of the very last times the disciples saw Jesus, he fed people's bellies and hearts. How did Jesus feed the disciples bellies and hearts in this story?
4. While everyone was eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter if he loved him. Then, he instructed Simon Peter to feed his sheep—three times! Just like Simon Peter, we too are called to feed God's sheep. In what ways have you noticed how your church feeds people's bellies and hearts?
5. How do you help feed people?

Look it Up

Have you ever had a traditional breakfast from India, Mexico, England, Morocco, Germany, or Switzerland? Look up breakfasts around the world. How are they the same or different from your usual breakfast? What breakfast would you like to try?



Activity

Materials:

- Dark blue/dark purple construction paper
- Salt, 1 cup
- Large bowl
- Flour, 1 cup
- Small bowls or cups, a few
- Hot water, 1 cup
- Measuring cups for dry ingredients
- Black marker
- Measuring cup for liquid
- Optional: food coloring, multiple colors

Today, we celebrate that Jesus, the bread of life, is risen!

Bread is made from flour, salt, and water. We will use those same ingredients to make bread paint. Then, we'll paint a picture to share the joy of Easter with someone else. We can remember Jesus calls us to feed his sheep—his people—both with bread and tender care, as we share his love.

EASTER: BREAD FOR FEASTING



To make the paint, mix 1 cup of hot water and 1 cup of salt in a large bowl. Then, stir in 1 cup of flour, and mix well. Divide the mixture into small cups, and add food coloring to make more colors if you'd like to paint more colorful pictures. Participant involvement in making the bread paint is encouraged.

Give each participant a piece of construction paper. Invite them to dip their finger in the paint once it is cool, and then, make a fingerprint in the middle of the construction paper. Repeat, adding fingerprints to form the shape of a loaf of bread, a table filled with bread, or a basket filled with bread to represent the abundance Jesus offers. You might also let participants create other bread-related images, like rolls, baskets of bread, fish and loaves (connecting to today's story of the breakfast on the beach), or whatever reminds them of the bread of life. Once the paint is dry, use a black marker to add simple details (e.g., outline the loaf or table of bread, draw steam rising from a warm loaf, or create a message of joy and hope). Encourage participants to think about someone who might need extra care and encouragement—a neighbor, friend, or church member—and make a plan to give them your artwork. Then, below the painting, have participants write an Easter message to someone they want to encourage or share love with. Ideas include:

- Jesus is Risen! May his love nourish you today.
- The bread of life brings hope and joy! Happy Easter!
- You are loved, today and always!

Note: If you want to celebrate with a feast of bread, check out the directions for Invitation to Play and modify the activity for your group.



Prayer

God, you are alive! Like the sun rising into day or a loaf of bread rising as it bakes, you rise to greet us each morning with love. Let's celebrate with a never-ending feast, inviting everyone to experience your never-ending love! Amen.

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Materials:

- Plates
- 3–5 types of breads, flatbreads, or crackers (including allergen-friendly options, if needed)
- Cutting board and knife

1. Set Up

Choose several types of familiar and unfamiliar breads, ensuring options for anyone who needs dietary accommodations due to gluten, dairy, or other allergies or sensitivities. Cut or tear large pieces of bread into bite-sized pieces, one per participant. Make individual tasting plates with one piece of each type of bread or cracker. Pass out one plate per participant at a table or in a circle on the floor. Alternatively, set the table/circle with the plates, and invite participants to find a spot at a plate when it is time. Reserve a plate of bread for yourself to use during the Invitation and an additional plate of bread to use during the Reflection.

2. Invite

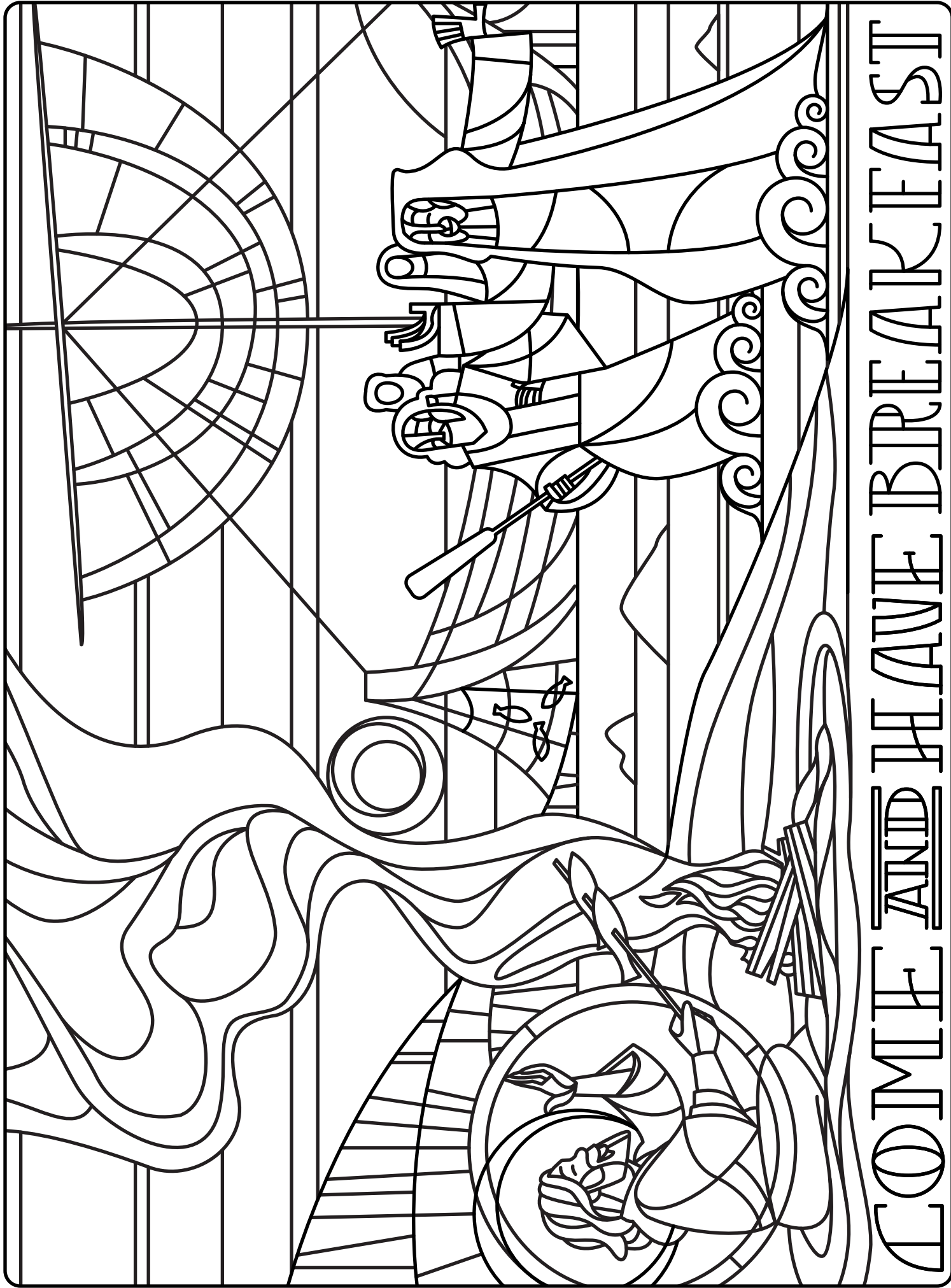
Say, “Jesus and his work to feed people’s bellies and hearts did not end when Jesus died. On Easter, we celebrate that nothing stopped Jesus from caring for people, not even death. After Easter, when Jesus appeared to his followers and friends, he continued to feed them. He fed them words of encouragement to continue his work, and he fed them fish and bread.” Invite participants to the table or floor. Say, “On this day of celebration, let’s share a feast to remind us how Jesus was, is, and will always be the bread of life filling our bellies and hearts.”

3. Guide

Say, “Jesus feeds us in different ways; we are all different and need different things to live the good life God wants for everyone. As we gather around this feast, we will taste different types of bread and find out which bread we like best. First, let’s enjoy the bread with our eyes. Which piece looks like a good place to begin your tasting?” Say, “Now, let’s enjoy the bread with our senses of touch and smell.” Model picking up any piece of bread and sharing observations, “This piece is round/square/soft/hard/etc.” Invite participants to choose a piece and share their observations. Then, model holding the bread near your nose and inhaling. Share any of your observations, “This smells sweet/sour/spicy/etc.,” and invite participants to share theirs. Say, “Finally, now we can enjoy the taste of the bread, but let’s slow down to savor it.” Instruct the group to put the bread in their mouth, but don’t chew right away. Say, “Let the bread sit in your mouth for a bit. Then, chew slowly.” Say, “Tell me about how your bread tastes.” Repeat for the remaining pieces of bread.

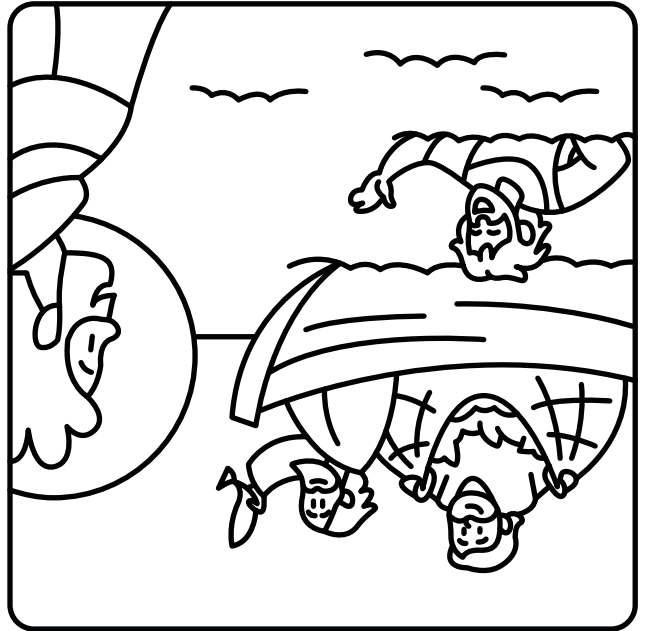
4. Reflect

Ask, “I wonder which piece of bread was your favorite today? Can you describe it?” Now that the participant plates are empty, they will need to try to use their words to describe the bread. Using the plate you reserved, you can point to pieces as they describe, “This one is round/crunchy/etc. Is this the one?” Pre-verbal/non-verbal participants can point out which piece they liked best. Say, “We all had a different bread that we liked best, and for different reasons, but we all enjoyed bread today.” Ask, “I wonder how it felt to enjoy a piece of bread that seems like it’s made just for you and is exactly what you need?” Ask, “I wonder how Jesus is, was, and will always be like the bread we ate today?”

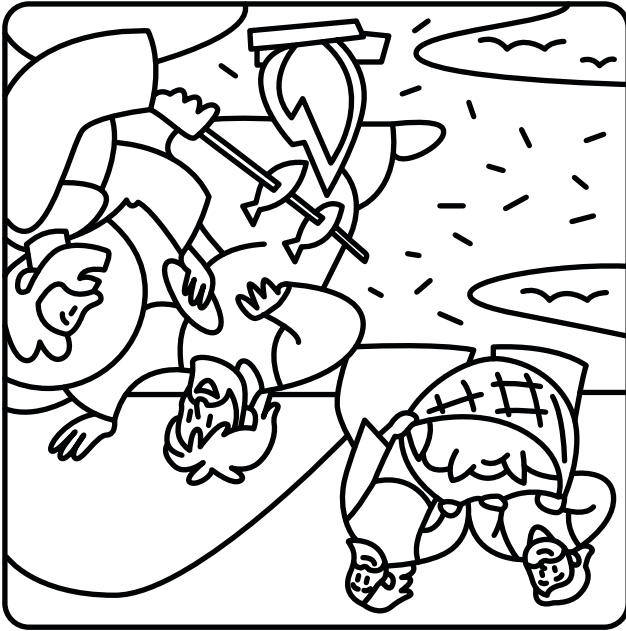


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2. This mysterious figure yelled, "Try casting your net to the other side of the boat! You'll find a lot more fish." The disciples were tired, hungry, and curious, so they tried it. Sure enough, their entire net filled up with fish!



3. At that moment, everyone knew who was standing on the beach—it was Jesus! The disciples raced to shore, dragging their net full of fish. Waiting there to greet them was a feast of fish and bread, a warm fire, and their friend, Jesus.



John 21:1-17



1. Early one morning, after the resurrection, a few of Jesus' disciples went out fishing. By sunrise, they had caught zero fish. Feeling discouraged, the disciples began gathering their net to return ashore. Suddenly, they heard someone shouting from the beach.



4. After eating breakfast on the beach, Jesus leaned over to Simon Peter and asked, "Dear friend, do you love me?" "You know I do, Jesus!" he responded. "I need your help," Jesus said. "Feed my sheep. Fill their hearts and bellies full."

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CONTRIBUTORS

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writing

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layout

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writing

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editing

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writing

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writing

bible story videos

content manager

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illustration

illustrator &

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concept

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REBEKAH LOWE develops and cultivates Illustrated Ministry's ever-growing library of resources. She earned a BA in Biblical Studies from Azusa Pacific University and served as the Director of Children's Ministry at Brentwood Presbyterian Church (USA) in Los Angeles, California. She resides in Austin, Texas with her husband and their two children.

layout

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ADAM WALKER CLEVELAND is an artist, pastor, pastor's spouse, and father of four (two living). Adam is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), and after doing youth ministry for over 15 years, he founded Illustrated Ministry in 2015. He resides in Racine, Wisconsin with his wife and their two children.