

The Circle Maker

C h i l d r e n ' s C u r r i c u l u m

Preschool

ZONDERVAN

The Circle Maker Children's Curriculum

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Week 1:

Becoming A Circle Maker

Objective: To teach each child that God wants us to pray

Bible Story: Joshua and the Wall of Jericho (Joshua 6:1 – 16)

Memory Verse: “Tell God about everything. Ask and pray.” (Philippians 4:6b, NIrV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ NIrV Bible
- ☐ Family Table Talk (one per child)
- ☐ Family Prayer Calendar (one per child)

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** Pray Continually coloring sheet (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Cardboard toilet paper tube (one per child), Trumpet template, glue sticks, washable markers and/or crayons, one complete sample Circle Maker Trumpet
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Plain white paper plate (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons, Memory Verse label template, glue sticks, stickers, stick-on gems, and a completed sample Prayer Plate
- ☐ **Explore More 2:** Cardboard boxes or blocks, empty toilet paper rolls or paper towel rolls for horns (one per child)
- ☐ **Explore More 3:** Cardboard boxes or blocks

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: Pray Continually Coloring Sheet

Supplies: Pray Continually coloring sheet (one per child), markers or crayons

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Pray Continually coloring sheet (one per child).

Give each child a Circle Maker coloring sheet. Make available washable markers and crayons for groups of children to share. Help the children write their names, as needed, on their coloring sheets. As the children color,

SAY, "Today we are going to learn that God loves it when we talk to Him. Another name for talking to God is called prayer. Isn't it great that God wants us to talk to Him? And we can talk to God anytime, anywhere, and in all different ways. God loves it when we pray."

ASK, "Have you ever prayed before? What are some different ways we can pray?" (*With our eyes open, with our eyes shut, standing up, sitting down, etc.*)

Option 2: Circle Maker Trumpets

Supplies: Cardboard toilet paper tube (one per child), Trumpet template, glue sticks, washable markers or crayons, one complete sample Circle Maker Trumpet

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Trumpet template onto yellow or gold card stock (enough for two per child); cut out the trumpets and fold a vertical crease in each to help create the rounded trumpet shape when glued to the toilet paper roll; assemble one complete sample Circle Maker trumpet.

Give each child one toilet paper roll and two pre-cut trumpet shapes. Make available washable markers and/or crayons for groups of children to share. Help the children write their names (as needed) on the trumpet shapes and decorate their trumpets. Glue the trumpet shapes around the paper tube. As the children decorate their trumpets,

SAY, "Today we are going to learn that God loves it when we talk to Him. Another name for talking to God is called prayer. Isn't it great that God wants us to talk to

Him? We'll learn how Joshua talked to God, and then saw God do amazing things. God loves it when we pray."

Note: You may want to allow the trumpets to dry while you are teaching the Bible story, and then pass out the completed trumpets at the end of your class time.

Option 3: Square, Square, Square, Circle Game

Invite children to play a game similar to the classic childhood game Duck, Duck, Goose.

Direct the children to sit in a circle on the floor. Select one child to be "it." "It" walks around the outside of the circle, patting each child on the head and saying "square." After a period of time, "it" touches someone's head and says "circle!" The tagged child gets up and chases "it" around the circle. "It" tries to get back around to the empty seat and sit down before being tagged. If successful, "it" joins the seated children and the new "it" starts the game again. If the first "it" is tagged, he or she sits in the center of the circle as the game goes on. As more people get tagged, the circle gets tighter and the chase gets tighter! The last person standing is the winner.

SAY, "Way to go! Today we're going to learn how God picks all of us to be Circle Makers. A Circle Maker is someone who prays or talks to God. We can all be Circle Makers. God loves it when we pray to Him."

Note: Make sure the room is safe for running children. You may keep the mood light by asking the children to walk in slow motion, hop, stomp their feet, etc.

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: Pretend trumpet, round hat box, cell phone, whiteboard, dry-erase markers

Ahead of Time: Prepare a round hat box with a cell phone inside.

(CUE: As the *Getting Started* time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.)



Storyteller: Good morning! It's great to see you! I'm so glad you are here. Welcome to Circle Maker! For the next four weeks we're going to learn how to be Circle Makers. Can you say that with me, "Circle Maker?" (*Children respond.*) When I say the words "Circle Maker," I want you to make a big circle in front of you like this. (*Make a big circle with your arms in front of your body.*) Now be careful not to bump your neighbor, okay, Circle Makers! (*Make circle.*) Great job!

So what is a Circle Maker? (*Make circle.*) I'm so glad you asked! I have a clue right here in my Circle Maker box (*round hat box with cell phone in it*) to help us.

Does anyone want to guess what's in my Circle Maker box? (*Shake box, etc.*)

Do you think it's an elephant? (*Allow children to respond, make guesses, teacher peeks under lid, etc.*) Should I give you a clue? Okay, it's a way we can talk to someone. (*Allow children to make guesses.*) That's right, it's my cell phone!

When I want to talk to someone I love — like my children or my husband/wife — I can get in touch with them anytime day or night. And my family loves it when I talk to them.

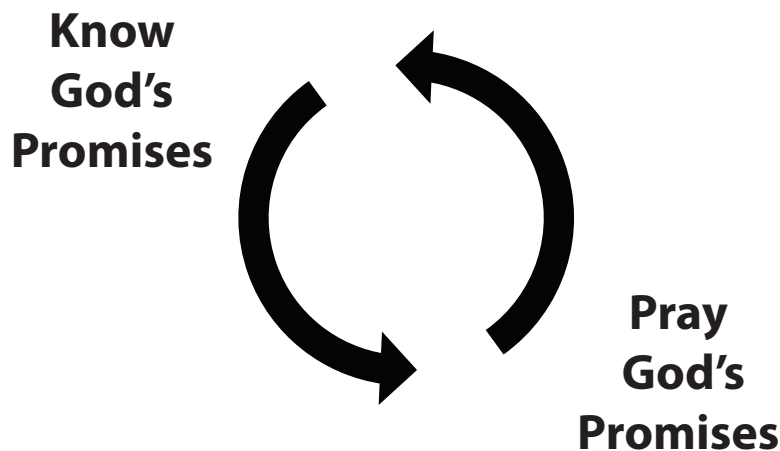
Today we're going to learn about prayer. Prayer is how we talk with God. We don't need a cell phone to talk to God, do we? No way! We can talk to Him anytime and anywhere as we pray to Him. God loves it when we talk to Him.

Did you know there are all kinds of ways we can pray? (*Children respond.*) Let's stand up and practice together. We can (*leader demonstrate while children follow again*) pray standing up, sitting down, with our eyes open, with our eyes closed, kneeling, face down, hands outstretched, hands folded; we can write our prayers, cry our prayers, and even shout our prayers. There are lots of ways to pray, and God loves it when we talk to Him. Great work! Okay, you can sit down.

For the next four weeks we are going to learn a new way to pray — praying in circles. Now is praying in circles the only way to pray? (*Children respond, "No!"*) Of course not! Prayer is just talking to God and we can talk to Him any way and anywhere and anytime.

When we pray in circles, it goes like this. We spend time reading the Bible so we can know God, and then we spend time talking to God, and it makes a big circle. Like this ...

(CUE: Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, SAY, "Know God's promises ... Pray God's promises!")



For example, God tells us in the Bible to be kind to each other. We know this. So let's say your sister makes you really, really mad while you are playing a game, and you just want to run and hide and not play with her. Rather than being mean, you can think about what you know from the Bible, and then pray, "God, please help me to be kind." That's being a Circle Maker!

And God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*) to join Him on an adventure in prayer! Anyone want to be a Circle Maker? (*Children respond.*) Hooray! Me too!

There's a story in the Bible where God calls some Circle Makers (*make circle*) and they watch God do something amazing! Let's take a look.

Today's Bible story involves Joshua and the wall of Jericho [jer-i-koh]. (*Say that with me ... Jericho.*) I'm going to need your help telling the story. Do you think you can help me?

The Bible tells us about a man named Joshua who loved God. Joshua was a mighty soldier. Can you stand up and march like a soldier? (*Lead children in marching.*) March, march, march! We're marching like Joshua. March, march, march. Okay, soldiers, sit down! (*Wait for children to be seated.*)

The Bible says Joshua and the people were finally going to make it to the special place that God promised he would give to them, called the Promise Land: an amazing land flowing with milk and honey, a land they've waited a long time to get to! Except there is a problem. Not only are there some mean and strong people already living in the Promised Land, but when they get to the first big city — Jericho — there are huge walls all around the city so Joshua and the people can't get in!

Oh no! How are Joshua and the people supposed to get the mean and strong people to leave their Promised Land? Let's find out. (*Open Bible.*) Have your listening ears ready, because I'll need you to join me and help tell the story. Are you ready?

Read Joshua 6:1 – 5 (NIRV) aloud to the children:

¹The gates of Jericho were shut tight and guarded closely because of the people of Israel. No one went out. No one came in.

²Then the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, "I have handed Jericho over to you. I have also handed its king and its fighting men over to you.

³"March around the city once with all of your fighting men. In fact, do it for six days. ⁴Have seven priests get trumpets that are made out of rams' horns. They must carry them in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. Have the priests blow the trumpets as you march.

⁵"You will hear them blow a long blast on the trumpets. When you do, have all of the men give a loud shout. The wall of the city will fall down. Then the whole army will go up to the city. Every man will go straight in."

Do you think those sounded like silly instructions? Yes! But Joshua obeyed God. First came some soldiers. (*Have a few children stand in line.*) Then came seven priests with seven trumpets, or horns. (*Have a few more children stand in line, and have them pretend they have horns.*) Then came Joshua and more soldiers and the rest of the people. (*Assemble rest of the children in line.*)

Now that we're in our line, who can remember what God told them to do? (*Children respond.*) That's right! They should march around the wall seven times, then shout and blow the trumpets, and the big walls of Jericho would fall down. Let's march in a circle while we count to seven, then we'll shout. Are you ready? Let's start marching. Count with me. And, when we all say "seven," shout as loudly as you can! (*Lead the children to march in a circle while you count to seven together. After you say*

the word “seven,” start shouting!) Wow, that was fun. Let’s sit down and see what happened to Joshua and the people. (*Children sit.*) The Bible tells us Joshua and the people listened to God and did exactly what He told them to do. They marched in a circle, and blew the trumpets, and shouted. And guess what happened? (*Children respond.*)

Yes! The Bible says, “The priests blew the trumpets. As soon as the fighting men heard the sound, they gave a loud shout. Then the wall fell down.”

Wow! What an awesome story! So God made a promise to Joshua and the people, and then Joshua and the people listened and obeyed God — and God helped them.

Do you think the walls fell down because of the trumpets and shouting? No! The walls fell down because God kept His promise! Isn’t God amazing!

You know what we can learn from today’s story? There are two very important lessons I want us to remember.

God keeps His promises. We can trust Him no matter what.

Say that with me: “God keeps His promises.”

Just like Joshua and the people, we can ask God to help us. God loves it when we pray to Him.

We can be Circle Makers! And remember, God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*) to join Him on an adventure in prayer! Anyone want to be a Circle Maker? (*Children respond.*) Hooray! Me too!

So how do we become Circle Makers? We can start by getting to know God’s promises. And how do we do that? (*Children respond.*) That’s right — by spending time reading the Bible or having a grown-up read it to us. What kinds of things does God promise us in the Bible? Does God promise to provide food for us? Yes, He does. Does God want us to have clothes to wear? Sure. Does He promise us new Legos or Barbies? Um, no.

God is not like a candy machine where we put money in and then get out whatever we want, is He? No, God gives us what He promises in the Bible. That’s why it’s important to read the Bible and know God’s promises.

Remember there are two parts of the circle, right? Anyone remember the other part? (*Point to whiteboard.*) That’s right! Being a Circle Maker also means spending time praying or talking to God. Maybe that means praying to be kind or loving. Kindness and love are both things God promises to us.

During our time together these next four weeks, we’ll be learning one new memory verse each week. This week’s memory verse will really help us as Circle Makers. “Tell God about everything. Ask and pray” (Philippians 4:6b, NIV). Let’s stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions while repeating the words after you.*)

- **Tell God:** Point to the ceiling.
- **About everything:** Make a large sweeping position with your right arm.
- **Ask:** Put your hands around your mouth, like you are making a megaphone.
- **And pray:** Fold hands in praying position.
- **Philippians 4:** Hold up four fingers on one hand.
- **6b:** Hold up five fingers on one hand and your thumb on the other hand.

God is looking for Circle Makers, friends. Would anyone here like to know God's promises and pray His promises? Anyone want to join God on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

Let's pray: "Dear God. Thank You for the Bible that's filled with Your promises. Thank You that You love us so very much. Thank You for inviting us to join You as Circle Makers. Help us to tell you about everything, and to ask and pray this week. In Jesus' name. Amen."

All right, friends, it's time to march just like the Israelites — but as quietly as you can — over to your activity times.

(CUE: *Direct the children to the assigned activity area(s). If needed, enlist the help of volunteers to assist with the selected activities.*)



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Prayer Plate

Supplies: Plain white paper plate (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons, Memory Verse label template, stickers, stick-on gems, other decorating supplies, glue sticks, and a sample completed Prayer Plate

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Memory Verse label template and cut apart the labels (one label per child). Assemble one completed sample Prayer Plate.

SAY, "We learned today that prayer is talking to God, and we can talk to God anytime and in all different ways. Let's make a Prayer Plate to remind us to pray at home this week!"

Give each child a plain paper plate and a memory verse label. Help the children (as needed) write their names on their paper plates. Make glue sticks and washable markers or crayons available for the children to share. Instruct the children to glue a memory verse label on the center of their plate. Next, instruct the children to draw four pictures of people and/or things they want to pray for. You may suggest praying for their family, their teacher, neighbors, and/or people who are sick. When they are finished, they may decorate their plates with stickers, stick-on gems, or other decorating supplies.

SAY, "As Circle Makers, we want to tell God about everything and to ask and pray! Put your Prayer Plate in a special place where you can see it and remember to pray at home this week."

Option 2: Remembering Jericho

Supplies: Cardboard boxes or blocks, empty toilet paper rolls or paper towel rolls for horns (one per child)

SAY, “What happened in our Bible story today? (*Children respond.*) Joshua listened to God and did what God told him to do, and a miracle happened! The walls of Jericho fell down! Let’s use our building supplies and see if we can retell the story. First, let’s rebuild the wall.”

Give each child some of the cardboard boxes or blocks. Once the wall is finished,

ASK, “Does anyone remember what God told the Joshua and the people to do?” (*Children respond.*)

SAY, “Yes, God told Joshua to march around the city, and on the seventh day, to march, blow trumpets, and give a shout. Then what would happen? (*Children respond.*) God said the walls of Jericho would collapse and God’s people would be able to walk right in and take the city.”

Give each child a “horn,” have them walk around the “walls of Jericho” six times quietly, and then on the seventh time have them blow their horns and shout! After they shout, let the children knock the walls down.

Reset and start again as time allows.

SAY, “Remember, was there magic in walking in a circle or blowing a trumpet? No way. It was God who kept His promise. We can pray to God and tell Him everything. He loves it when we pray to Him.”

Option 3: Walls Came Tumbling Down

Supplies: One cardboard block/brick

Gather the children into standing circles of eight to ten children each.

SAY, “Way to go! What an awesome circle! Today we learned how God is looking for Circle Makers who talk or pray to Him. We also learned that when we tell God about everything and ask and pray, God can do anything — even make big walls come tumbling down!”

ASK, “Who can remember how many times God told Joshua to walk around the big wall of Jericho?” (*Children respond.*)

SAY, “That’s right — seven. We’re going to pass around this brick while we count to seven. When we’ve passed it seven times, we’re going to tumble to the ground like a brick wall falling down. Then we can start all over again so everyone has a turn!”

Pass the brick to the friend on the right, while everyone says, “One.” Continue passing the brick and counting until you reach the seventh person. On “seven,” everyone pretends to be bricks falling slowly and carefully down. Continue play until everyone has had a turn to pass the brick.

SAY, “Remember, our God is amazing! He can do anything — even make a huge wall fall down. We can pray to God and tell Him everything. He loves it when we pray to Him.”

Step 4: Go!

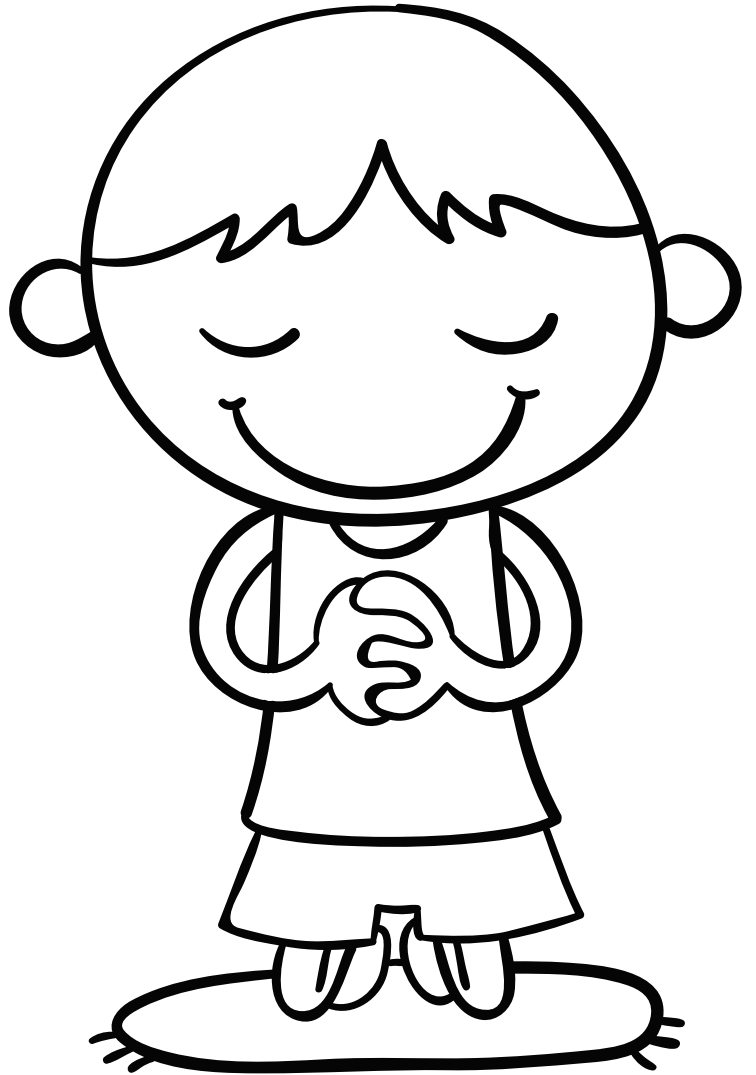
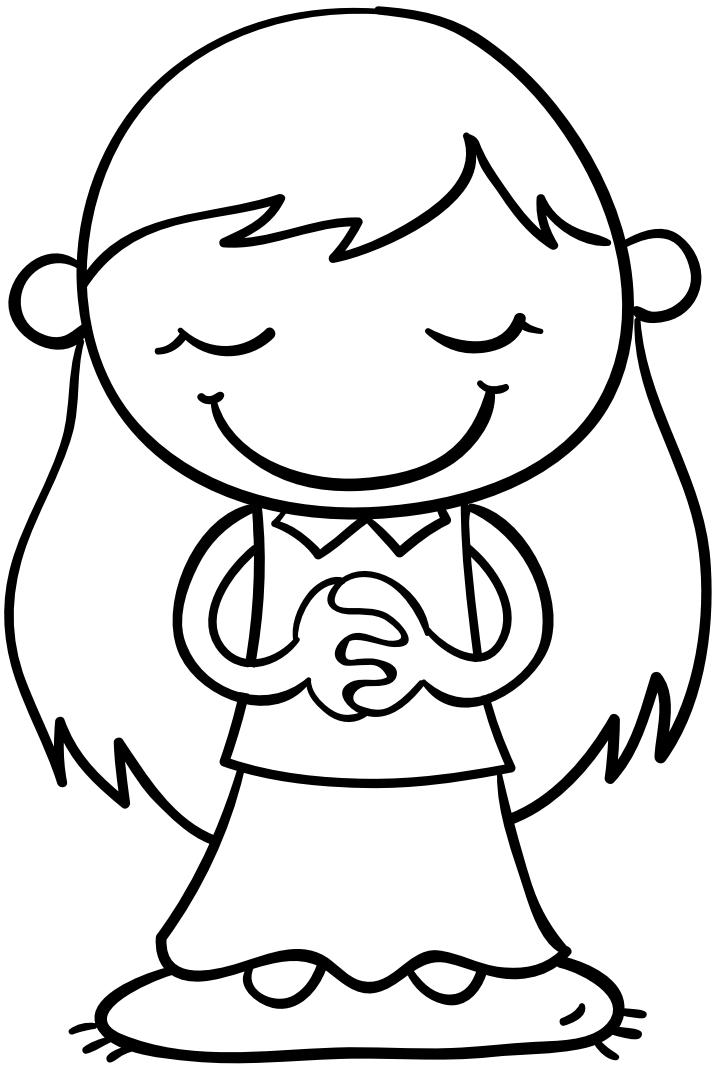
Supplies: Family Table Talk handout (one per child)

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child).

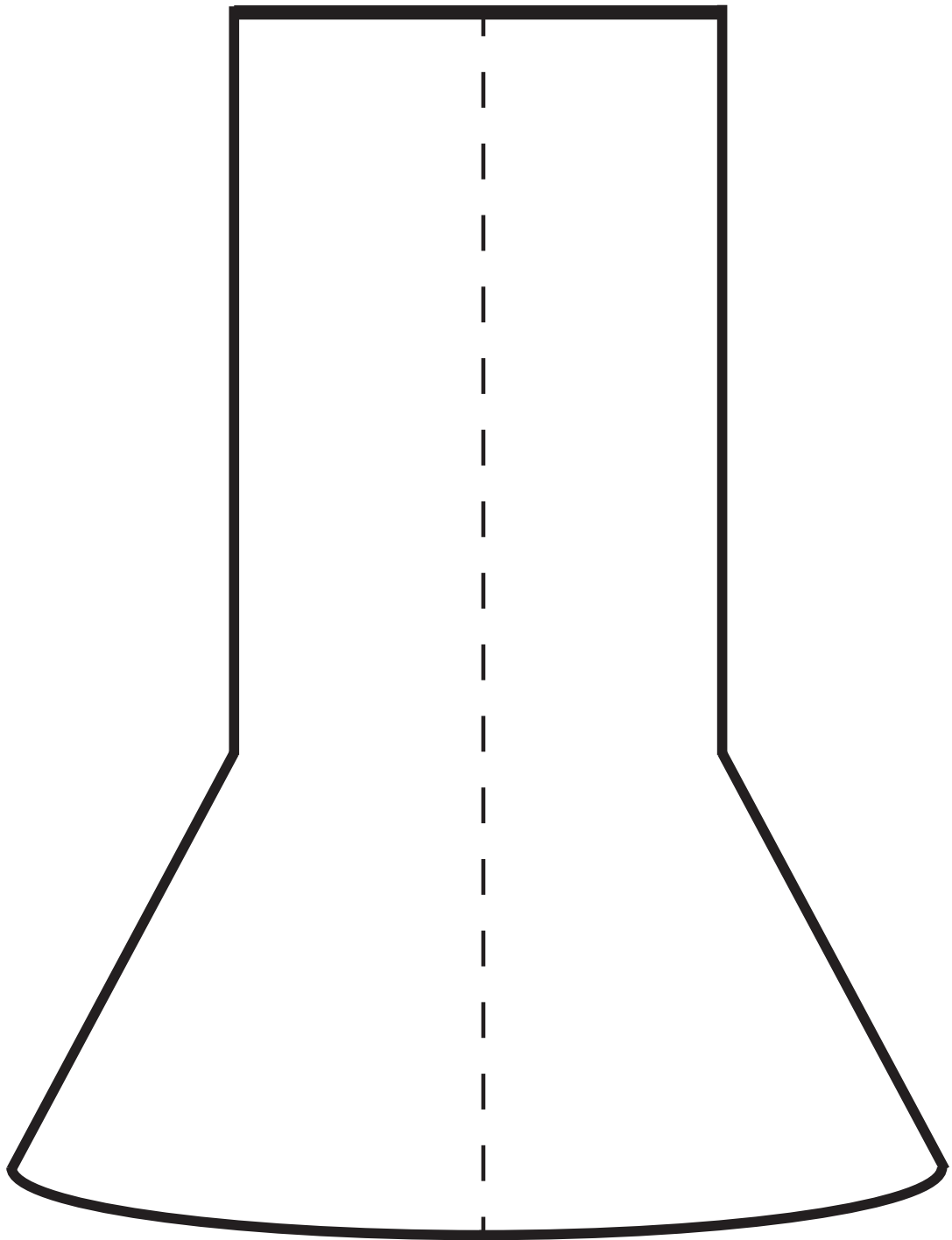
As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to spend time praying to Him this week. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing Philippians 4:6b at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities as well as the Family Table Talk and Family Prayer Calendar handouts.

As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!

Name _____



PRAY CONTINUALLY



**“Tell God about
everything. Ask
and pray.”
Philippians 4:6b**

**“Tell God about
everything. Ask
and pray.”
Philippians 4:6b**

**“Tell God about
everything. Ask
and pray.”
Philippians 4:6b**

**“Tell God about
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Philippians 4:6b**

**“Tell God about
everything. Ask
and pray.”
Philippians 4:6b**



Week 2:

Cloudy with a Chance of Quail

Objective: To teach each child God wants us to trust Him

Bible Story: God Provides Meat for the People (Numbers 11)

Memory Verse: “The LORD will keep all his promises.” (Psalm 145:13b, NiRV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ NiRV Bible
- ☐ Family Table Talk (one per child)
- ☐ Family Prayer Calendar (one per child)
- ☐ Paper trumpet
- ☐ Whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ☐ Round hat box
- ☐ Plastic zipper bag with dry frosted cereal flakes inside
- ☐ Quail Picture

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** 18” x 24” sheets of construction paper (in a variety of colors), washable markers and/or crayons, stickers, stick-on gems, other decorating supplies, glue sticks, stapler, I’m A Circle Maker label template
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Plain white paper plates, pre-cut pictures of food (from magazines or printed from an online source), crayons, glue sticks
- ☐ **Getting Started 3:** Plastic toy bowling set (pins and plastic ball), masking tape, Quail Picture, Quail Knock-Down template
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Styrofoam cups, craft sticks, washable markers or crayons, glue sticks, Memory Verse label template, a completed sample Prayer Pail
- ☐ **Explore More 2:** God Provides Quail coloring sheet (one per child), Quail template, washable markers and/or crayons, glue sticks
- ☐ **Explore More 3:** Bean bag, music player, music

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: Circle Maker Crowns

Supplies: 18" x 24" sheets of construction paper (in a variety of colors), washable markers and/or crayons, stickers, stick-on gems, other decorating supplies, glue sticks, stapler, I'm A Circle Maker label template

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the I'm A Circle Maker label template (one label per child). Cut out the labels. Cut the construction paper into 3" x 4" strips.

Give each child a strip of construction paper and a pre-cut label. Explain that the strips of paper are going to be used to create their Circle Maker Crowns. Help the children write their names, as needed, on the back of the strips of construction paper. Make available glue sticks and washable markers and/or crayons for the children to share. Instruct the children to glue the label to the center of the construction paper strip. Enlist the help of volunteers to assist the children if needed. Make available stickers, stick-on gems, and other decorating supplies for children to share. Next, instruct the children to use stickers, washable markers and/or crayons, stick-on gems, and other supplies to decorate their crowns. As the children decorate their crowns,

SAY, "God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises from the Bible and talk to Him about His promises. When we see our Circle Maker Crown, let's remember 'I'm a Circle Maker. I can trust God.'"

Once decorated, wrap each child's crown around his or her head so it fits comfortably. Remove the crown and staple it at the correct size.

Note: You may want to allow the crown decorations to dry while you are teaching the Bible story, and then pass out the completed crowns at the end of your class time.

Option 2: Food from Heaven

Supplies: Plain white paper plates, crayons, pre-cut pictures of food from magazines or printed from an online source, glue sticks

Ahead of Time: Cut out a selection of food pictures from old magazines or printed from an online source.

SAY, "In today's Bible story we'll learn how the Israelites in the Bible had to trust that God would send food each day. God promised His people that He would take

care of their needs, and He provided food to feed them when they were hungry. God always keeps His promises.”

Give each child a paper plate. Help children (as needed) write their name on the back of the paper plate. Make available pre-cut food pictures, crayons, and glue sticks for the children to share. Encourage the children to draw pictures of their favorite foods on the paper plate or select pre-cut pictures and glue them on the paper plate. As the children are working, tell them that God sent food from heaven to feed the Israelites when they were hungry. Remind the children that we can trust God to provide for all of our needs too.

Option 3: Quail Knock-Down

Supplies: Plastic toy bowling set (pins and plastic ball), masking tape, Quail Picture, Quail Knock-Down template

Ahead of Time: Print the Quail Picture. Print and cut apart the squares on the Quail Knock-Down template. Tape one square to each bowling pin. Set up the bowling area, and make a starting line with masking tape.

SAY, “I’m so glad you are here with us for Circle Maker! In today’s Bible story we’ll learn how the Israelites in the Bible had to trust that God would send food each day. God promised to send meat, and He sent lots of quail for them to eat. (CUE: *Show the picture of the quail.*) Let’s play Quail Knock-Down to remind us of how God gave His people what they needed. When we see the quail, we can remember, ‘I can trust God. He keeps His promises.’”

Have the children form a single file line behind the masking tape. Give each child two turns to roll the plastic bowling ball and try to knock down the quail bowling pins. Continue to play until all the children have a turn or time is up.

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: Bible, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, pretend trumpet, round hat box, plastic bag with dry frosted cereal flakes, Quail Picture

Ahead of Time: Prepare a plastic zipper bag of dry frosted cereal flakes. Place the zipper bag inside of the hat box. Print the Quail Picture (if you haven’t already done so for the Getting Started activities).

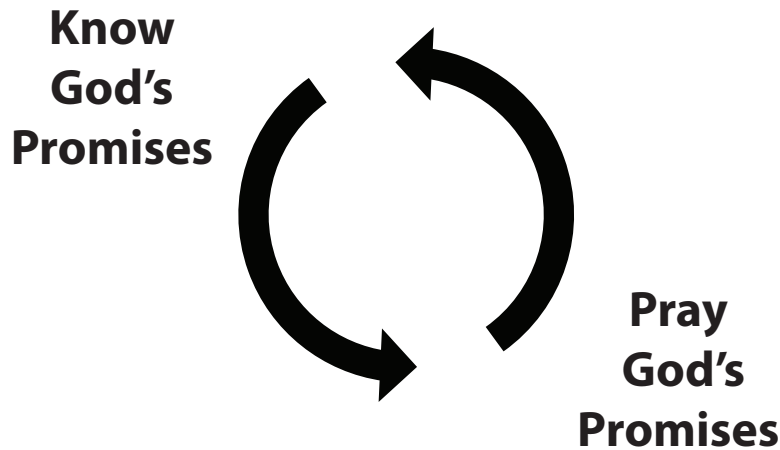
(CUE: *As the Getting Started time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.*)



Storyteller: Good morning! It's great to see you! Welcome to Circle Maker! We're learning how to be Circle Makers. Can you say that with me, "Circle Maker?" (*Children respond.*)

When we pray in circles, it goes like this. We spend time reading the Bible (*hold up the Bible*) so we can know God and His promises to us, and then we spend time talking to God, or praying to Him, and it makes a big circle. Like this ...

(CUE: *Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, SAY, "Know God's promises ... Pray God's promises!"*)



For example, God tells us in the Bible to be kind and loving. We know this promise. Raise your hand if you know this promise? (*Children respond.*) Let's say you get a new super cool bike and your little brother really, really wants to ride it. But you don't really want him to. Rather than pretending you don't hear him when he asks you if he can ride your bike ("What, I can't hear you, are you talking to me"?!) — you can think about what you know from the Bible ("I know God asks me to be kind and loving"), and then pray, "God please help me to be kind and loving to my brother." That's being a Circle Maker!

And God is looking for Circle Makers (*make circle*) to join Him on an adventure in prayer! Anyone want to be a Circle Maker? (*Children respond.*) Hooray! Me too!

There's a story in the Bible where God calls some Circle Makers (*make circle*) and they watch God do something amazing and so super cool! (*Whisper the next sentence.*) Do you want to know what God did? The Bible tells us that God made a promise to His people, the Israelites. He told the people He would always take care of them. So after God led His people out of Egypt, He gave them food to eat called manna. (CUE: *Open the hat box and pull out the plastic bag full of dry frosted cereal flakes.*)

God promised He would always take care of the people, so He gave them manna. The word "manna" means "What is it?" Can you say that with me? (*Children respond, "What is it?"*) The people called the food manna because they didn't really know exactly what it was.

Manna may have looked like these dry frosted cereal flakes, and it tasted like a cracker made with honey. Yum! God kept His promise and took care of His people by supplying them with food. But pretty soon the people got tired of eating manna

every day. Would you want manna for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? And tomorrow? And the next day? (*Children respond.*) I'm not sure I would either. Can you guess what happened next?

Let's find out. Have your listening ears ready, because I'll need you to join me and help tell the story. Are you ready?

Read Numbers 11:4–6; 10–11, 13; 18–21; 23–24, 31–32 (NIRV) aloud to the children. You can either use a NIRV Bible or read from the following script.

⁴Some people who were with them began to long for other food. Again the people of Israel began to cry out. They said, "We wish we had meat to eat. ⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. It didn't cost us anything. We also remember the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. ⁶But now we've lost all interest in eating. We never see anything but this manna!"

On the count of three, let's all do our best whining and crying — like this: "Waa, waa, waa!" Ready? One, two, three — "Waa, waa, waa!"

Okay, let's continue our story.

¹⁰Moses heard people from every family crying. They were sobbing at the entrances to their tents. The LORD burned with hot anger. So Moses became troubled. ¹¹He asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on me? Why aren't you pleased with me? Why have you loaded me down with the troubles of all of these people? ¹³"Where can I get meat for all of these people? They keep crying out to me. They say, 'Give us meat to eat!'

Can you say that with me? *Give us meat to eat!* Now let's put it together, "Waa, waa, waa! Give us meat to eat!" Ready? One, two, three — *Waa, waa, waa! Give us meat to eat!*

Great job! Moses didn't know how to answer the people and was very sad. But he did know what to do when he faced a problem. Pray! Moses took his problem to God, and then God told Moses what to do —

¹⁸"Tell the people ... 'The LORD heard you when you cried out. You said, "We wish we had meat to eat. We were better off in Egypt." Now the LORD will give you meat. And you will eat it. ¹⁹You will not eat it for just one or two days. You will not eat it for just five, ten or 20 days. ²⁰Instead, you will eat it for a whole month. You will eat it until it comes out of your nose.'"

Wow! That's a lot of meat! But Moses is wondering how God is going to do this, so he asks God ...

²¹"Here I am among 600,000 men on the march. And you say, 'I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!'"

In other words, that's a lot of meat, God. Are You sure You mean meat for a whole month?

²³The LORD answered Moses, "Am I not strong enough? Now you will see whether what I say will come true for you."

²⁴So Moses went out. He told the people what the LORD had said . . .

Want to know what happened?

³¹The LORD sent out a wind. It drove quail (*Pull Quail Picture out of Circle Maker box. SAY, "Quail is a wild bird, sort of like a chicken."*) in from the Red Sea. It brought them down all around the camp. They were about three feet above the ground. They could be seen in every direction as far as a person could walk in a day. ³²The people went out all day and gathered quail. They gathered them all night and all the next day. No one gathered less than 60 bushels. Then they spread the quail out all around the camp.

Wow! Did God send them meat? (*Children respond.*) Absolutely! That's right; God sent them quail to eat.

You know what we can learn from today's story? There are two very important lessons I want us to remember.

God keeps His promises. We can trust Him no matter what.

Say that with me. "*God keeps His promises.*"

Who can remember what God had promised the Israelites? (*Children respond, "Food."*) Right! So did God keep His promise? (*Children respond.*) Yes! God always keeps His promises! God made a promise to His people, and He meant it. God wants us to trust Him to take care of us.

Just like Moses, we can ask God to help us. God loves it when we pray to Him.

I have one more important question. Do you have your thinking caps on? Great!

Where do you get enough meat in one place to feed that many people? There weren't any restaurants out in the middle of the desert, and even if there were, they couldn't feed that many people. It seemed impossible. But guess what?

God is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine! (Say that with me: "*God is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine.*")

Yes, God is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine. God told Moses and the people that He would supply enough meat for them to eat for a whole month — not just a day, a month! — and then God performed a miracle. Do you know what a miracle is? (*Let children respond.*) A miracle is something only God can do. God sent them a whole bunch of quail! Some really smart people who study the Bible think there might have been 105 million quail that fell that day. Wow! That's a lot of birds! How many of you think that's only something God, who is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine, could do? (*Allow children to respond.*) God kept His promise to supply meat for Moses and the Israelites. God always keeps His promises!

The quail miracle reminds me of one of my favorite Bible songs. It goes like this: (CUE: *You may find a sample of this song online for reference.*)

My God is so big,
So strong and so mighty,
There's nothing my God cannot do.
(*clap, clap*)

Let's stand up and sing it together: (*repeat*)

As Circle Makers, the next time we have a big problem or we don't like the way things are going, let's not mumble and complain (*grrrr!*); instead, let's remember how God supplied both manna and quail for Moses and the Israelites. Let's remember our circle (CUE: *Point to the whiteboard*). We can KNOW God's promises and PRAY God's promises! Remember, God is looking for Circle Makers, friends. Would anyone here like to join God on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

This week's memory verse will really help us as Circle Makers. "The LORD will keep all his promises" (Psalm 145:13b, NIV). Let's stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions along with repeating the words after you.*)

- **The Lord:** Point to the ceiling.
- **Will keep:** Make a fist with your left hand; with your right hand make a "V" and place both by one's chest. The right hand "V" gently pushes the back of the left hand fist, and both are moved toward one's heart.
- **All:** One hand circles around the other and comes back to the palm of the hand.
- **His promises:** Both flat hands come together, then open like a book.
- **Psalm 145:** Quickly hold up one finger, then four fingers, then five fingers on one hand.
- **13b:** Hold up both hands (ten fingers), then three fingers on one hand, and then just shout "b."

Let's pray: "Dear God, thank You for the Bible. Thank You that we can be Circle Makers. Help us to know Your promises and pray Your promises. Thank You, God, that You are big and powerful. In Jesus' name. Amen."

All right, friends, it's time to waddle like a quail — but as quietly as you can — over to your activity times.

(CUE: *Direct the children to the assigned activity area(s). If needed, enlist the help of volunteers to assist with the selected activities.*)



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Prayer Pail

Supplies: Styrofoam cups, craft sticks, washable markers and/or crayons, Memory Verse label template, a completed sample Prayer Pail

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Memory Verse label template (one label per child). Cut apart the labels. Assemble one completed sample Prayer Pail.

SAY, “Today we learned how God kept His promise and fed the Israelites when they were hungry. We can trust God to give us what we need too. Let’s make a Prayer Pail to remind us that God always keeps His promises. As Circle Makers we can trust God to take care of each member of our family.”

Hand out the craft sticks and ask the children to take one for each member of their family including themselves. Make available washable markers and/or crayons for the children to share. Instruct the children to color each stick so that it looks like one of their family members. If time allows, allow the children to identify which family members they created and have a volunteer write the family member’s names on the bottom of the appropriate sticks.

When the children are finished coloring, give each child a Styrofoam cup and a memory verse label. Help children, as needed, to write their names on the bottom of the cup. Make glue sticks available for the children to share. Instruct the children to glue the memory verse label on the outside of the cup. After the memory verse labels are glued on, instruct the children to place the craft sticks that represent their family members inside the “pail.”

SAY, “Keep this Prayer Pail somewhere in your home to help you to remember to talk to God about your family, and ask Him to help all of you to remember His promises. Be sure to thank God for always keeping His promises.”

Option 2: God Provides Quail

Supplies: God Provides Quail coloring sheet (one per child), Quail Squares template, washable markers and/or crayons, glue sticks

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the God Provides Quail coloring sheet (one per child). Print and photocopy Quail Squares template (enough for five quail squares per child). Cut out the quail squares.

SAY, “Today we learned how God kept His promise and sent quail when the Israelites were hungry. We can trust God to give us what we need too. Let’s color this picture to remind us that God always keeps His promises.”

Give each child a coloring sheet and five pre-cut quail squares. Make available washable markers and/or crayons as well as glue sticks for the children to share. Help the children, as needed, to write their names on their coloring sheet. Instruct the children to color the picture and the quail squares. When the children are finished coloring, instruct them to glue the quail squares onto their coloring sheet.

While the children color,

ASK, “How did God give the Israelites what they needed? (*He sent quail for them to eat.*) What kind of food does God give you to eat? (*various responses*)

SAY, “The Israelites learned to trust God for the things they needed. We can trust God to give us what we need too. He loves it when we pray or talk to Him.”

Option 3: Bean Bag Pass

Supplies: Bean bag, music player, music

Gather the children into a circle of eight to ten kids each, everyone seated.

SAY, “Way to go! What an awesome circle! Remember, God is looking for Circle Makers who talk or pray to Him. We also learned that we can trust God to give us what we need. Like the Israelites, we know God will provide for our needs. Let’s think of all the things God provides each day. (*Responses may include: food, bed, house, water.*)

Hand the bean bag to the first child. Instruct the group to gently pass the bean bag around the circle as the music plays. Stop the music at various times. Whoever has the bean bag when the music stops stands and says, “I can trust God!” Continue the game until everyone has had a turn to stand up or the activity time is over.

Step 4: Go!

Supplies: Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child)

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child).

As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to spend time praying to Him this week. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing Psalm 145:13b at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities as well as the Family Table Talk and Family Prayer Calendar handouts.

As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!

I'm A Circle Maker

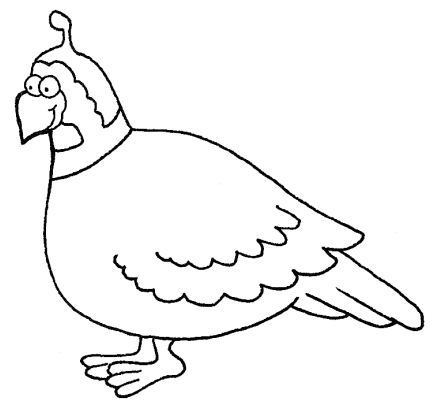
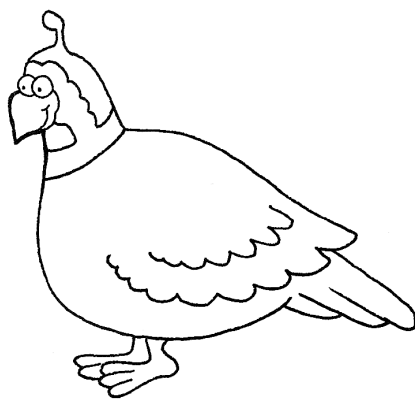
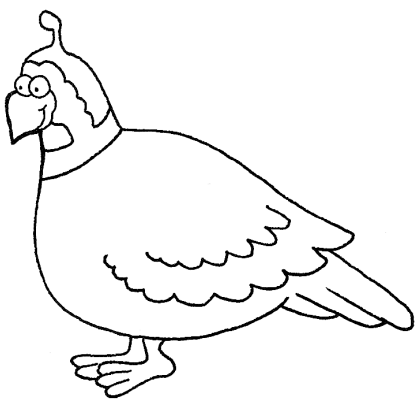
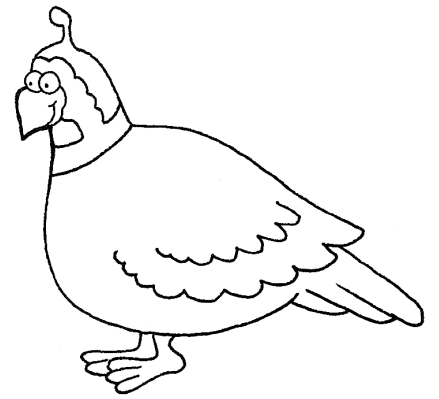
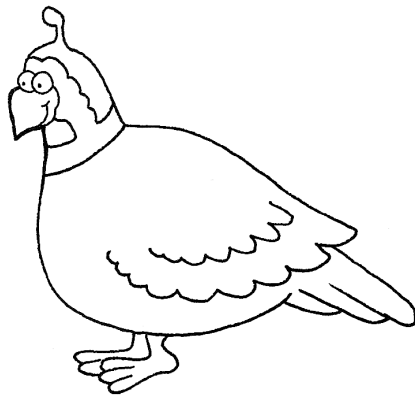
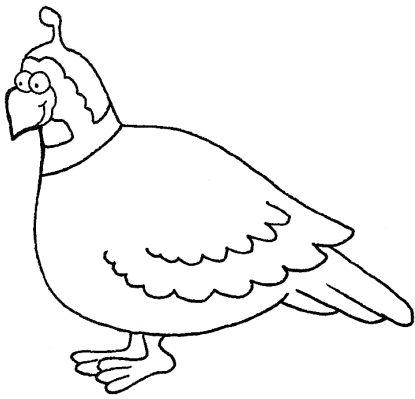
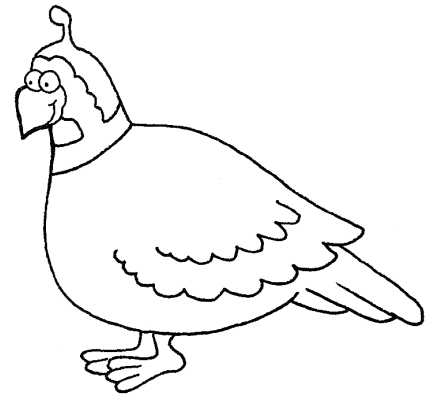
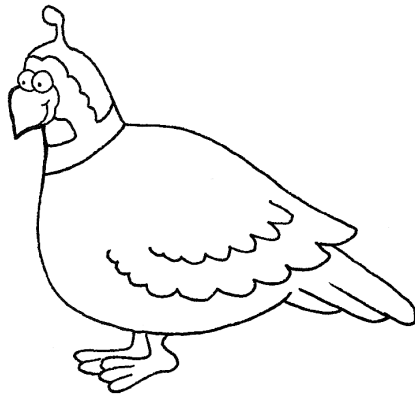
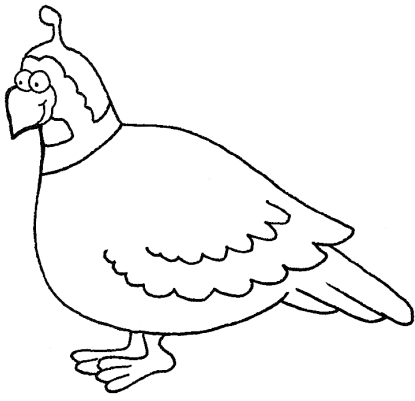
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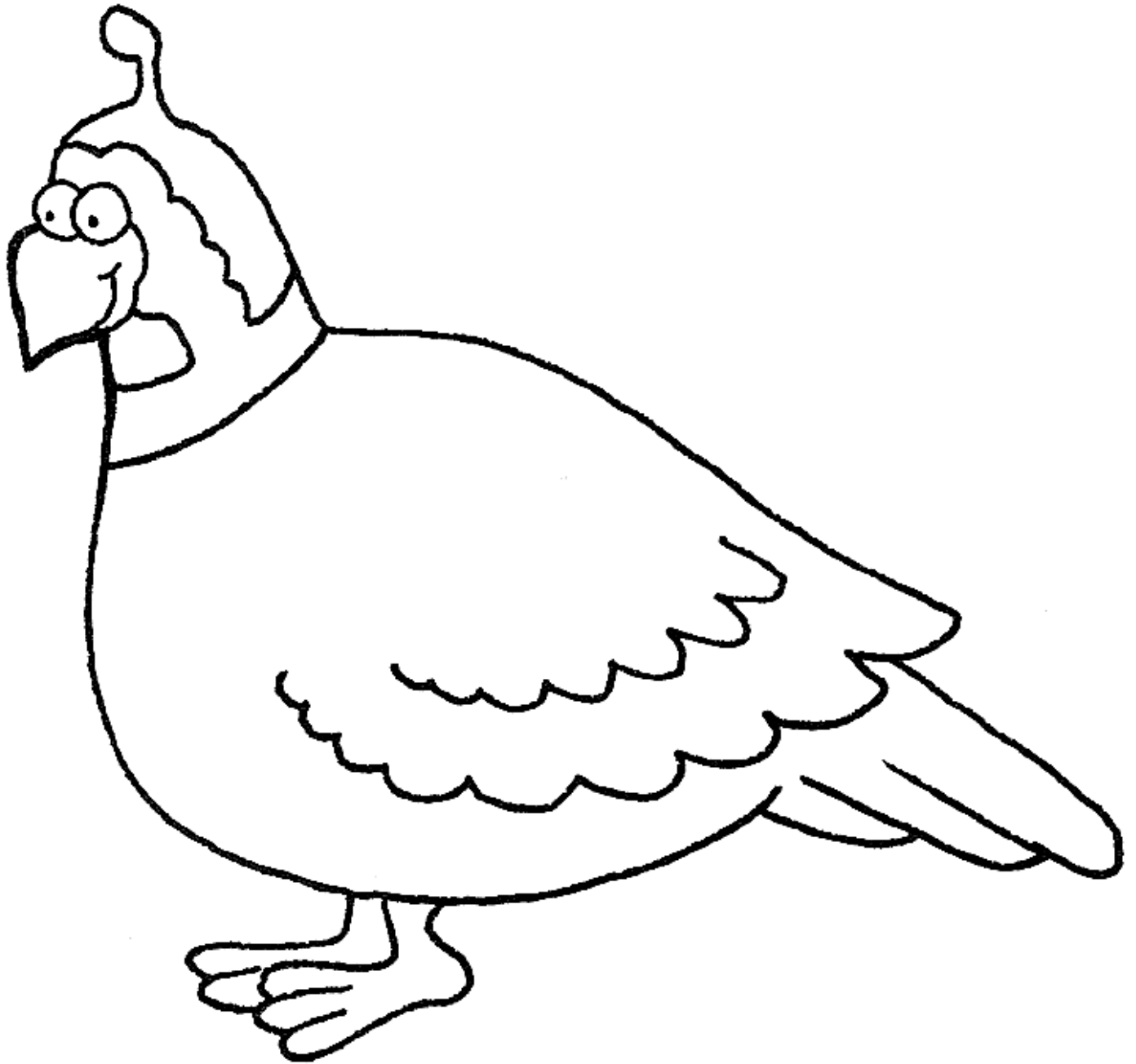
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**“The LORD will keep
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Psalm 145:13b**

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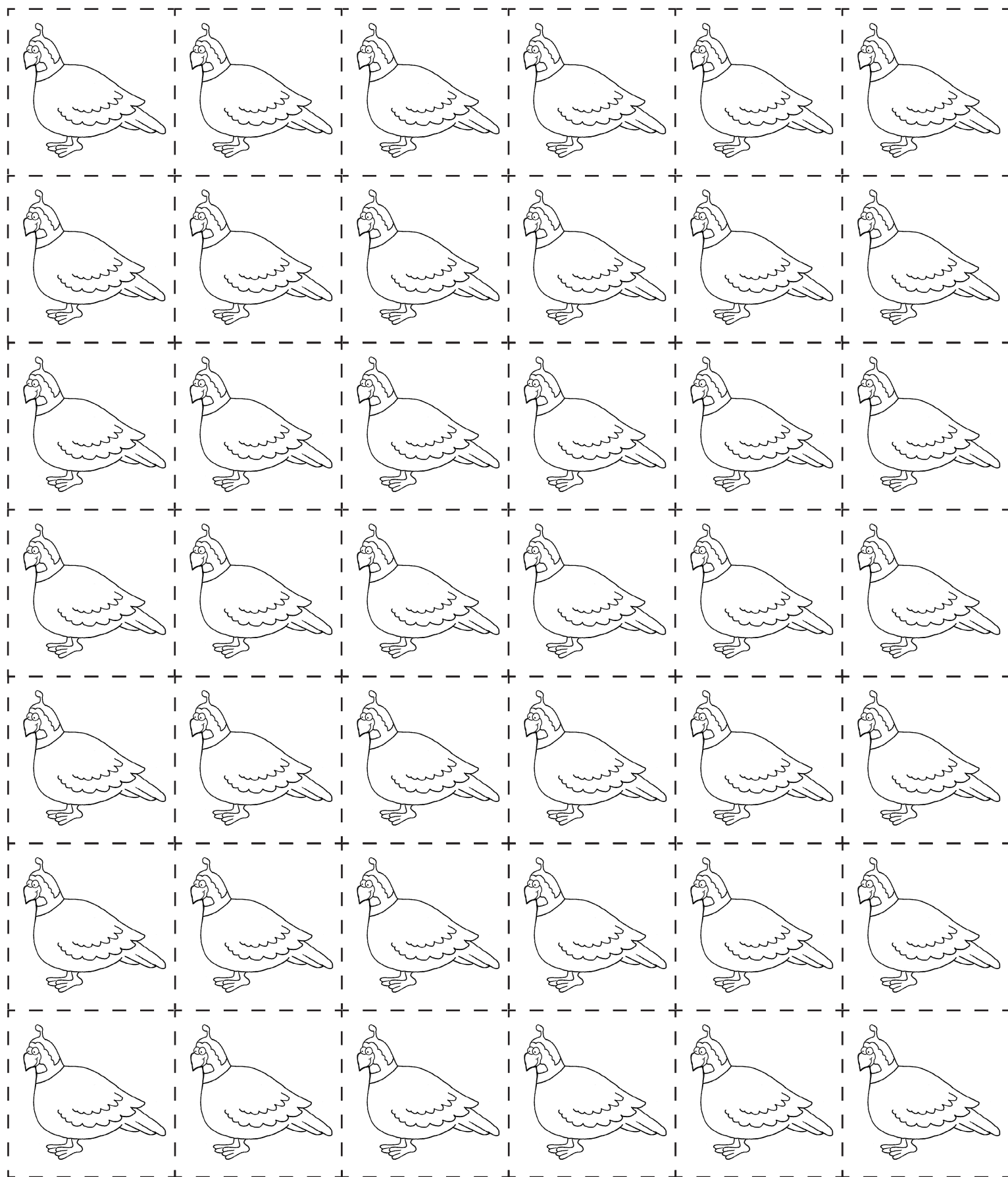
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GOD PROVIDES QUAIL



Week 3:

Praying Hard and Praying Through

Objective: To teach each child God wants us to always pray and never give up

Bible Story: The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1 – 5)

Memory Verse: “Never stop praying.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIrV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ NIrV Bible
- ☐ Family Table Talk (one per child)
- ☐ Family Prayer Calendar (one per child)
- ☐ White board and dry-erase markers
- ☐ Round hat box
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Two pre-selected volunteers (one for the judge, one for the widow)
- ☐ Skit props (ideas include gavel, robe, basket for widow, bonnet, etc.)

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** Never Stop Praying coloring sheet (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Circle Maker Memory Game pieces (one set for every 3 – 4 children), safety scissors
- ☐ **Getting Started 3:** Chutes and Ladders board game
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Yarn, macaroni or similar noodles (12 pieces per child), Never Stop Praying card template, card stock, scissors, hole punch, crayons
- ☐ **Explore More 2:** Soft round ball, masking tape, and a large empty round trash can

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: Never Stop Praying

Supplies: Never Stop Praying coloring sheet (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Never Stop Praying coloring sheet (one per child).

SAY, "I'm so glad you are here! We've been learning that prayer is talking to God, and we can talk to God anytime and in all different ways. Let's color these praying hands to remind us to never stop praying!"

Give each child a Never Stop Praying coloring sheet. Make available washable markers and/or crayons for the children to share. Help the children write their names, as needed, on the coloring sheet. Instruct children to color the picture. As the children are coloring,

SAY, "God loves it when we talk to Him. Is it easy or hard for you to pray? Do you ever feel like giving up? (*Let the children respond.*) Today we'll learn that God never gets tired of hearing from us. He loves when we talk to Him. In fact, God wants us to always pray and never give up!"

Option 2: Circle Maker Memory Game

Supplies: Circle Maker Memory Game pieces (one set for every 3 – 4 children), scissors, zippered bags

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy onto card stock the Circle Maker Memory Game template. Cut out the pieces (one set for every 3 – 4 children). Place sets of game pieces in zippered bags.

SAY, "Welcome, Circle Makers! Let's play a Circle Maker Memory Game. I'm so glad you are here!"

Mix up the Circle Maker Memory Game cards and lay them face down on a table. The first child will turn over two cards. If they match, he or she picks up the cards

and gets another turn. If they do not match, the child turns the cards over and places them back on the table face down. It is then the next child's turn. Play continues until all the cards have been matched, or as time allows. The child with the most sets of matches at the end wins.

SAY, "Great job! I love how everyone kept going and didn't give up — even when it was hard! Today we'll learn how not giving up and prayer go together for Circle Makers!"

Option 3: Chutes and Ladders

Supplies: Chutes and Ladders board game

SAY, "Welcome, Circle Makers! Let's start by playing the game Chutes and Ladders."

Play the classic board game "Chutes and Ladders" as time allows. As you're playing, look for opportunities (especially when the children encounter a slide and are sent back) to encourage the children with words such as, "keep going," "don't give up," "you can do it!"

SAY, "Great job! I love how everyone kept going and didn't give up — even when it was hard! Today we'll learn how not giving up and prayer go together for Circle Makers! I'm so glad you are here!"

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: Pretend trumpet, round hat box, whistle, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, two pre-selected child volunteers (one for the judge, one for the widow), props for the judge and widow (ideas include gavel, robe, basket for widow, bonnet, etc.)

Ahead of Time: Select two child volunteers to act out the parts of the judge and the widow. Be sure to provide them with some direction regarding acting out the story as you read it. Gather props for the judge and the widow. Prepare a round hat box with a whistle inside.

(CUE: As the Getting Started time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.)



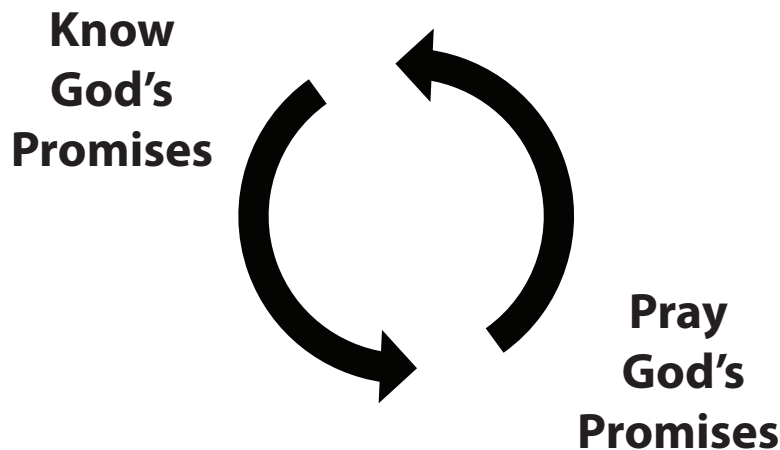
Storyteller: Hi, friends! It's great to see you! I'm so glad you are here. Who can remember what we've been learning together? *(Children respond.)* That's right! We've been learning how to be Circle Makers. Can you say that with me, "Circle Maker"? *(Make circle with your arms. Children respond.)*

We've been talking about a new way to pray — praying in circles. Now is praying

in circles the only way to pray? (*Children respond, “No!”*) Of course not! Prayer is just talking to God and we can talk to Him any way and anywhere and anytime.

But when we pray in circles, it goes like this. We spend time reading or listening to the Bible so we can get to know God, and then we spend time talking to God, and it makes a big circle. Like this ...

(CUE: *Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, SAY, “Know God’s promises ... Pray God’s promises!”*)



Today we’re going to talk about something very important if you want to be a Circle Maker. (*Whisper the next sentence.*) Want to know what it is? I have a clue right here in my Circle Maker box (*round hat box with a whistle in it*) to help us.

Does anyone want to guess what’s in my Circle Maker box? (*Shake box, etc.*)

Do you think it’s an alligator? (*Allow children to respond, make guesses; Storyteller peeks under lid, etc.*) Should I give you a clue? Okay, it’s something a coach uses at a game. (*Allow children to make guesses.*) That’s right, it’s my whistle! (*Blow whistle.*)

(CUE: *You may choose to insert a personal story of persistence here, or use the sample below.*)

When I was a kid, my coach would use this whistle when he wanted me to go faster on the track. But I didn’t want to go faster; I was tired and ready to quit. But my coach wasn’t going to let me quit. No sirree! He’d blow his whistle like this (*blow whistle*) and say, “Hey you! You keep going. Don’t you give up! Got it?!” And guess what? I didn’t give up! I kept going and finished the race! (*Blow whistle.*) Never give up!

When I blow my whistle I want you to say, “Never give up!” Let’s give it a try! (*Blow whistle; children respond, “Never give up!”*) Great job!

If we’re going to be Circle Makers — knowing God’s promises and praying God’s promises — we have to remember to never give up. (*Blow whistle.*) Never give up!

Jesus once told an important story about praying and not giving up. Could I have my two friends who offered to help me tell a story come forward? (CUE: *Instruct the two volunteers to come up with their props to portray the judge and the widow.*)

In today’s Bible story, we find Jesus telling His disciples a story about prayer that involves a widow—a woman who didn’t have money for food or her other needs (*point to widow volunteer*), and the only person who could help her — a mean judge (*point to judge*).

Read Luke 18:1 – 5 (NIrV) aloud to the children. You may read from your own NIrV Bible or use the script below.

¹Jesus told his disciples a story. He wanted to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ²He said, “In a certain town there was a judge. He didn’t have any respect for God or care about people. (*Volunteer judge makes mean face.*) ³A widow lived in that town. She came to the judge again and again. She kept begging him, “Make things right for me. Someone is doing me wrong.” (*Widow gets on her knees and begs.*)

⁴For some time the judge refused. (*Judge waves his finger, “No! No! No!”*) But finally he said to himself (*judge makes thinking face*), “I don’t have any respect for God. I don’t care about people. ⁵But this widow keeps bothering me. So I will see that things are made right for her. If I don’t, she will wear me out by coming again and again!”

Okay — if you were listening carefully to the story, what did it say the widow wanted? (*Children respond.*) You got it ... to make things right. Jesus doesn’t tell us what the exact problem was, does He? Maybe she or someone in her family had been hurt. We don’t know. But she was going to the person she thought could help her. And who was that again? (*Children respond.*) Right, the judge. The only problem was that the judge was not kind, was he? He was not fair to the people. Can you make a face like our unkind judge? (*Children respond.*) Wow. Great job! I wouldn’t want to come and ask you for help! You definitely look unkind!

It sounds like the widow went to the unkind judge once and either he didn’t help her or he ignored her. So the Bible says the widow kept coming and coming after him. She never gave up. Finally, the judge had enough of her bothering him and he made sure things were made right for the widow. Yay! I love happy endings!

Let’s thank our two volunteers! (*Children clap; volunteers return to their seats.*)

When I think about this Bible story and our role as Circle Makers, there are two lessons I want us to remember.

The first lesson: Always pray and never give up. What if the widow in our story had given up one day before the judge decided to help her? She would have missed out on having things made right for her. God wants us to ... (*blow whistle; children respond, “Never give up!”*). Right, never give up!

The second lesson: Believe God is loving. Unlike the mean judge, our loving God wants us to talk to Him and tell Him our needs. We don’t have to beg God to listen to us. Isn’t that awesome! Jesus said in this story that if an unkind judge will listen to a widow, our loving and caring God will surely listen to us.

You know what, friends? A lot of people get tired of talking to God and they quit praying. But if we want to see God answer our prayers, we need to never give up on talking to God. We need to pray hard and ... (*blow whistle; children respond, “Never give up!”*).

This week’s memory verse is an easy one to remember; it’s also a great reminder for us as Circle Makers. “Never stop praying” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIrV).

Let's stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions while repeating the words after you.*)

- **Never:** Hold up the pointer finger, and wave it back and forth as if to say, "No, no, no."
- **Stop:** Extend your left hand, palm upward. Sharply bring your open right hand down to your left palm at a right angle.
- **Praying:** Fold hands in praying position.
- **1 Thessalonians:** Hold up one finger.
- **5:** Hold up one hand (five fingers).
- **17:** Hold up both hands (ten fingers), then one hand (five fingers), and then two fingers (for a total of seventeen).

God is looking for Circle Makers, friends. Would anyone here like to know God's promises and never give up praying His promises, and join Him on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

Let's pray: "Dear God. Thank You for being faithful, loving, and kind. Forgive us for the times we give in, give up, and stop praying. Please give us Your power so we can pray hard and pray through. We want to always keep praying and never give up. In Jesus' name. Amen."



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Never Stop Praying Necklaces

Supplies: Yarn, dry macaroni or similar noodles (12 pieces per child), Never Stop Praying card template, card stock, scissors, hole punch, crayons

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy onto card stock the Never Stop Praying card template (one Prayer Necklace card per child). Cut out the cards and pre-punch two holes approximately one inch apart at the center top of each card. Cut one 30" piece of yarn for each child. Assemble one completed sample Prayer Necklace.

SAY, "We've been learning that prayer is talking to God, and we can talk to God anytime and in all different ways. He loves when we talk to Him and wants us to always keep praying. Let's make a Prayer Necklace to remind us to never stop praying!"

Give each child a piece of yarn and one of the pre-cut cards. Make crayons available for the children to share. Help children, as needed, write their name on the back of the card. Encourage the children to decorate their cards with things that remind them of prayer and/or Jesus. Children might draw hearts, a cross, happy faces, a Bible, their family, etc. While the children are coloring and decorating,

ASK, “Is it easy or hard for you to pray? How do you feel when you pray?”

Help the children lace the yarn through the holes in the card. Give each child about twelve dry noodles. Instruct them to string the noodles to the yarn on both sides of the card. Tie the ends of the string together, and let the children wear their necklaces.

SAY, “Your prayers are important to God. Keep this Prayer Necklace somewhere in your room or home where you will see it every day. Remember God hears your prayers. Never stop praying!”

Option 2: Memory Verse Circle Toss

Supplies: Soft round ball, masking tape, and a large empty round trash can

Ahead of Time: With the masking tape, mark a starting line and set up the trash can five feet away.

Review the memory verse aloud (“*Never stop praying,*” *1 Thessalonians 5:17*) and have the group repeat it several times. Next, instruct the children to line up in a single-file line. Repeat the memory verse; then tell the children that, in order to toss the ball, they each must say the memory verse on their own. Don’t worry too much about the reference, but each child should be able to say the verse content from memory. If the child does so, he or she can shoot the soft round ball. If the child fails to repeat the verse correctly, he or she goes to the end of the line. If the child fails to make a basket, he or she also goes to the end of the line. Encourage any children who struggle with this activity to keep trying! Ensure that each child has several turns at saying the verse and shooting the ball. When everyone has made a basket, instruct the children to sit in a circle.

SAY, “That was a fun game! I’m so proud of you all for not giving up on repeating this week’s memory verse! Great job! You never gave up!”

Option 3: Circle Prayers

SAY, “Today we learned we should always pray and never give up! The best way to grow as Circle Makers is to practice praying, so let’s pray together.”

Ask the children to sit in a circle.

SAY, “We can talk to God anytime, anywhere, about anything. Right, friends? Well, today we’re going to practice praying together. As we do this, I’d like for you to fold your hands, bow your heads, and close your eyes. This is one way of showing respect to God. Ready? Now, we’re going to go around the circle and I want each one of you to say one thing you are thankful for. Let’s try it! (CUE: *Start by saying one thing you’re thankful for and then allow the next person in the circle to take a turn.*)

SAY, “Great job! Now I’m going to say a sentence and I want each of you to fill

in the part that I leave out with something or someone you want to pray for. Ready? Okay, here goes: God, we pray for _____.” Continue as time and/or attention allows.

SAY, “Isn’t it awesome to know that we can always talk to God! He is always ready and willing to listen to us when we talk to Him! So let’s remember this week to never stop praying!”

Step 4: Go!

Supplies: Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child)

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar (one of each per child).

As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to never give up. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing 1 Thessalonians 5:17 at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities, the Family Table Talk handout, and the Family Prayer Calendar.

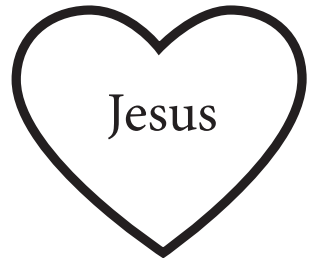
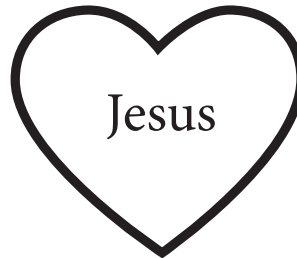
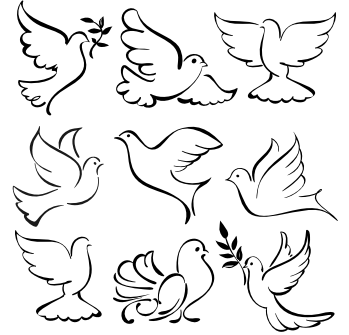
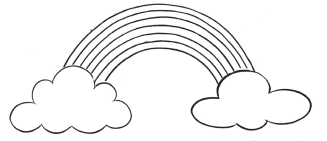
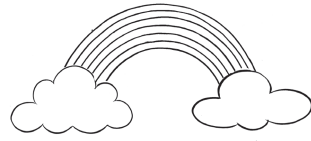
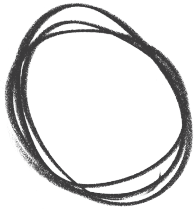
As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!

Name _____



NEVER STOP PRAYING

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Never Stop Praying

Never Stop Praying

Never Stop Praying

Never Stop Praying

Week 4:

Praying Is Like Planting

Objective: To teach each child God always hears our prayers but sometimes asks us to wait for the answer

Bible Story: Daniel's Prayer Delayed (Daniel 10:12 – 13)

Memory Verse: "I wait for the LORD to help me." (Psalm 130:5a, NIV)

Circle Maker Motto: God is looking for Circle Makers who know His promises and pray His promises.

Master Supplies List

- ☐ NIV Bible
- ☐ Family Table Talk (one per child)
- ☐ Family Prayer Calendar (one per child)
- ☐ Whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ☐ Round hat box
- ☐ Traffic signal (one printed from an online source or handmade on paper)
- ☐ Adult volunteer to dress up and role-play as Daniel
- ☐ Scroll
- ☐ Monthly calendar drawn onto white poster board
- ☐ Garden pot filled with potting soil and a zippered plastic bag filled with seeds

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **Step 1: Getting Started** and **Step 3: Explore More**.

- ☐ **Getting Started 1:** Circle Maker Certificate (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons
- ☐ **Getting Started 2:** Stuffed animals, dolls
- ☐ **Getting Started 3:** Circle Maker Walk templates, nine different colored sheets of 9" x 12" construction paper (i.e., red, blue, yellow, green, purple, pink, orange, black, and white), nine matching smaller pieces of colored construction paper, basket, music, music player, (optional) laminating supplies, masking tape
- ☐ **Explore More 1:** Seeds that are easy to grow (beans, marigold, pumpkin, etc.), potting soil, small Styrofoam cups, water, washable markers, Memory Verse label template, and a sample completed seed cup
- ☐ **Explore More 2:** God Hears and Answers Prayer handout (one per child); red, yellow, and green tissue paper; glue sticks; washable markers and/or crayons

Step 1: Getting Started

As the children arrive to class, provide activities to help prepare them for the lesson. Select one of the following activities that will work best for your group, or create a variety of stations for the children to pick from within the classroom. Play music in the background to help create a fun and welcoming environment. Welcome the children as they arrive, and share the activities available. If you choose to create stations, you may want to have volunteers on hand to help. As the children work on these activities, remind them that the Storyteller will blow a trumpet when it's time to finish and move to the story time.

Option 1: Circle Maker Certificate

Supplies: Circle Maker Certificate (one per child), washable markers and/or crayons

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Circle Maker Certificate (one per child).

SAY, "I'm so glad you are here for our final week of Circle Maker! You have earned an official Circle Maker Certificate!"

Give each child a Circle Maker Certificate handout. Make available washable markers and/or crayons for the children to share. As the children decorate their certificates,

ASK, "What are some of the things you've learned about praying to God these past few weeks? Who can you tell about what you have learned?" Be sure to share with the children what you have been learning as well.

Option 2: I Can Pray to God!

Supplies: A few stuffed animals and/or dolls

SAY, "Welcome back! We've been learning that God loves it when we talk to Him. Talking to God is often called prayer. And we can talk to God anytime, anywhere, and in all different ways. God loves it when we pray."

ASK, "Have you ever prayed before? What are some different ways we can pray?" (*Children respond with answers like "with our eyes open," "with our eyes shut," "standing up," "sitting down," etc.*)

Hand a few children a stuffed animal or doll.

SAY, "Let's take turns teaching our stuffed animals and dolls how to pray. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to pray; prayer is just talking to God. I can go first."

Hold out the doll and SAY, "You can pray closing your eyes and saying 'thank you, God' before you eat your lunch."

ASK, "Who would like a turn?" Continue until everyone has a turn, or as time and the children's attention spans allow.

ASK, "How and when can you pray at your home this week?" (*Children respond.*)

SAY, "Those are some great ideas! God loves it when we pray, and we'll learn from the Bible today that He always answers our prayers!"

Option 3: Circle Maker Walk

Supplies: Circle Maker Walk templates, nine different colored pieces of 9" x 12" construction paper (i.e., red, blue, yellow, green, purple, pink, orange, black, and white), nine matching smaller pieces of colored construction paper, basket, music, music player, (optional) laminating supplies, masking tape

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy onto construction paper Circle Maker Walk templates. Cut out the nine large and nine smaller different colored circles. If possible, laminate the nine large circles and use the masking tape to tape them in a circle on the floor. Cut out nine smaller matching circles of paper and place them in a basket.

Note: For this option, you will invite kids to play an activity similar to the classic childhood game Cake Walk.

SAY, "Welcome, Circle Makers! Today we're going to play Circle Maker Walk. I hope you have your listening ears on — to play this game you have to listen closely to the music. Let's quickly review the rules."

Instruct the children to select one of the colored circles to stand on. It's okay if more than one child stands on a particular color.

SAY, "When I start the music I want you to walk around the circle on the different colored pieces of paper. When the music stops, I want you to freeze! I'll show you the small circle I've selected from the basket. If you're standing on the matching large circle, then you win! Got it? Everyone ready?"

Start the music and allow the children to walk around the circle. As they are doing so, select a small colored circle from the basket. Stop the music and SAY, "Freeze!" Show the small colored circle and SAY, "Here's the small circle I've selected from the basket. Who's standing on the matching large circle? Great! You win!" Encourage the winner(s) of each round to sit out the next round so that other children may have an opportunity to win.

Continue playing as time/attention allows.

SAY, "Awesome work! It was fun to watch everyone 'circling' and listening closely to the music. Today we'll learn how God is always listening to our prayers. I'm so glad you are here!"

(**Note:** With larger groups, you may choose to play the game with only six children at a time, or you can play with more than one circle at a time, duplicating supplies as necessary.)

Step 2: Present the Story

Supplies Needed: Pretend trumpet, round hat box, whiteboard, dry-erase markers, traffic signal (homemade one is fine), adult volunteer to dress up and role-play as Daniel, scroll, monthly calendar drawn onto white poster board, large garden pot filled with potting soil, and a zippered plastic bag filled with seeds

Ahead of Time: Print out a picture of a traffic light from an online source. Or, create your own. It should be small enough to fit inside of the round hat box. Prepare the round hat box with the traffic light inside. Pre-select an adult volunteer to play the role of Daniel. Be sure that the volunteer reviews the story script ahead of time. Gather costume items for the adult volunteer (costume clothing and a scroll). Draw a monthly calendar on a piece of white poster board. Prepare a garden pot with soil and place some seeds in a zippered plastic bag.

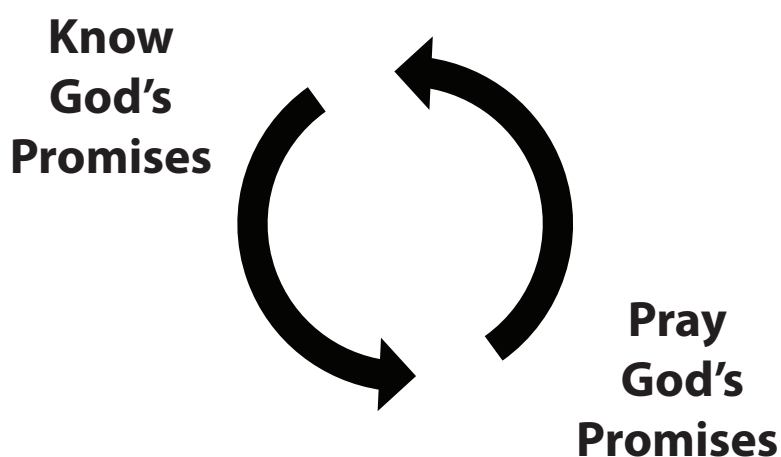
(CUE: As the Getting Started time comes to a close, have the Storyteller prepare to blow a pretend trumpet. When the Storyteller blows the trumpet, direct the children to the teaching area. The Storyteller will then lead the Bible story time. Ask volunteers to sit with the children, provide crowd control, and participate as directed by the Storyteller.)



Storyteller: It's great to see you! I'm so glad you are here. Who can remember what we've been learning together? (*Children respond.*) That's right! We've been learning how to be Circle Makers. God is looking for Circle Makers — like you and me who know God's promises and pray God's promises!

When we pray in circles, it goes like this. We spend time reading the Bible (*hold up the Bible*) so we can know God and His promises to us, and then we spend time talking to God, or praying to Him, and it makes a big circle. Like this ...

(CUE: Use the whiteboard and dry-erase markers to draw a circle as shown. As you draw, say, "Know God's promises. ... Pray God's promises!")



Today we're going to talk about something very important if you want to be a Circle Maker. (*Whisper the next sentence.*) Want to know what it is? I have a clue right here in my Circle Maker box (*round hat box with a paper traffic signal in it*) to help us.

Does anyone want to guess what's in my Circle Maker box? (*Shake box, etc.*)

Do you think it's a golf club? (*Allow children to respond, make guesses; Storyteller peeks under lid, etc.*) Should I give you a clue? Okay, it's something you probably saw on your way to church today. (*Allow children to make guesses.*) It's a traffic signal.

When you see the green light on the traffic signal, what does that mean? (*Children respond.*) Right, green means it's safe to GO!

When you see the red light on the traffic signal, what does that mean? (*Children respond.*) That's right! A red light means STOP!

But how about the yellow light in the middle? Does anyone know what that means? (*Children respond.*) The yellow light means to WAIT, or be patient. It's not time yet. You must wait.

How many of you like to wait? (*Children respond.*) Let's say you've been invited to go to a friend's house after school next Friday. Is it easy or difficult to wait for Friday? (*Children respond.*) Or you know you are going to get a new bike for your birthday. Is it easy or difficult to wait for your birthday? (*Children respond.*) Waiting isn't always easy, is it? But as Circle Makers, it is important that we learn to wait, or be patient, especially when we pray or talk to God.

Sometimes it takes a while for God to answer our prayers. Or, sometimes He answers by asking us to wait. Today's Bible story involves a man who had to wait for God to answer his prayer. His name is Daniel. How many of you have heard about Daniel before? (*Children respond.*) Daniel was a Circle Maker. (CUE: *Point to white-board.*) He knew God's promises and prayed God's promises.

As I read today's Bible story, I need you to listen for two things. One, what did Daniel do when he needed help? And two, did God keep His promise to Daniel?

Do you have your listening ears ready? (*Children respond.*) Great!

Circle Makers, meet Daniel (CUE: *Have the adult volunteer come out dressed as Daniel.*) Now we all know this isn't the real Daniel, but we can pretend, right? Great.

(CUE: *Daniel silently mimes while Storyteller shares story.*)

When Daniel was a young man, he was taken far, far from his home to be a servant to a mean king. Daniel's city was destroyed and all of God's people became slaves. (*Daniel bows as if kneeling before a king.*)

Daniel was very sad that his city was ruined, but Daniel continued to pray to God. Daniel didn't just pray when he had a bad day. He prayed every day. Daniel prayed on his knees three times a day (*Daniel prays*) — even though praying to God was against the law.

One day many, many years later, Daniel, who was still a servant far away from his home, was reading God's Word. (*Daniel reads scroll.*) You know what he learned? God's Word said it was almost time for Daniel and God's people to be set free! They wouldn't be slaves any longer. Could it be true? Would God help them? What do you think Daniel did? (*Children respond.*) That's right, Daniel prayed. (*Daniel begs and prays earnestly.*)

The Bible tells us Daniel prayed to God. He begged God saying, "Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers! Our God, please don't wait. Your city and your people belong to you." (Daniel 9:19)

Let's pray out loud like Daniel did, "Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!" Can you say it with me? (*Children respond, "Lord, please*

listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!”) One more time. (*Children respond, “Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!”*)

Daniel kept praying. He kept circling. (CUE: *Point to whiteboard.*) Daniel had waited a long time for God to help him, but he trusted God’s promises.

Another time, Daniel had a vision, or a dream, about a great war. Daniel was very sad about this dream, so what do you think he did? (*Children respond.*) That’s right — Daniel prayed for twenty-one days. How long? (*Children respond.*) Yes, twenty-one days!

(CUE: *Hold up the calendar poster.*) So if Daniel started praying on Day 1, help me count out twenty-one days that Daniel prayed to God to help him. (*Count squares on calendar — 1, 2, 3, . . . 21.*)

For twenty-one days Daniel prayed, barely ate any food, and cried out to God.

Let’s pray out loud again like Daniel, “Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!” Ready? (*Children respond, “Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers!”*)

You’ll never believe what happened? An angel showed up! Listen to what the angel said to Daniel:

“Do not be afraid, Daniel. You decided to get more understanding. (*Daniel wanted to know what was going on.*) . . . Since the first day you did those things (*like praying*), your words were heard. I have come to give you an answer.” (Daniel 10:12 – 13, NIV)

Isn’t that awesome? Since the first day Daniel started praying (*point to Day 1 on calendar*), his prayers were being heard. God always hears our prayers!

Then the angel said . . .

“But the prince of Persia (*who was kind of like a bad angel*) opposed (*or stopped*) me for 21 days.”

For how long? (*Children respond.*) Right! Twenty-one days!

“Then Michael (*who was a good, powerful angel*) came to help me. He is one of the leaders of the angels. He helped me win the battle over (*the bad angel*) . . .” (Daniel 10:13)

Wow! Can you imagine talking with an angel? Daniel did! And he had something important to tell Daniel. The angel told Daniel since the first day he started praying (*point to Day 1*), God heard his words. God always hears our prayers!

So why didn’t God answer Daniel’s prayers right away? There was a struggle going on between good angels and bad angels. But God was listening for all twenty-one days, and He was working. God always hears our prayers!

Let’s thank our Daniel volunteer. (*Everyone claps; Daniel exits.*)

Okay — were you listening for the two things I mentioned?

What did Daniel do when he needed help? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: He prayed, he cried.*) Daniel talked to God about everything. Daniel knew what to do when he needed help. Pray!

And did God keep His promise to Daniel? (*Children respond. Possible answers may include: Yes, He heard Daniel’s prayers.*) Yes! God always keeps His promises!

God answers every prayer, and He keeps every promise. That is who He is. That is what He does.

When I think about this Bible story and our role as Circle Makers, there are two very important things I want us to remember.

First, God always hears our prayers.

Can you say that with me? (*Children respond, "God always hears our prayers."*) God isn't asleep. He isn't too busy. The very second you start praying, God is listening. But since God knows everything, He knows what is best for us. And sometimes that means waiting for the answer to our prayer.

It's like our traffic signal. (*Hold up traffic signal.*)

What did we say yellow meant again? (*Children respond.*) Right, the yellow light means WAIT.

Sometimes God answers our prayers with a "yes." (*Point to green circle.*)

Sometimes God answers our prayers with a "no." (*Point to red circle.*)

And sometimes God answers our prayers with a "wait." (*Point to yellow circle.*)

Let's say you have been praying for a new friend to play with at school. God always hears your prayers. If you don't have a new friend yet, maybe there is a new boy or girl moving to your school in a few weeks. Sometimes God answers our prayers with a "wait" (*point to yellow circle*), but it doesn't mean He isn't listening. Keep praying; keep circling; God always hears your prayers.

The other thing I want you to remember is that praying is like planting. (CUE: *Hold up the garden pot filled with potting soil and the zippered plastic bag of seeds.*)

We can think of our prayers like seeds that get planted in the ground and then disappear for a season. (CUE: *Put seeds in the soil as you say these words.*)

- God, please watch over my family.
- God, please help us sell our home so we can move.
- God, please help me have a new friend at school.

Eventually the seed grows into a plant or a flower, doesn't it? But it takes time. Just like we can't see what's going with a seed planted in the dirt, we can't always see what God is doing with our prayers. But does that mean the seed is not doing its job just because we can't see it? No way! We can trust that something is growing down there. Praying is like planting seeds. God always hears our prayers; we just don't know how or when He will answer them. Praying is like planting.

Our job as Circle Makers is to keep praying, to keep planting those seeds, and to believe that God hears us and will keep His promises.

This week's memory verse will help us as Circle Makers. "I wait for the LORD to help me" (Psalm 130:5a, NIV). Let's stand up and say that together. (CUE: *Have the children stand up and practice the hand motions while repeating the words after you.*)

- **I:** Point to yourself.
- **Wait:** Put palms straight out like a crossing guard.
- **For the Lord:** Bow down to a king.
- **To help:** Close your left hand into an upright fist with your thumb sticking up.

Place the outstretched palm of your right hand under your left fist and raise both hands. (The bottom hand lifts the fist hand like a helping hand.)

- **Me:** Point to yourself.
- **Psalm:** Open hands like a Bible.
- **130:** Hold up one (pointer finger), then three fingers, then form a zero — all with your right hand
- **5:** Hold up your left hand (five fingers).

God is looking for Circle Makers, friends. Would anyone here like to know God's promises and pray His promises, and join God on an amazing adventure of prayer? (*Children respond.*) Oh good! Me too!

Let's pray: "Dear God. Thank You for the Bible. Thank You for Daniel's story and his love for prayer. Help us to be more like Daniel — praying, reading Your Word, and praying more. Thank You for loving us so much and for always hearing our prayers. In Jesus' name. Amen."



Step 3: Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Growing Seeds of Prayer

Supplies: Seeds that are easy to grow (beans, marigold, pumpkin, etc.), potting soil, small Styrofoam cups, pitcher of water, washable markers, glue sticks, Memory Verse label template, and a completed sample seed cup

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Memory Verse label template (one label per child). Cut apart the labels (one per child).

SAY, "Today we heard that 'praying is like planting.' Let's make a seed cup to help us remember what we learned today."

Give each child a Styrofoam cup. Make available washable markers for the children to share. Help children, as needed, to write their names on the side of the cup. Give each child a memory verse label. Make available glue sticks for the children to share. Instruct the children to glue the memory verse label on the outside of the cup. Make available a variety of decorating supplies such as stickers and stick-on gems. Instruct the children to decorate their cups using markers, stickers, stick-on gems, or any other decorating supplies.

After the children have finished decorating their Styrofoam cups, scoop potting soil into each cup about three-fourths full. Give each child a seed.

SAY, “We learned our prayers are like seeds that get planted in the ground. Let’s plant real seeds today. Then you can take yours home and watch it grow. When you water it each day, stop and pray to God. You can tell God how much you love Him and thank Him for hearing and answering your prayers.”

Instruct the children to put their seeds in the cup and poke them down into the soil. Help each child lightly sprinkle their dirt with water. Remind them to keep their plants on a sunny windowsill at home and to water them just a little each day.

SAY, “Your prayers are important to God. Keep this seed cup somewhere in your room or home where you will see it every day. Remember to water your seed regularly so that it will grow! Remember God always hears your prayers!”

Option 2: God Hears and Answers Prayer

Supplies: God Hears and Answers Prayer handout (one per child); red, yellow, and green tissue paper; glue sticks; scissors

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the God Hears and Answers Prayer handout (one per child). Cut larger sheets of tissue paper into several sections each. Prepare one completed sample.

SAY, “Today we learned God always hears our prayers. Sometimes God answers our prayers with a ‘yes’ (*point to green circle on your sample*), sometimes God answers our prayers with a ‘no’ (*point to red circle on your sample*), and sometimes God answers our prayers with a ‘wait’ (*point to yellow circle on your sample*). Let’s decorate a traffic signal to help us remember this important lesson.”

Give each child a God Hears and Answers Prayer handout; a section each of green, red, and yellow tissue paper; and a glue stick. Help the children write their names on their sheets, as needed. Instruct the children to tear the tissue paper into small pieces and to glue the pieces on the correct circles. As the children decorate the stoplight,

SAY, “Let’s think of ways God might answer with a yes, no, and wait.”

Examples may include:

- Yes — You pray for a new job for your family member, and then he/she gets one; you pray for a nice trip and everyone gets along.
- No — You pray to make a soccer team, but you don’t make it; you pray for a new baby brother, but you are still an only child.
- Wait — You pray for your house to sell, but it takes almost a whole year; you pray for your cough to go away, but it lasts eight days.

SAY, “It isn’t always easy to wait when we pray, is it? Remember, wait doesn’t mean God isn’t listening. Keep praying; keep circling; God always hears your prayers.”

Option 3: Red Light/Green Light Game

SAY, “How many of you have played Red Light/Green Light before? (*Children respond.*) Circle Maker Red Light/Green Light is just like the regular game, except we will also have a yellow light. Let’s play!”

Instruct the children to line up side by side at one end of the classroom. Instruct an adult volunteer (the “traffic light”) to stand about twenty feet away, and then turn his/her back to the children. When the traffic light shouts “Green Light!” the children walk quickly toward him/her (no running!). When the traffic light suddenly turns and shouts “Red Light!” the children must stop immediately and place their hands along their sides. If the traffic light sees anyone moving, that person must go back to the starting point. When the traffic light turns and shouts “Yellow Light!” the children “freeze.” Once again, any movement requires going back to the beginning. The game ends when a child reaches the traffic light.

Continue as time and/or attention allows.

SAY, “Your prayers are important to God. God may answer your prayers by saying Yes, No, or Wait. But remember God loves when you talk to Him and always hears your prayers.”

Step 4: Go!

Supplies: Family Table Talk handout and Family Prayer Calendar (one each per child)

Ahead of Time: Print and photocopy the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar (one each per child).

As you prepare for dismissal, pray together and ask God to help each child to remember that sometimes God answers our prayers by asking us to wait. Encourage the children to spend time memorizing Psalm 130:5a at home. Make sure each child leaves with his or her take-home activities, the Family Table Talk handout, and a Family Prayer Calendar.

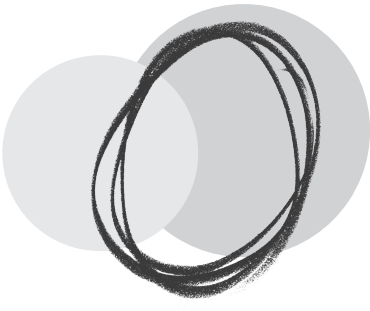
As parents arrive, introduce them to the Family Table Talk handout and the Family Prayer Calendar. Encourage parents to spend time throughout the week praying through the verses on the prayer calendar and talking about ways to be Circle Makers!

Way to go, Circle Maker!



Let it be known that

name



did an awesome job!

leader

date

Know God's promises and pray God's promises.

**“I wait for the LORD
to help me.”
Psalm 130:5a**

**“I wait for the LORD
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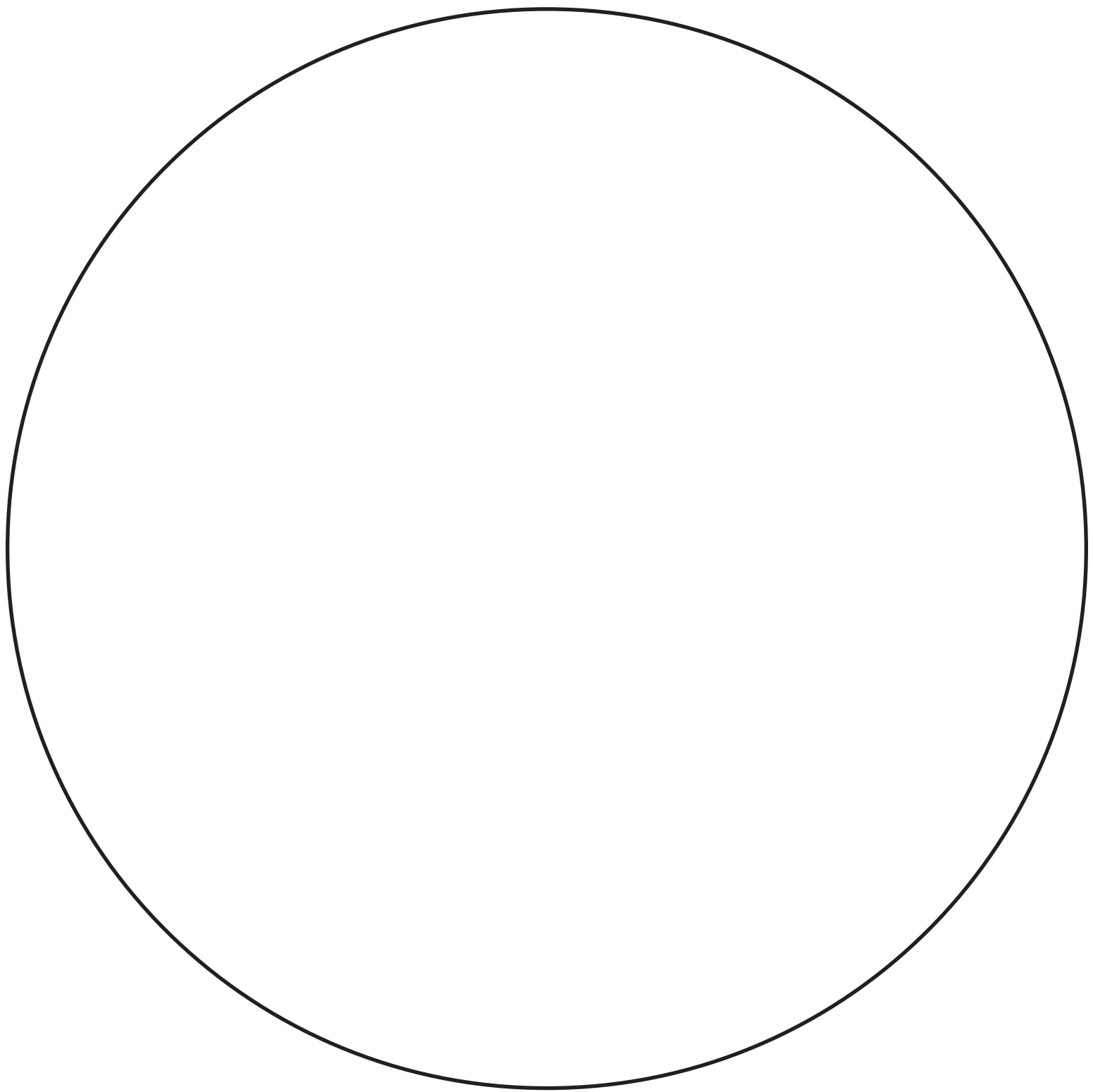
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to help me.”
Psalm 130:5a**

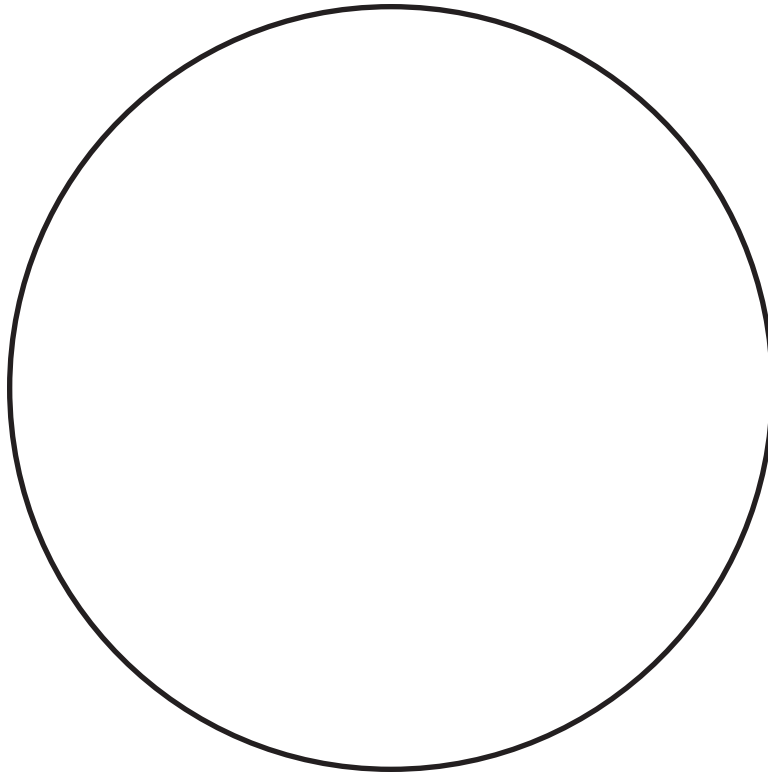
**“I wait for the LORD
to help me.”
Psalm 130:5a**

**“I wait for the LORD
to help me.”
Psalm 130:5a**

**“I wait for the LORD
to help me.”
Psalm 130:5a**

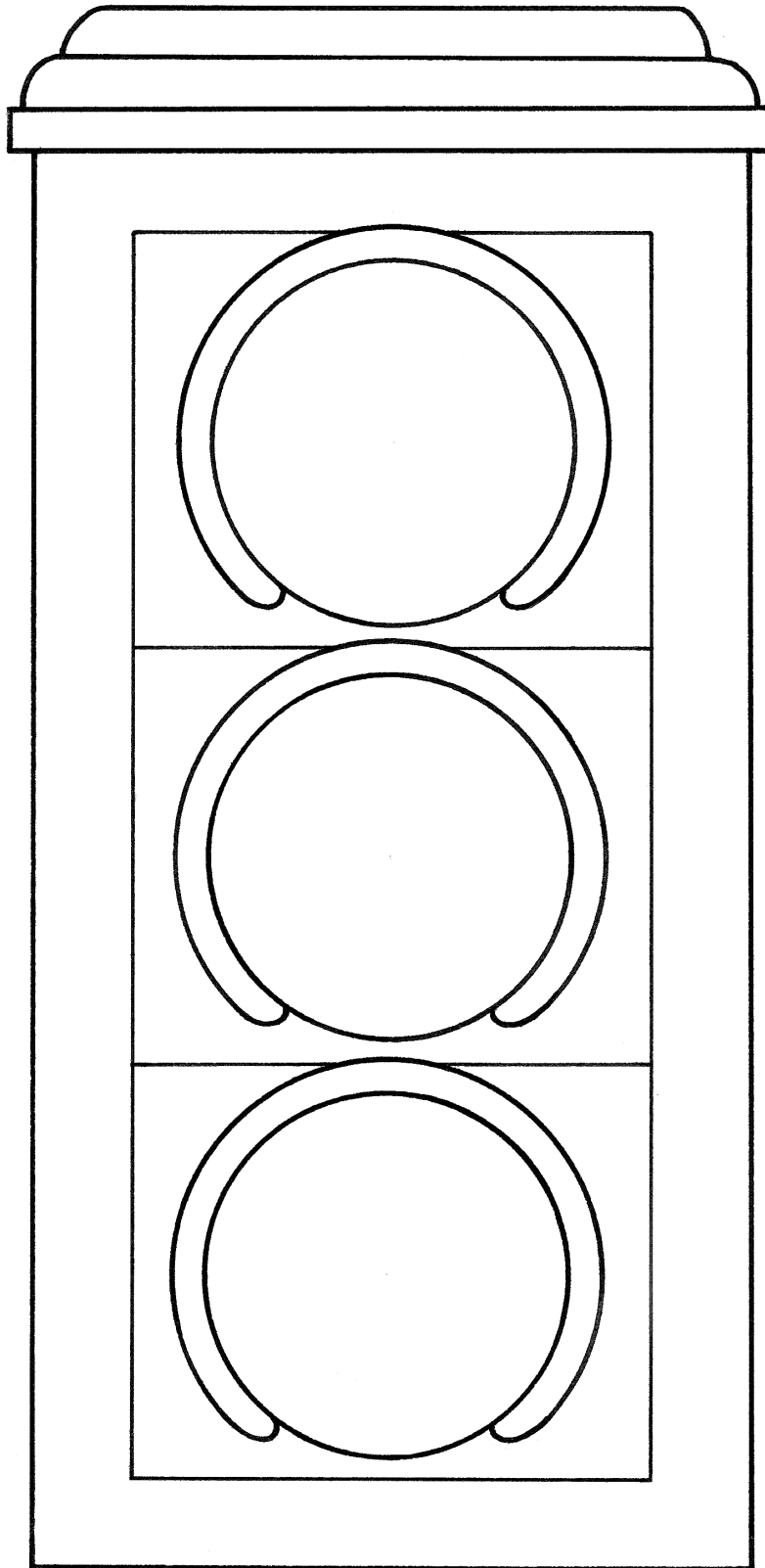
**“I wait for the LORD
to help me.”
Psalm 130:5a**





Name _____

GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS PRAYER



“I wait for the LORD to help me.”

Psalms 130:5a