

THANK GOD I'M FREE

CELEBRATING JUBILEE

TGIF Children's Engagement Programme 2015

This year for Good Friday, each cell is free to create a programme that meets the needs of their guests and that provides them with an opportunity to share about the freedom that is found in knowing Jesus Christ.

Here are some ideas that cells with children guests can consider for their programme, which enable a transition into sharing the gospel with the children using the Breaking the Barrier sticker booklet.

Children below the age of 5 years

- It may not be easy to separate pre-nursery children from their parents to participate in a separate children's programme.
- Children of this age have a short attention span and would need to be engaged in activities such as craft, colouring or simple games.
- If they join the rest of the children in the children's programme, being more restless, they would need extra children's helpers to look after them.
- Some ideas for how to engage them:
 - Watch a children's cartoon, e.g. Veggie Tales.
 - Help them to do a simple Easter craft and use it to share simply and briefly about what Jesus did during Good Friday and Easter.
 - Please refer to the colouring pages in the Appendix.
 - Bless them at the end of the session with a prayer and goodie bags. As Breaking the Barrier is for children 5 years and above, there is no need to do Breaking the Barrier with this group of children

Children ages 5 to 12

Idea #1: Play games with a "Freedom" theme

Big Idea: Sin traps us and takes away our freedom to know God and to live the life that He wants for us, but Jesus came to set us free.

Reference Verses:

John 8:31-36

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

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34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Note: These games can be adapted for indoor use, provided that there is sufficient space and that the children's safety is taken into consideration.

1.1 Ice-Breakers

Choose one to two age-appropriate ice-breakers for the children to help them to get to know each other, including each other's names.

1.2 Games

Game 1 – Marco Polo (indoor/outdoor)

Objective: Avoid being found by the person who is chosen to be 'It'

Logistics: Blindfolds (can be made out of strips of trashbags, or disposable face masks can be used)

Instructions:

- One person is chosen to be 'It' and is blindfolded
- 'It' will count out loud from 1 to 10, while the other children will spread out quietly and try to avoid detection by 'It'
- After counting to 10, 'It' will roam around the play area and try to find the other children
- When 'It' wants a clue about where the other children are, 'It' will call out "Marco!" and the rest of the children have to reply "Polo!"
- If a child is caught by 'It', they would become the new 'It' and would be blindfolded. The previous 'It' would join the game as a participant.

Debrief

- Leader to interview 1 or 2 of the children who were blindfolded
 - Was it difficult to find everyone just now?
 - How did it feel to be blindfolded?
 - Were you able to move freely about when you had the blindfold on? Is it easier with the blindfold off or on?

Game 2 – Three-Legged Race (outdoor)

Objective: Be the first pair of children to cross the finishing line

Logistics:

- Trash bags (cut into strips, one per pair of children)
- Items (such as a bag) to be used to indicate where the end of the race track is

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Instructions:

- Split the children into pairs, matching children of similar height and build
- Ask the pairs to stand together side by side
- Use the raffia string to tie the two inside legs of the pair together (the right leg of the partner on his left and the left leg of the partner on the right). Do not tie too tightly. Open up the raffia string so that it will apply less pressure on the children's leg.
- Have the pairs line up at the starting line. On your count, have the pairs walk or run as quickly as possible to the finish line and return to the start point again.

Game 3 – Human Knot (indoor/outdoor)

Objective: Untangle the group so that everyone's arms are no longer crossed.

Logistics: None

Instructions:

- Get the children to stand in a circle facing each other
- Tell the children to stretch out one of their hands and grasp the hand of a person across from them in the circle
- Tell the children to stretch out their other hand and grasp the hand of another person across from them in the circle
- **Leader to say:** "You are all tangled up as a group right now, but you're going to work together a team to be freed."
- Give the children 5 minutes as a start to untangle their arms by moving around
- Remind them that they should not let go of the other persons' hands at any time
- The game ends when the group is standing in a circle, with none of the children's arms crossed.

Note: This game may be quite challenging for younger children (5-7 years old) as it requires problem-solving and communication skills. It should also be played with at least 7 children.

Game 4 – Pick-Up Sticks (indoor)

Objective: Pick up the most sticks without moving other sticks

Logistics: Pick-up stick sets, 6 children should be able to share one set

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Instructions:

- Have the group sit in a circle.
- Take the sticks and hold it 2-3 inches above the floor in the middle of the circle of children.
- Drop the sticks.
- **Leader to say:** "Look at this pile of sticks. They are in a big mess, tangled up with other sticks. We are going to try to free these sticks one by one, without moving other sticks in the pile."
- Allow the children to take turns to pick up the sticks, one at a time.
- If any of the other sticks move, their turn is over, and it is the next child's turn.
- The child who has the most sticks at the end of the game wins.

Game 5 – Rescue Mission (indoor/outdoor)

Objective: Work together as a team to move stuffed toy animals from one point to another

Logistics:

- 3-5 stuffed toy animals of various sizes
- Masking tape
- Rubberband Grabber (one grabber to be shared by 6 children)
 - Rubberband
 - 6 pieces of twine, about 3m in length

Preparation:

- Tie one end of the twine to the rubberband, repeat for all 6 pieces of twine
- Use masking tape to make a small circle on the ground, large enough for the stuffed toys to be placed within
- Use masking tape to demarcate a safe zone for the toys to be placed

Instructions:

- **Leader to say:** "You are part of a rescue team that will set the animals free from the island that they are stuck on. You will each hold on to one end of the twine and will work together to use the rubberband to pick up the animals. You cannot use your hands to touch the animals, and once the animal falls into the water surrounding the island, they will have to return to their starting point."
- Allow the children to discuss their strategy and have a trial round.
- Give them 5 minutes to rescue all the stuffed toy animals and bring them to the safe area

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1.3 *Transition to Breaking the Barrier*

Note: This is a suggested transition, which incorporates all five proposed games and helps to link the games to the sharing of Breaking the Barrier. Do amend the transition to suit the games that you select. If you are short of time, you can focus on the big idea “Sin traps us and takes away our freedom to know God and to live the life that He wants for us, but Jesus came to set us free.”

“Children, I hope that you had fun playing these games. Did anyone notice that there was something that the games had in common?”

In the first game, **Marco Polo**, the person who was trying to find everyone else had a blindfold, and couldn't see. In the second game, the **Three-Legged Race** – what made the game difficult? Yes, that's right, every pair had their legs tied together, so it wasn't easy coordinating and getting to where you wanted to go.

The blindfold and the string around our legs were things that were trapping us, and stopping us from being free to do what we usually can do, like see and run freely.

God created us to be free, to be able to do things like see everything that He has created in this world, and to run and move freely. He created us to be with Him forever and to enjoy eternal life with Him always.

There's something in each of our lives that is just like the blindfold and the string, and it's called sin. Sin is when we choose to do things our own way, instead of doing what is right. An example is like when we stay angry with others or tell a lie. Sin stops us from knowing God, like we were created to do.

We are trapped in a mess, just like the **Pick Up Sticks**, or the **Human Knot**... And we have no way out of the mess on our own. But because God loves us so much, He wants us to be free to know Him and to live life like He created us to. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to save us from sin and set us free. He came to rescue us, like how we saved the stuffed animals in our **Rescue Mission**.

We are now going to split into small groups to share with you more about what Jesus did for us on Good Friday and Easter to set us free.”

At this point, the children's helpers can split into smaller groups and share Breaking the Barrier with the children.

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Idea #2: Watch a movie about freedom

Big Idea: Jesus has set us free from being slaves to sin.

Reference Verse:

Galatians 5:1

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

2.1 Ice-breakers

Choose one to two age-appropriate ice-breakers for the children to help them to get to know each other, including each other's names.

2.2 Watch the movie

Watch the movie "The Prince of Egypt" (98 minutes), about the Israelites being set free from slavery in Egypt.

If the entire movie is too long, you can pause after 2:45 minutes and start again at around 37:00 minutes, when Moses is looking for a sheep and comes across the burning bush.

Here are some questions that you can ask the children after watching the movie:

- Who were the Israelites? Were they free or were they slaves?
 - **Answer:** They were the slaves of the people of Egypt
- What was it like being a slave?
 - **Answer:** They worked very hard, and were treated badly by the Egyptians
- Did the people like being slaves?
 - **Answer:** No, they wanted to be free
- How did Pharaoh feel about the Israelites leaving Egypt?
 - **Answer:** He was angry and reluctant. He did not want them to go.
- How were they set free?
 - **Answer:** God sent Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. He used Moses to perform many miracles.

2.3 Transition to Breaking the Barrier

The Israelites weren't made to be slaves, to be trapped. They were created to be free. God sent Moses to save them and to set them free because He loved them and cared for them.

In the same way, God made us to be people to live in freedom. He created us to know Him and to have eternal life with Him forever. But something came into our lives to take away that freedom. That thing is sin.

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Sin is when we choose to do things our own way, instead of doing what is right. An example is like when we stay angry with others or tell a lie. Sin stops us from knowing God, like we were created to do. Sin traps us, and we become trapped just like how the Israelites were trapped in Egypt.

But because God loves us so much, He wants us to be free to know Him and to live life like He created us to, that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to save us from sin and set us free.

We are now going to split into small groups to share with you more about what Jesus did for us on Good Friday and Easter to set us free.”

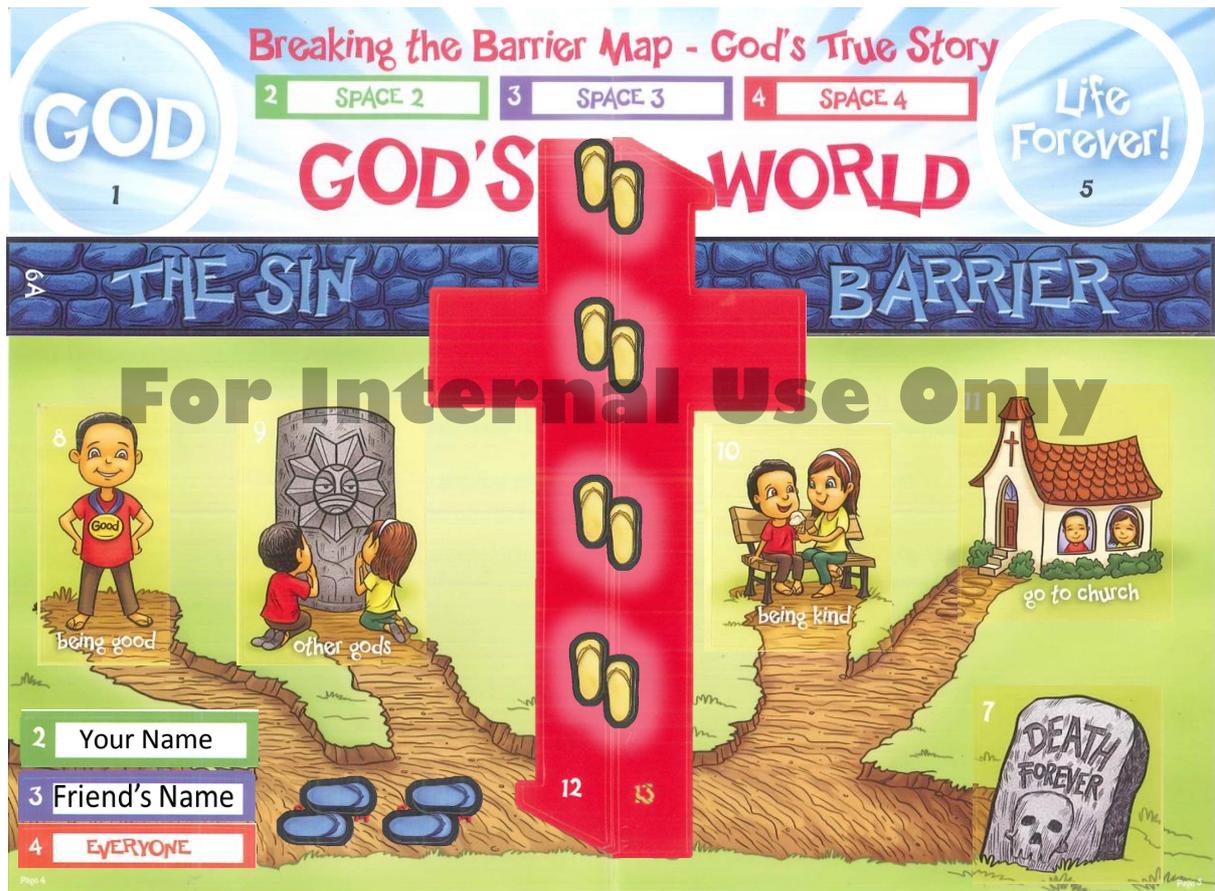
At this point, the children's helpers can split into smaller groups and share Breaking the Barrier with the children.

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Appendix: Guide to Sharing "Breaking the Barrier"

Breaking the Barrier is a sticker booklet tool that GKidz uses to share the gospel with children in an interactive, understandable way. The booklet follows the sequence of the John 3:16 diagram, with a sticker to be pasted by the child at each step. The booklet includes a recommended script for what to say with each step, but the overview below is included for your early preparation if required.

Completed picture after all stickers pasted



Explain to the children that we have a God who is great and who created the universe! He created the stars, moon, sun, trees, animals, everything, perfectly and without sin.

(Paste Sticker 1, the "God" sticker)



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Tell the children that on Earth, one of His first few choices was to create Man. Yes, He created you and me, He created everyone!

(Paste Stickers 2, 3, and 4 and write the child's name in Blank 2 and your name in Blank 3)



Share with the children that He created us so that He could spend life forever with us!

(Paste Sticker 5, the "Life Forever" sticker)



Tell the children that Man chose to do things their own way. They didn't listen to God and instead chose to do wrong. This is called sin.

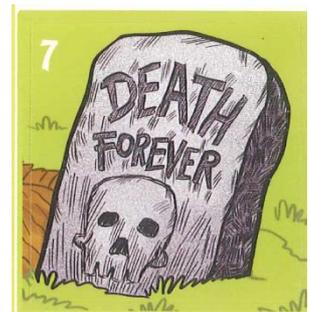
(Paste Sticker 6A and 6B, the "Sin Barrier" stickers)



Because of our sin, we cannot be with God, because God is holy and pure. Sin creates a barrier between us and God and separates us from Him. **(Move Stickers 2, 3, and 4 down to the corresponding spaces at the bottom of the sheet)**

Because of this separation, we will no longer have life forever, but we will instead be led to death forever.

(Paste Sticker 7, the "Death Forever" sticker)



But because we were created to be with God, we try all sort of ways to get back to God. Sometimes, we do good deeds, like helping the elderly, helping my mummy wash the dishes, but no matter how much good we do, it doesn't break through the sin barrier

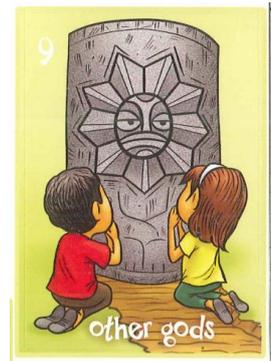
(Paste Sticker 8, the "Being Good" sticker).



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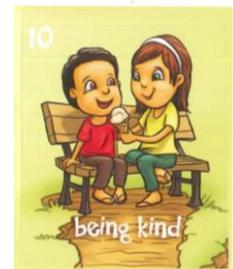
Sometimes we turn to other gods, but there is only one true God

(Paste Sticker 9, the "Other gods" sticker).



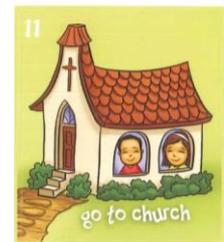
Sometimes we also try to be kind to others, but you know what, we still love ourselves the most

(Paste Sticker 10, the "Being Kind" sticker).



And sometimes, we think we can get back to God by going to church, but going to church is not enough to break the sin barrier

(Paste the Sticker 11, the "Going to Church" sticker).

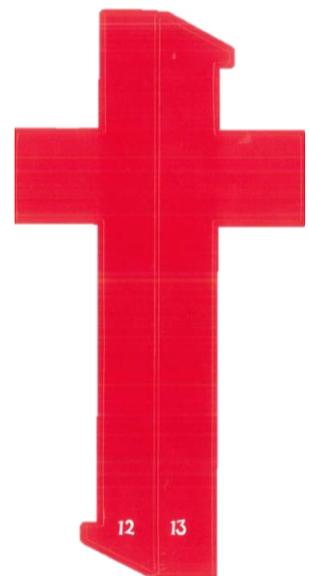


Remember, God created you and me. This means that God loves us. He loves us so much that He sent His Son Jesus, down to earth.

(Paste Sticker 12, the half of the "Cross" pointing downwards)

When Jesus was on earth, He lived the perfect life. That means that He didn't have any sin at all! We were supposed to be punished because of our sin, but Jesus took our punishment and died for us on the cross! But the good news is, Jesus did not stay dead, but rose again and came to life on the third day! Jesus is stronger than death! He broke the sin barrier, giving us a way to go back to God again.

(Paste Sticker 13, the other half of the "Cross" pointing upwards).



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(Paste the "Blue Sandals" stickers in Space 14 that lead to the foot of the cross)

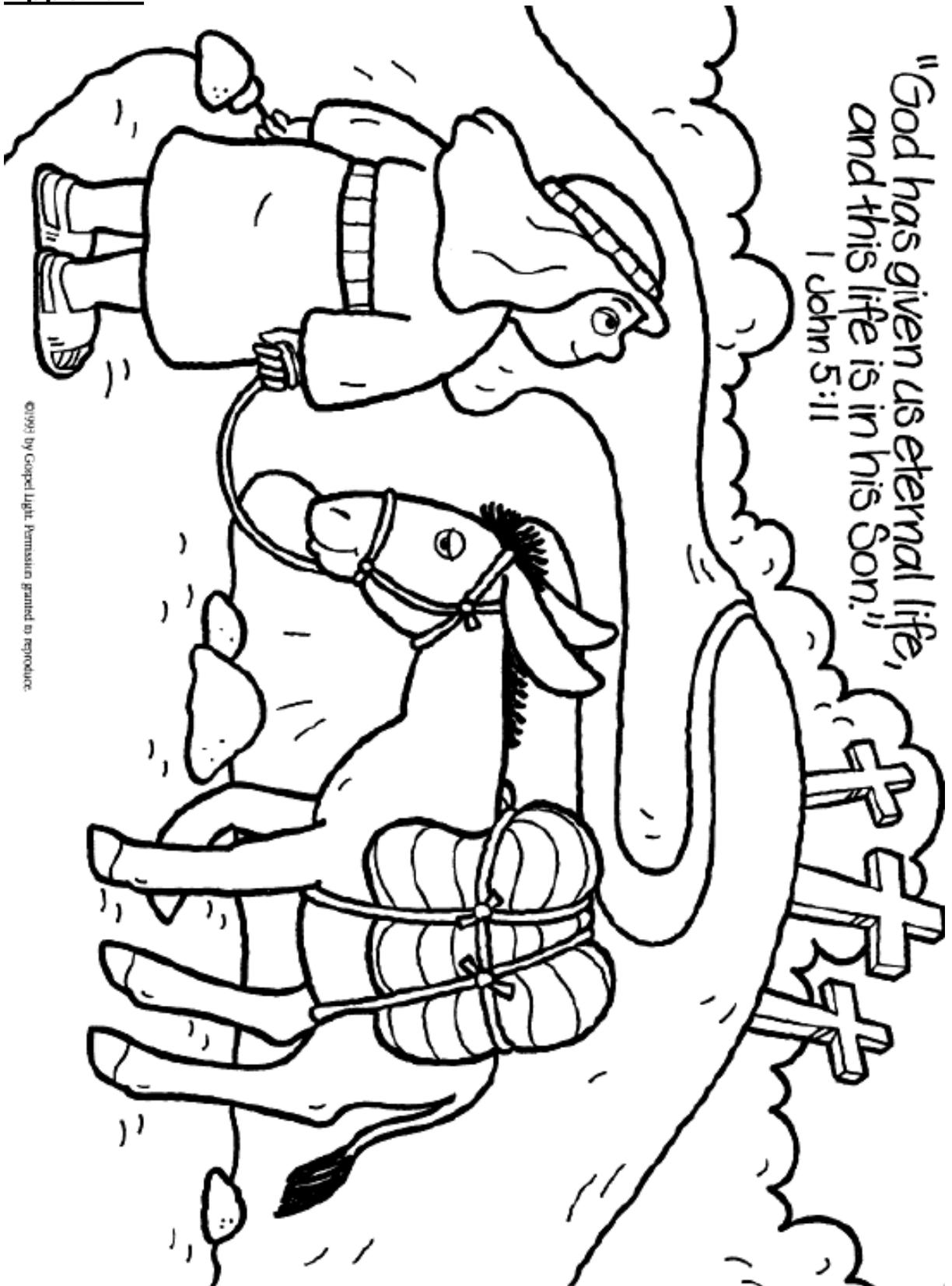
Tell the children that "Today, Jesus wants you to know that He loves you, even when you have done wrong before. He has broken the sin barrier so that you can return to God. Jesus wants to be your friend, but He also gives you a choice. Do you want Jesus to be your friend and do you want to follow Him? Do you want Him to take away your sins and to bring you back to God?"

If the child's answer is "Yes", get them to repeat the salvation prayer printed in the booklet. ***(Pray first, then paste the "Gold Sandals" stickers on the cross that leads them back to God)*** Congratulate them that they now know God. Share with them that they can pray to God, and teach them a simple way to pray.

If the child's answer is "No" or "Not Now", pray a prayer of blessing for them over any area of need in their life.

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Appendix



Jesus Is Alive!

(John 20)

At the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene talked to a man. She thought he was a gardener. But then she saw that the man was really Jesus! He had risen from the dead and was alive again!

Color the picture using the code. Cut it out and tape it up so you can be reminded of this wonderful truth!

