



Memory Challenge

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

—1 Corinthians 13:1-3, NIV

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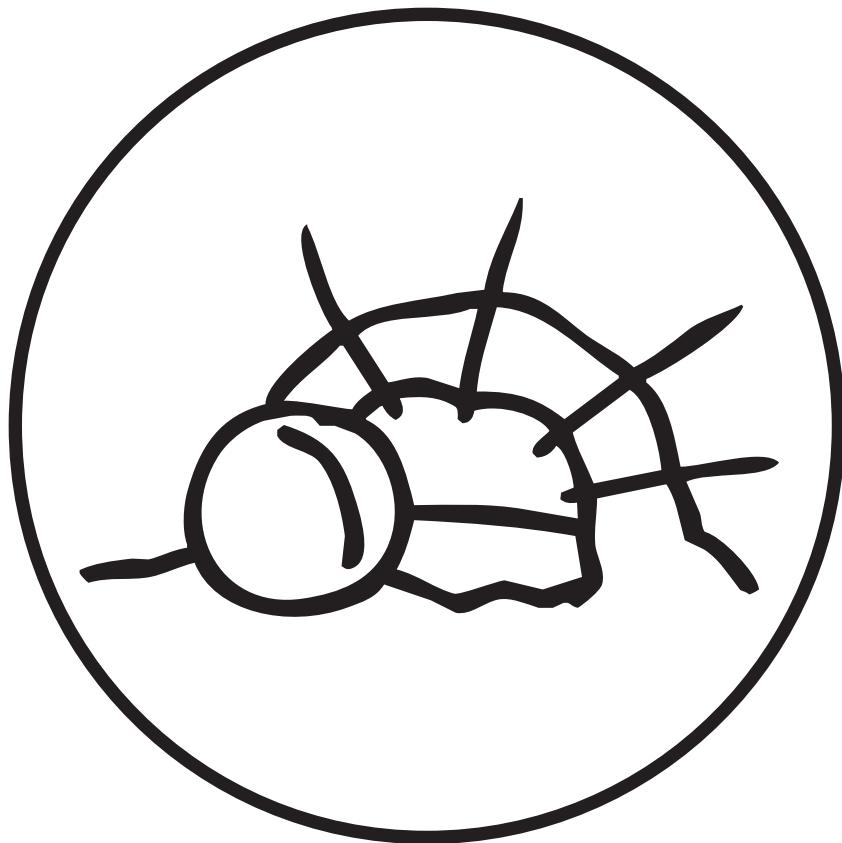
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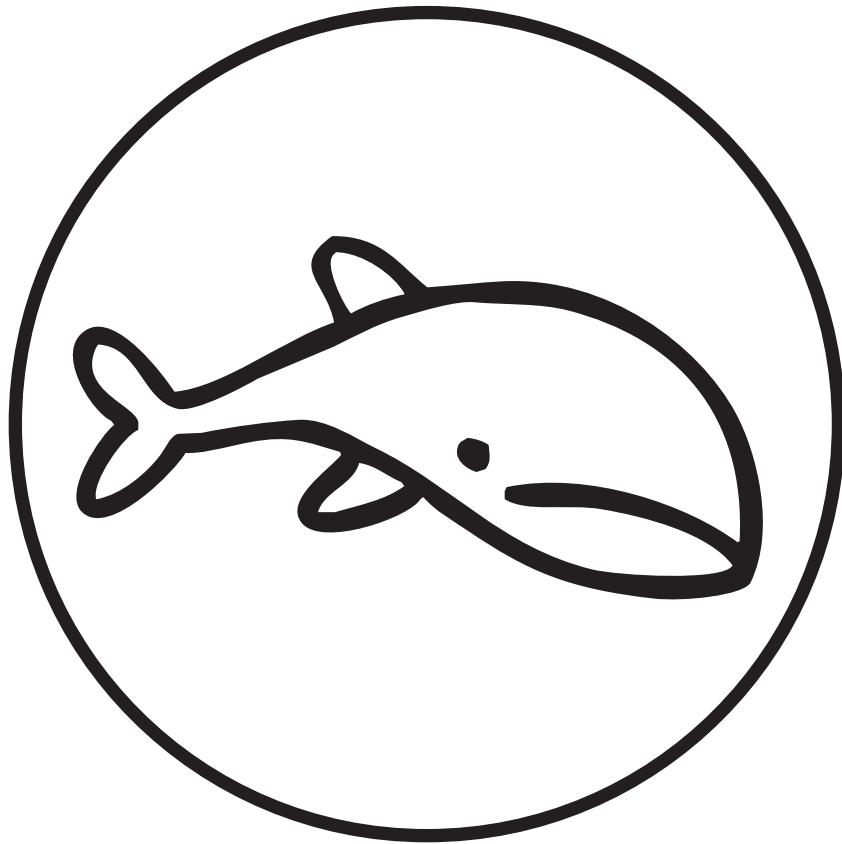
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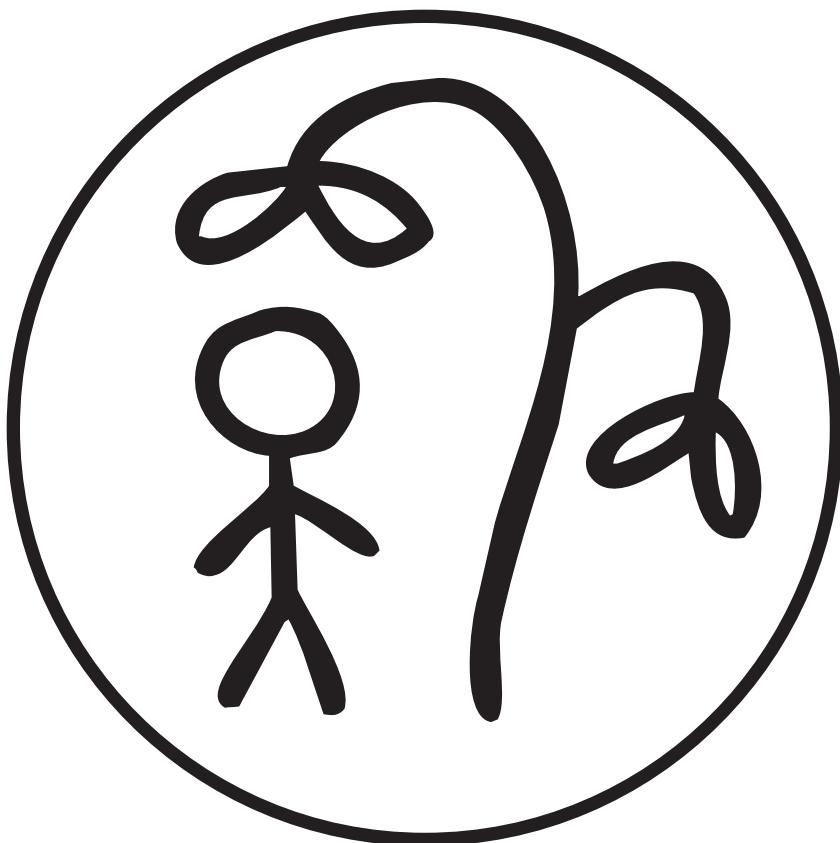
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Marvel Year 2, Unit 5, Easter Session



Marvel Year 2, Unit 5, Session 1



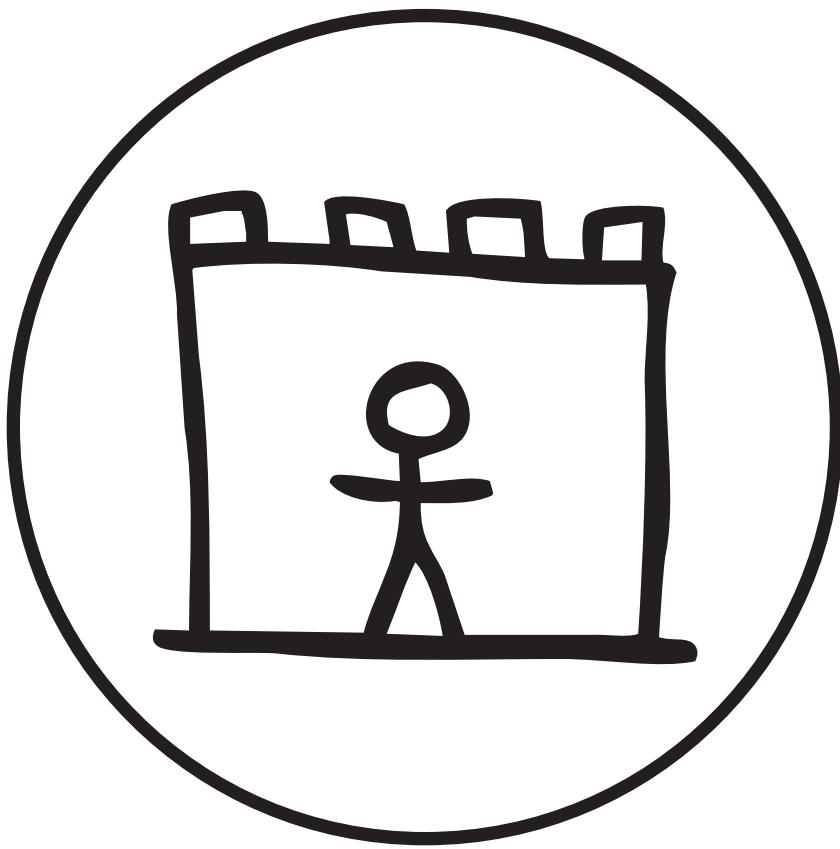
Marvel Year 2, Unit 5, Session 2



Marvel Year 2, Unit 5, Session 3



Marvel Year 2, Unit 5, Session 4



Marvel Year 2, Unit 5, Session 5

Dear Family,

Our group looks forward to exploring some remarkable stories about Jonah and Daniel in the weeks to come. At some point in our time together, we will marvel at the miraculous resurrection of our Savior Jesus. This is what our schedule looks like:

Date: _____ Celebrate Jesus' Resurrection 

Date: _____ A Lesson for Jonah 

Date: _____ Jonah Goes to Nineveh 

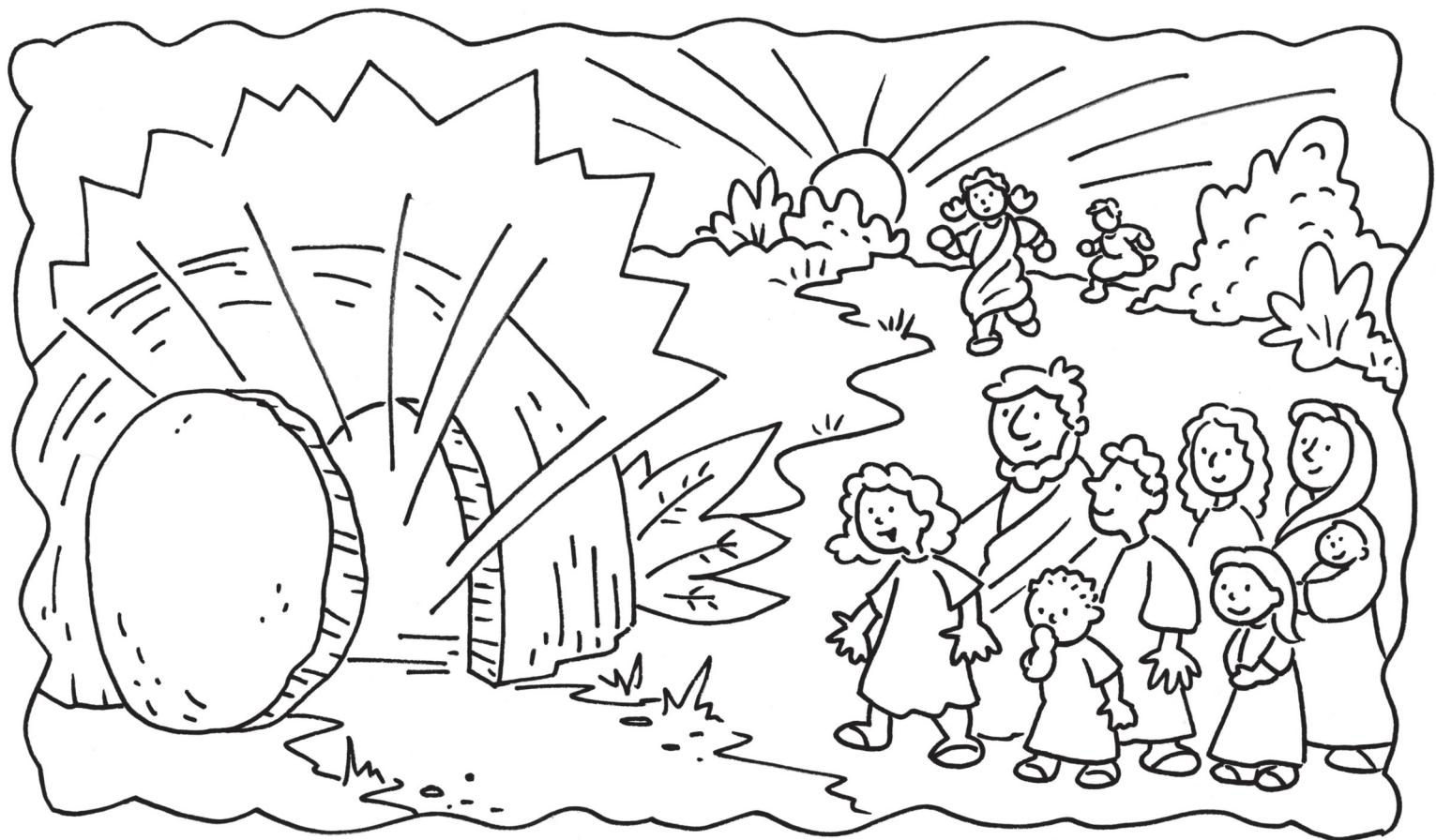
Date: _____ A Strange Dream 

Date: _____ Three Friends and a Furnace 

Date: _____ A Proud King 

Our memory challenge for this unit is 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. As you learn these verses together in the coming weeks, feel free to talk with your child about how these verses relate to your lives. A great way to make this passage part of your life is to download one of the Memory Challenge songs, "Love Is" or "Without Love" from our website: www.Dwellcurriculum.org/downloads

Yours in Christ,



When you talk to Jesus and ask him into your life, he will walk with you.
Later, Jesus walked and talked with his disciples.
Jesus walked in the garden and talked to Mary.
Jesus walked out of the tomb.

Mary's Story

*Raise your hand every time you encounter **bold type** to signal your witnesses to act or to show.*

Mary is alone outside the tomb, crying. **Silently you watch her.** You know how much she loved Jesus. She had been one of Jesus' followers, listening to his stories, watching him heal people who couldn't walk or see. He did it lovingly, with a touch or a word. Thinking about Jesus' love, you notice your heart softening. **You stretch out your hand to her for a second.**

You look at the tomb. It is like a small stone house with a large, round boulder that rolls in front of the opening after a body is put inside. Mary bends down to look inside. **You also bend down to look.** You see a carved-out space for the body. It is almost like a shelf. Mary appears startled and upset. Now you see two bright figures sitting on the shelf, one on one end and another on the opposite end. Could they be angels?

You put your hand behind your ear to hear every word that might be said. Yes, they are speaking. "Woman, why are you crying?" She doesn't really seem to notice that they are angels, but she does answer. "They have taken my Lord away. And I don't know where they have put him." **Place a hand on your heart because it is beating fast.** **You want to know what they will tell her.** Before they answer, you see her turn around. She has heard something else. **Quickly, turn and look to see what has distracted her.**

With her eyes full of tears, she looks straight at a man who has now appeared. You hope she can identify him for you, but her eyes are so glazed over from crying that she doesn't seem to recognize him. **Lean out to listen.** He is speaking. "Woman, why are you crying?" Maybe the kindness in his voice will help her. **You softly clap with your hands a few times, hoping she feels his kindness.**

You hear her voice growing a little stronger. **Clench your fist in hope.** Her voice is asking, pleading. "Sir," she is saying, "if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him." This man must be one of the workers in this garden. **Your hopeful fist is now a little irritated. Shake your fist at him.** He'd better give her some answers.

For a second he simply looks at her. **You don't want to shake your fist anymore.** There is kindness in his eyes. Now he is looking directly at her as if he is going to say something important. "Mary." That's all he says. But he says it as if he knows her and cares about her. **You put your hands together as if in a prayer.** The trembling of her shoulders has stopped. The tears have stopped. She looks at him as if she is really seeing him now. "Teacher!" she calls out. **You stand and watch with a hand over your mouth. It is so amazing! There is joy rushing through you like a fast-moving river.** No one needs to tell you that she is seeing and speaking to Jesus. You know that dead people can't walk or talk, but here is Jesus, who was dead, walking and talking!

Put both hands behind your ears. You want to hear everything that is said. Jesus is telling her not to hold on to him. She obeys. She must see that there is something different about him. Next, he says that he has not yet ascended to the Father. **You drop your hands to your sides and lift them as if questioning.** What does that mean? You wish that you could hear that conversation between God the Father and Jesus. Would the Father be proud of his Son for obeying? For a moment you remember Jesus in the garden, asking the Father for his will to be done. Jesus did the hard thing and came out as the winner.

Wait, he has something else to tell Mary. Her tears are gone. She is nodding her head in agreement. If Mary is agreeing, you want to also. **Nod your head as you listen to Jesus.** "Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

You watch as Jesus goes. You hear Mary saying, "I have seen the Lord!" **Your voice has returned and you can say it too. "I have seen the Lord!"**

Easter Story Strips

John 20:1-18

Mary went to the tomb while it was still dark.

She saw the stone had been rolled away.

Mary ran to Peter and John, saying, “They have taken the Lord!”

Peter and John both ran to the tomb.

They saw the strips of linen and the burial cloth that once wrapped Jesus’ body, folded in the tomb.

Saddened and confused, the disciples went home.

Crying, Mary looked into the tomb and saw two angels.

She turned around and saw Jesus, but thought he was a gardener.

Jesus spoke to Mary, calling her by name.

Then she realized it was Jesus.

Mary went to the disciples and said, “I have seen the Lord!”

The Investigation

The detective knocks on the door of Mary's house. Mary lets the detective in.

Detective: Good evening. I am a detective from the Roman Guard, and I'm here to investigate the strange disappearance of the body of Jesus.

Is there anyone I can speak with who might have information on the whereabouts of the body?

Mary: Yes, I have information for you, detective.

Detective: Great. Would you mind answering a few of my questions?

Mary: Not at all. Please come in.

Detective: (*Both sit down at a table.*) Okay, well let's get started (*taking out a pad of paper and a pen*). Where were you the day Jesus' body went missing?

Mary: I was on my way to visit his tomb. It was a Sunday morning, and it was still dark.

Detective: What happened when you arrived?

Mary: The strangest thing had happened—the large stone that covered the entrance to his tomb was rolled away, and the tomb was empty! Immediately I thought that someone must have stolen Jesus' body. I was devastated.

Detective: What did you do when you saw Jesus' body was missing?

Mary: I ran back to the city as fast as I could and told Jesus' disciples what I had seen. Peter and John ran to the tomb and saw the strips of linen and burial cloth Jesus had been wrapped in folded neatly in the tomb. They couldn't believe their eyes! I caught up with them and saw the terrible sadness on their faces. I just couldn't stop crying.

Detective: What did the disciples do once they saw that Jesus' body was missing?

Mary: Nothing. I think they were in great shock. Once they saw there was nothing else they could do, they went back home.

Detective: Did you return home with them?

Mary: No. I stayed near the tomb and just cried and cried. I couldn't leave. I was hoping that the person who took his body would come back. Then I could ask the person where Jesus was.

Detective: What happened after that?

Mary: I peeked into the tomb one more time, and you will be shocked at what I saw: two angels sitting at the place where Jesus had been! They asked me why I was crying. I told them that they had taken my Lord away, and I didn't know where they had put him.

Detective: Did the angels tell you where the body of Jesus was?

Mary: No, but Jesus himself spoke to me!

Detective: What do you mean he spoke to you? How can a dead person talk?

Mary: That's just it, detective—he isn't dead anymore. Jesus is alive! He rose again, just as he said he would! As I was speaking with the angels, a person came up to me. Because my eyes were so blurred with tears, I did not know that it was Jesus standing right in front of me!

Detective: What did he say to you?

Mary: He said, "Woman, why are you crying?" I thought he must be the gardener, so I asked him to tell me where he had taken my Lord's body. Then Jesus called my name, and I knew it was him! I reached out to hold on to him, but he told me that he still had to return to the Father. That's when he told me to go and tell the disciples that he was returning to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God.

Detective: So what did you do then?

Mary: I ran as fast as I could to the disciples and told them I had seen the Lord!

Detective: This is an incredible story. So the body of Jesus isn't missing after all, is it?

Mary: No, Jesus is alive, and I'm sure he will come and visit us.

Detective: (*writing down notes on the pad of paper*) Thank you for agreeing to speak with me, Mary. I will file this report at Headquarters. If you see Jesus again, please let me know. I'm sure the whole world would like to hear.

Mary: Thank you, detective.

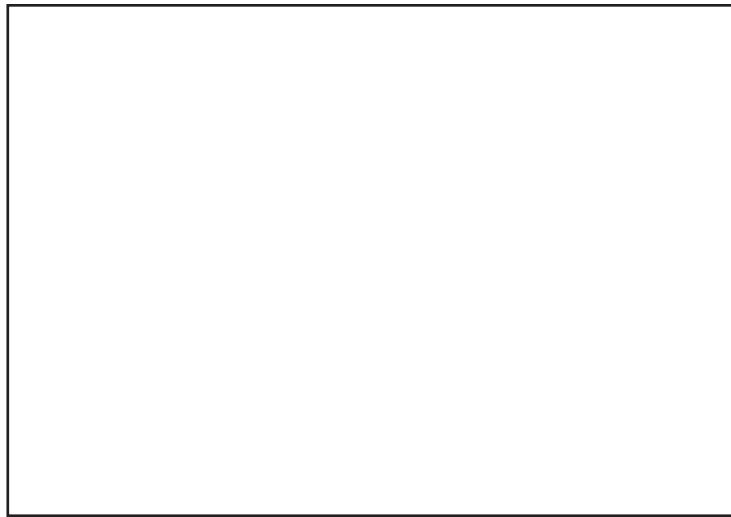
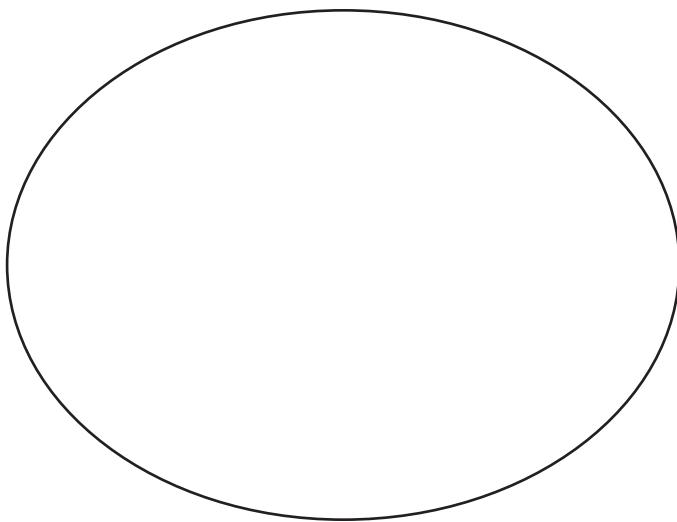
Jonah's Journal

Day 1

I will *not* go to Nineveh! Yes, it's true that God said, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it." But I *will not go*.

How can God expect this of me? It goes against everything I stand for as a prophet to God's people. I can't betray my loyalty to them. The Assyrians who live in that city are our enemies. They've **killed** my friends, **stolen** our cattle, **burned** our homes, and **harmed** our children! If I speak to those cruel Ninevites about God's judgment, they just might be smart enough to turn their lives around and ask God to forgive them. And God would do it. I *know* how God operates. The way I see it, they should be punished for their sins!

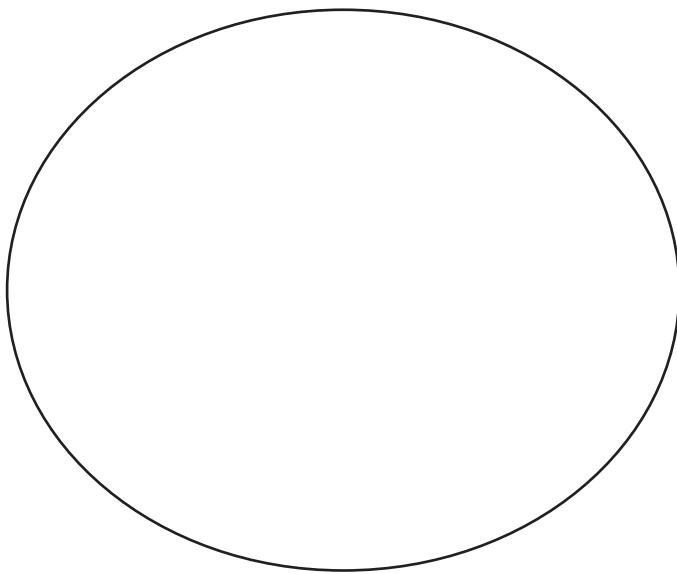
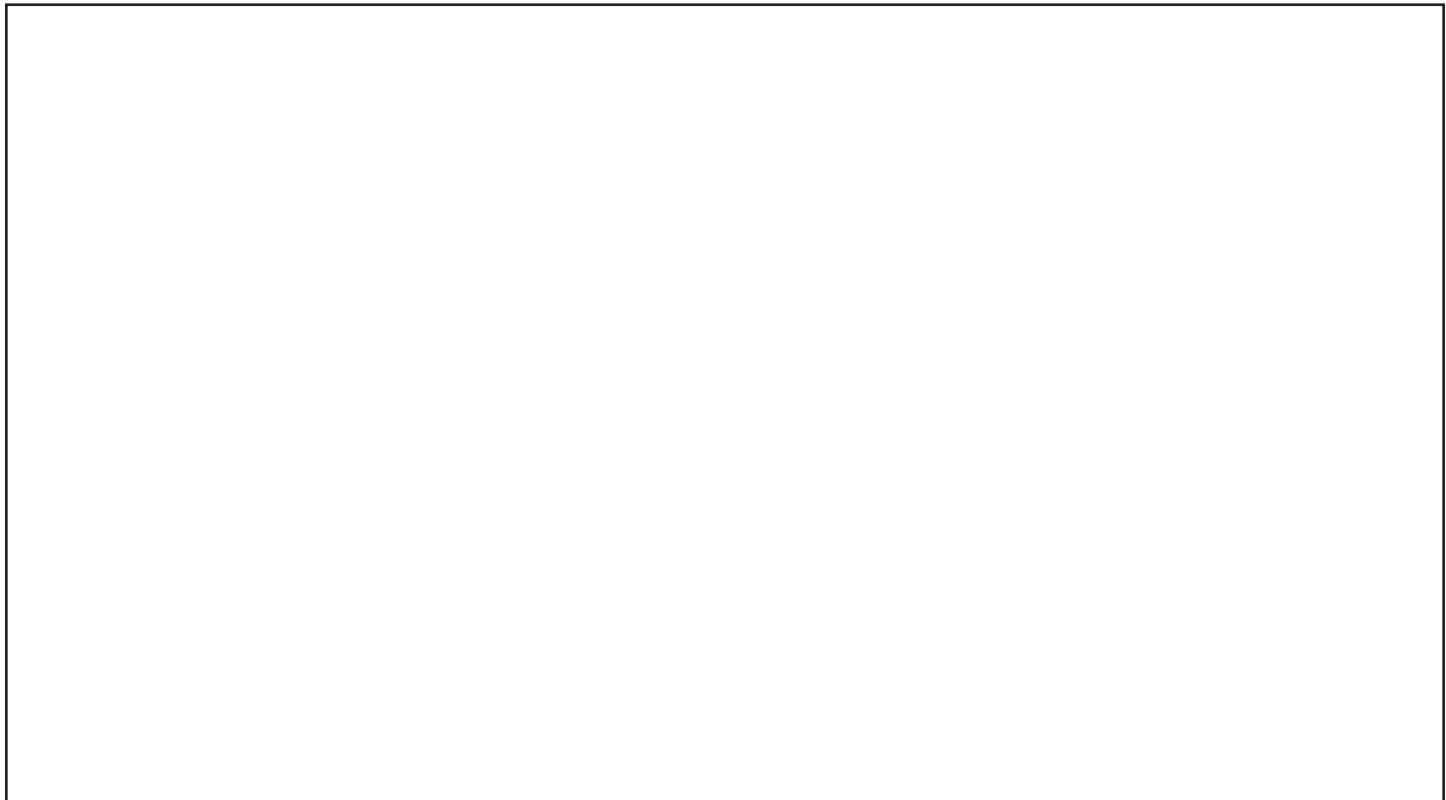
So I'm running away from God. Maybe if I take a ship out of Joppa and head toward the distant city of Tarshish, God will forget all this stuff about wanting me to preach to the people of Nineveh. Then maybe God will destroy that rotten city of Nineveh after all!



Jonah's Journal

Day 2

Safe on board—what a relief! I kept imagining God's eyes *burning* into my back all the way to Joppa. But now that I'm on this ship, the fresh salt air, the deep blue sea, and sailors going about their business should take my mind and body far away. I *did* tell them that I was running away from my God, but they didn't blink an eye. They are used to all kinds of gods and stories about those gods. Wouldn't you know it? I can't seem to escape God. The sea reminds me that **God** is the Creator of heaven and earth. I know God controls the sea, but I don't want to be reminded of it. I think I'll escape to the bottom of the boat and catch some sleep. Yes, that'll stop me from thinking about God and his little assignment for me.



Jonah's Journal

Day 3

The captain woke me up by screaming in my ear. “**Wake up**, man of Israel! How can you sleep in this storm? **Get up** and call on your God!”

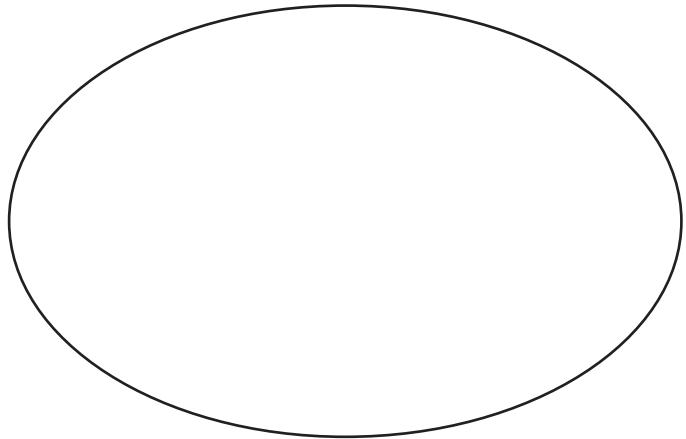
When I got on deck, I saw waves surge and crash, splashing into the boat. The sailors called to their gods, but it didn’t make a difference. Frantically, they **threw** the cargo overboard, hoping to lighten the ship and get better control.

“Let’s throw dice and see who has made his god so angry!” shouted one of the crew. My number came up. With suspicion in their eyes, they asked, “Who are you? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from?”

I already knew this was my fault for trying to run from God, so I told them the truth. “I am a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

That terrified them. To make matters worse, a huge wave **smacked** against the side of the boat, nearly sinking us.

“Quick!” I shouted. “Throw me into the sea, and it will be calm.” But the sailors, afraid of being responsible for killing a man who hadn’t committed any crimes, tried their best to row back to land. The sea grew even **wilder** than before. Finally, they picked me up and **tossed** me overboard. The cold salt water filled my ears and eyes. My lungs **burned** from having no air to breathe. Seaweed choked me. I cried out to God, “*Help!*”



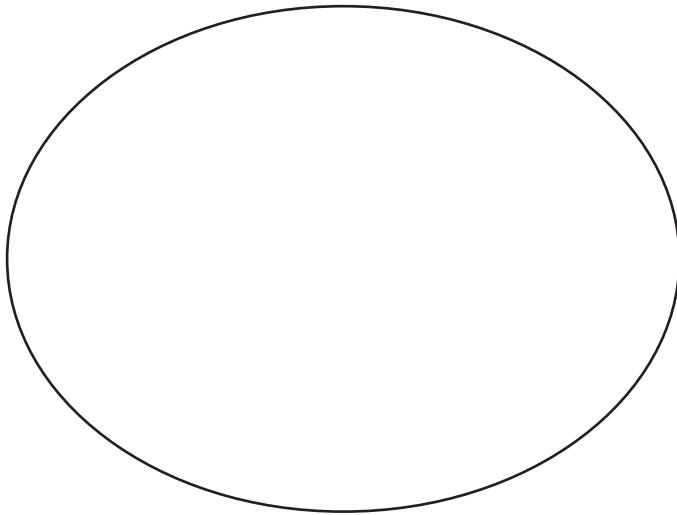
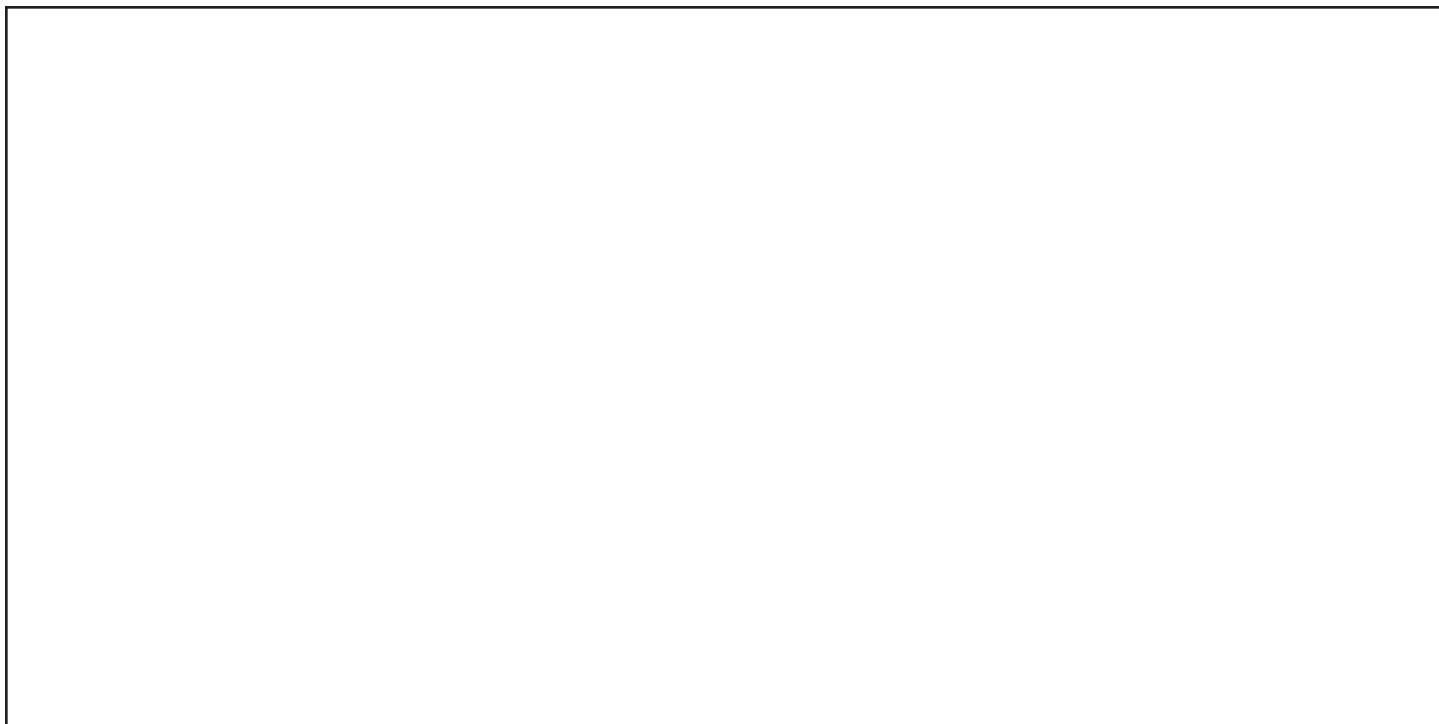
Jonah's Journal

Days 4, 5, and 6

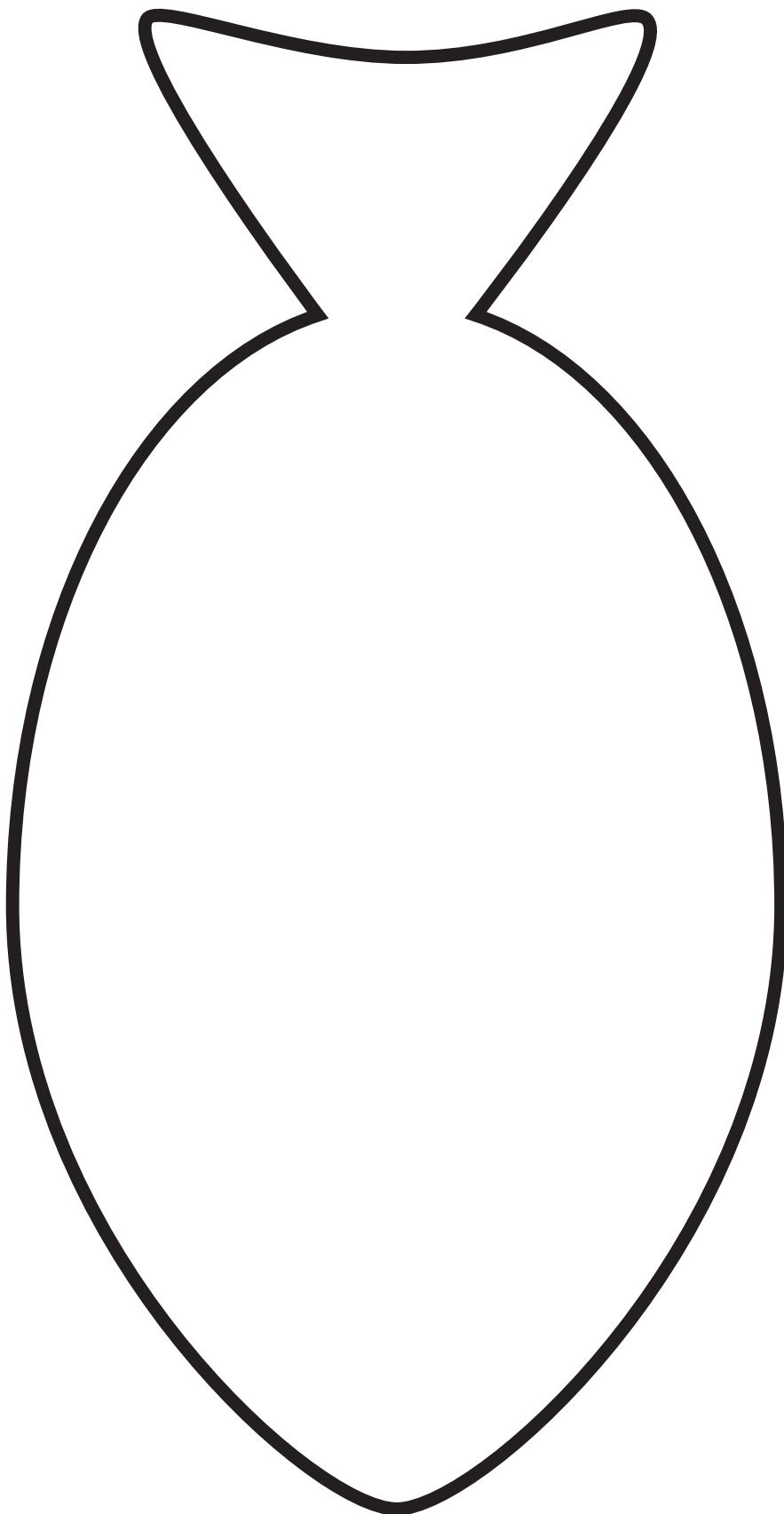
I'm alive! I may stink and smell, but I'm alive. Here's what happened. Just before I blacked out, along came a huge fish with a big open mouth. A surge of water pushed me right into the opening, and I found myself in a warm, wet place where I could breathe.

A long time passed—my best guess is three days and three nights. I used the time to think and pray. I realized that without God's help, I would have sunk to the roots of the mountains. At least that's how deep the sea seemed to be. I praised God for lifting my life up out of the pit. I praised him for hearing my prayer. I promised to make sacrifices to him. And I promised to say that "salvation comes from the Lord."

Now that the fish has coughed me out and heaved me onto the shore, I must keep my promises to God. I will go to Nineveh. I will preach. I won't try to escape from God again.



Fish Template



Jonah Goes to Nineveh

CHARACTERS

Narrator

Jonah

Bystander 1

Bystander 2

Bystander 3

King of Nineveh

Narrator: The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.” This time, Jonah obeyed the Lord and went to Nineveh.

Jonah: In forty more days, Nineveh will be destroyed!

Bystander 1: Huh? Who are you, and what do you want?

Jonah: I am Jonah the Hebrew, and I serve the one true God of this earth. He is greatly saddened by your wicked behavior, and if you do not repent of your sins, he will destroy this city!

Bystander 2: Hey, did you say your name was Jonah? Aren’t you the guy sailors on the ship going to Tarshish threw into the sea the day of that terrible storm?

Jonah: Yes, that was me.

Bystander 2: Wow! My friend sailed on that ship, and he said that the storm grew calm the instant they threw you overboard. Then they worshiped your God. He said that your God is the real deal!

Jonah: Yes, he’s right. That’s why if you and your people do not turn from your sinful ways and trust in God, you will all perish!

Bystander 3: I think this guy is serious!

Bystander 1: What should we do?

Jonah: Stop doing evil in God’s eyes, and you will live!

Narrator: Soon, word spread to the king of Nineveh concerning Jonah’s warnings.

King: We’re doomed! What can we do? Repent. Yes, we must repent of our terrible sins and turn to God! I hereby issue a decree that everyone must wear sack-cloth and every person and animal in the city must fast from food and drink. We must cry out for mercy from Jonah’s God. Who knows? Maybe he will turn his anger away from us so we will not perish!

Narrator: The entire city cried out to God for mercy. God had compassion on the people of Nineveh and did not destroy them. The animals, too, were rescued. Jonah, however, was not pleased.

Jonah: I knew this would happen! This is exactly why I ran away to Tarshish in the first place. I knew God would have compassion on these filthy people! I can’t believe it!

(Angrily, he stomps off.)

Narrator: Jonah went outside the city. He sat down and waited to see if God would change his mind and destroy the city. It would have been miserable out in the hot sun, but God provided a vine to grow near Jonah. It was a huge plant that spread out and gave plenty of shade.

Jonah: Nice. The shade from this vine is perfect. With a tall, cool drink I could last for days. One thing for sure, if God changes his mind about those evil Ninevites, I’ll have a front row seat!

Narrator: During the night, God provided a worm to chew on the plant. It chewed at the vine and made it wither and die. When the sun rose the next day, God provided a scorching wind. Next, the blazing sun beat down on Jonah’s head. It zapped away every drop of moisture. Jonah’s skin dried up against his bones.

Jonah: I’m dying in this heat! God, I’m so angry, I wish that I could just die!

Narrator: God spoke to Jonah and said, “Jonah, if you cared so much about the vine that withered away, how much more do you think I care about the people of this city?”

(Jonah holds hands over his face with despair.)

Narrator: God’s compassion now filled Jonah. God didn’t make enemies. Why should Jonah? Jonah discovered God’s kindness and care can be for all people.

Jake's Fly Ball

Jake threw his baseball glove down on the kitchen counter. "I hate those guys."

"Jake," said his mother, "those are strong words."

"Well," he said, "Dennis and Levi from the other team deserve it. They tripped me after the game."

"Come sit down and tell me about it," Mom said as she put a plate of warm cookies on the table.

"It happened after the game." Jake chewed on the warm cookie. "They did it because I caught the ball Dennis hit into the outfield. When they tripped me, Levi said I caused them to lose the game. They're bad sports. That's what they are."

"Yes," Mom agreed.

"I hope they both get hurt and never play baseball again!" Jake reached for another cookie.

Mom poured a glass of milk for him. "I can understand that you are hurt and angry, son. But wishing them harm is acting as poorly as they did."

Jake rolled his eyes. "Yeah, I know, Mom, I've heard that a thousand times. You want me to be a little angel. But it's really hard to be nice to people who are mean."

"I know it's tough, Jake, but I also know that God will give you the strength to do the right thing, even when it isn't easy."

Jake knew his mom was right. Deep in his heart, he knew God was asking him to forgive Dennis and Levi. But he didn't know if he ever could.

At the next game, Dennis and Levi snickered to themselves as Jake went to bat. Nervous at everyone watching him, Jake tried to swing, but missed the ball. "Strike one!" yelled the umpire. The pitcher threw the ball once more, and Jake swung with all his might, missing the ball again. "Strike two!" His face grew hot with embarrassment.

"Hey, do you want me to get your blanket and mommy for you?" Dennis yelled from the dugout. "My one-year-old brother can swing better than you!"

The pitcher threw the ball a third time, and Jake was determined to hit the ball out of the park. Instead, he hit a massive fly ball that soared high above the

opposing team's dugout and landed right on top of Dennis's head.

"Owwwww!" Dennis burst into tears and fell to the ground, holding his head in pain. His teammates rushed to his side, and the coaches stopped the game to make sure Dennis was all right.

At that moment, Jake no longer felt anger toward Dennis, but compassion. He felt sorry that his fly ball caused so much pain. Dennis sat out the rest of the game with an ice pack on his head.

After the game, Jake saw Dennis and Levi standing near the parking lot, waiting for their ride. Jake took a deep breath and went over to them.

"Hey, I'm sorry my ball hit you in the head," he said to Dennis.

Dennis looked down and kicked at the cracking concrete.

"No big deal," he mumbled. "Sorry for tripping you at the last game."

"Thanks," Jake replied. He didn't expect Dennis to apologize, but it made him feel good inside. "Well, see you at the next game."

Jake turned to meet his family.

"Hey, just go easy on those fly balls next time," Dennis called out.

Jake laughed. "Sure thing."

As Jake rode home that day, he smiled. Then he whispered a thank-you to God for the gift of compassion. It was better than revenge after all.

A Strange Dream

Scene 1

Narrator: One night King Nebuchadnezzar had a very strange dream.

King: Servant! Come quickly!

Servant: Yes, my lord?

King: Send for my wise men and sorcerers! I want all the magicians, enchanters, and astrologers who live nearby to report to me immediately. No delays, do you understand?

Servant: (*bowing*) Right away, sir.

King: I must know what that dream meant! It was such a strange dream, but it felt so real, like I could have reached out my hand and touched the feet of that great statue! What does it mean? My wise men must tell me!

(*Wise men enter*)

Wise Man 1: We have come, our lord the king! What does his majesty wish to know?

King: I have had the most troubling dream, and I wish to know what it means right now.

Wise Man 2: O king, live forever! Tell us your dream, and we will tell you its meaning.

King: This is what I have decided. To make sure that you will not lie to me about the meaning of the dream, you must tell me what I dreamed and what it means. If you don't tell me correctly, I will have you all killed, and your houses destroyed. But if you do tell me the dream and its meaning, I will reward you with gifts and great honor. So—tell me the dream, and interpret it for me.

Wise Man 1: O King, there isn't a person on earth who could do what you ask! No one can reveal the dream to the king except the gods, and they do not live in this world.

King: (*furiously*) How dare you try to trick me! You are false magicians, all of you! Servants, take these men out and kill them. Then search out all the other wise men in the kingdom and kill them too—every single one!

Scene 2

(*Loud knock on the door*)

Arioch: Daniel! Daniel! Are you there?

Daniel: Yes—come in! How are you, Arioch?

Arioch: I'm sorry to say that I have bad news, Daniel. The king has sent me to put you and your friends to death.

Daniel: What? Why? What have we done to make the king angry?

Arioch: The king had a dream and the wise men couldn't tell him what the dream was or what it meant. Now he wants to kill all the wise men in the country!

Daniel: The king had a dream? Hold on, Arioch. God has given me the ability to understand dreams. Take me to the king. I must ask him for more time. Maybe I can help.

Narrator: Daniel asked the king for more time; then he and his friends prayed and asked God to reveal the mystery of the dream to him. The next day, Daniel went before the king again.

Daniel: O lord, my king, do not kill the wise men of Babylon. My God revealed to me your dream and its meaning. This is what you saw:

CHARACTERS

Narrator

King Nebuchadnezzar

Servant

Wise Man 1

Wise Man 2

Arioch

Daniel

As you lay on your bed, O king, you saw an enormous, dazzling statue. Its head was made of pure gold, and its chest and arms of silver. Its belly and upper legs were made of bronze. Its legs were made of iron. And its feet were made of iron mixed with clay.

As you watched, you saw a rock—a large rock—being cut out of a mountain. Then that rock came and struck the enormous statue. It smashed the feet and the whole statue broke into tiny pieces. The wind came and blew the broken pieces away so that nothing from the statue was left. Then the rock grew so large that it became a huge mountain, and it filled the whole earth.

King: That's right! That was my dream!

Daniel: Here is the meaning of the dream: You, O king, are the greatest ruler on this earth. God has given you much power, might, and glory. You are the head of gold that you saw on the enormous statue.

But after you there will come a kingdom with not as many riches—the one represented by the chest and arms of silver. Then another kingdom that is even less glorious—the bronze—will rule the whole earth. Finally, there will come a kingdom as strong as iron—like the iron legs on the statue. But its peoples will be mixed, like the feet of the statue made of iron mixed with clay. So the kingdom will be partly strong and partly weak.

And in the time of that kingdom, God will set up his own kingdom. It will be a kingdom that can never be destroyed. No other kingdom will ever replace it. It will grow so large that it will cover the whole earth.

That, O king, is the meaning of your dream. God has shown you how his kingdom will be more powerful than any other kingdom on earth.

King: Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings, a God who reveals great mysteries! I will make you ruler over the entire province of Babylon, in charge of all my wise men. Tell me more about this one true God, and what his kingdom will be like....

Headlines for Freeze Frames

BABYLON'S WISE MEN PUT TO SHAME
Daniel 2:1-11

DANIEL ASKS FOR DELAY IN DEATH SENTENCE
Daniel 2:12-16

A PRAYER-FILLED NIGHT
Daniel 2:17-23

FEARLESS DANIEL FACES KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Daniel 2:24-35

STATUE TURNS TO DUST AND BLOWS AWAY IN THE WIND
Daniel 2:36-45

DANIEL RECEIVES HIGHEST HONORS
Daniel 2:46-49

Toppling the Statue

All Together We Stand

Based on Daniel 3

Reader 1: One day

All: the proud and mighty Nebuchadnezzar decided to build a huge statue.

Reader 2: “I want it made out of gold,” he said

All: His servants trembled over gathering that much gold,” he said.

Reader 2: “And I want it taller than twelve men.”

All: Ninety feet! Twenty-seven meters! It will be taller than anything else.

Reader 3: The servants built scaffolds and gathered materials until they had formed the enormous statue. Then they pounded gold into sheets until there was enough to cover the entire figure. It gleamed under the sun, stunning people from near and far.

All: Everyone was amazed.

Reader 1: King Nebuchadnezzar puffed out his chest. “Yes, this statue will let everyone throughout my whole kingdom see that Babylon rules.”

Reader 2: He invited all the important rulers from each part of his large kingdom.

All: Governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, provincial officials, and more.

Reader 3: King Nebuchadnezzar gloated and strutted. He’d unite his territories under one great statue. When everyone arrived, the king’s messenger shouted:

Reader 1: This is what the king commands: “As soon as you hear the sound of the king’s musical instruments, you—and . . .

All: “all the people in this whole kingdom . . .

Reader 2: “are to fall down and worship this beautiful statue the king has made.”

Reader 3: “Any man, woman, or child who does not obey the king’s command will be thrown immediately into a . . .

All: “fiery furnace!”

Reader 1: The music sounded.

Reader 2: All the important people and rulers bowed down and worshiped the huge statue.

Reader 3: Well—not quite all the people.

All: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn’t.

Reader 1: Yes, they stood in that huge crowd.

Reader 2: They heard what the messenger said.

Reader 3: They heard the music.

All: But they didn’t bow down. They were the only ones standing in a sea of bowed-down bodies. They stayed standing.

Reader 1: The king’s wise men immediately went to the king and said,

All: "May the king live forever. Your Majesty has commanded all people to fall down and worship the image of gold. But three Jews,

Reader 1: "Shadrach,

Reader 2: "Meshach,

Reader 3: "And Abednego, men whom you have made rulers in your kingdom—do not obey you. They do not bow before your golden statue."

All: The king was furious!

Reader 1: He yelled at his soldiers. "How dare they disobey? How dare anyone disobey my orders? Bring them to me."

All: So the soldiers arrested Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and brought them to the king.

Reader 2: Nebuchadnezzar roared at the three men who stood before him.

Reader 3: "Is it true that you have actually refused to obey my orders to bow down to my golden statue? Don't you know that the punishment for disobeying me is death in a fiery furnace?"

All: "Yes, O King. We heard your command and understand the punishment. But we cannot bow down to your statue. We serve the one true God—the God of heaven and earth. If you throw us into the fiery furnace, our God is powerful enough to save us. But even if God doesn't save us, we want you to know that we will not serve your gods or bow before your statue. We worship only the true God."

Reader 1: King Nebuchadnezzar was furious. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual. He commanded the strongest soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them ...

All: into the blazing furnace.

Reader 2: The furnace was so hot that when they got close to it, the flames leaped out and surrounded them. The soldiers died, but not Daniel's friends.

Reader 1: King Nebuchadnezzar couldn't believe what he saw. He jumped to his feet in amazement. As he looked into the fire, he saw another amazing thing: a fourth man.

Reader 2: In shock he asked his advisers about it. "Weren't there only three men that we threw into the furnace?"

Reader 3: "Yes, O King. Only Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego."

Reader 1: "But, but, I see four, all unharmed. And one looks like a son of the gods."

Reader 2: Nebuchadnezzar walked closer to the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

All: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walked out of that fiery furnace. They were completely unharmed! Not a hair on their heads was singed. Their clothing wasn't burned at all, and their skin was clear and healthy. They didn't even smell like smoke!

Reader 1: Astonished, amazed, and thoroughly astounded, the king said ...

Reader 2: "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Praise be to the God who sent an angel to rescue his servants! From now on, anyone who says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will be put to death. No other god can save his people in this way!"

All: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego thanked and praised the one true God. Their mighty and powerful God proved he is a God who saves.

Three Friends and a Fiery Furnace

There was a _____ who ruled in Daniel's time:

_____—a difficult name to rhyme!

He summoned all his satraps, governors,
prefects, advisers, and treasurers.

They gathered 'round an image made of _____.

A mighty image—90 _____, 27 _____ I'm told!

He ordered all the people gathered 'round
To bow and worship when they heard the _____

of horn and flute, of zither, lyre, and pipe

"And if you don't," the king said, quite uptight,

"I'll throw you in a furnace—I'm no liar!

You'll burn to crispy critters in my _____."

So when the horn and flute and lyre played sweet,

The people knelt and _____ at its feet.

But what was this? Some people ran to tell

King Neb that things were wrong—not all was well:

Three men had stood while others bowed and _____!

The king was mightily dismayed.

"These men are Jews, my lord," the tattlers said,

"an evil people. Some prefer them dead."

"Well so do I!" the king roared with ire.

"Prepare the furnace! Throw them in the _____!"

The three men knelt before him, bowing low:

Shadrach, Meshach, and _____.

"Great king," they said, "our God can save our skin.

And if he doesn't, we'll still worship him.

We will not serve your gods or bow and _____

to statues made of silver, gold, or clay."

The king threw down his crown; his face was red.
He looked at them and said, “You are _____!”
He made his servants heat the fire ’til
it blazed with heat and deadly power to kill.

“Where are my strongest men?” the king yelled.
They tied the friends with rope—strong knots that held
their hands and feet so close they could not walk.
Then all were silent; no one dared to_____.

“Into the furnace!” roared the king at last
as the soldiers perished in the fiery blast.
The soldiers _____ from all that heat—but wait!
The three friends were walking straight!

The king leaped to his _____ and, trembling, cried,
“Weren’t there three men we tied and threw inside?
“Look! I see four men walking unharmed!”
The king was greatly curious and alarmed.

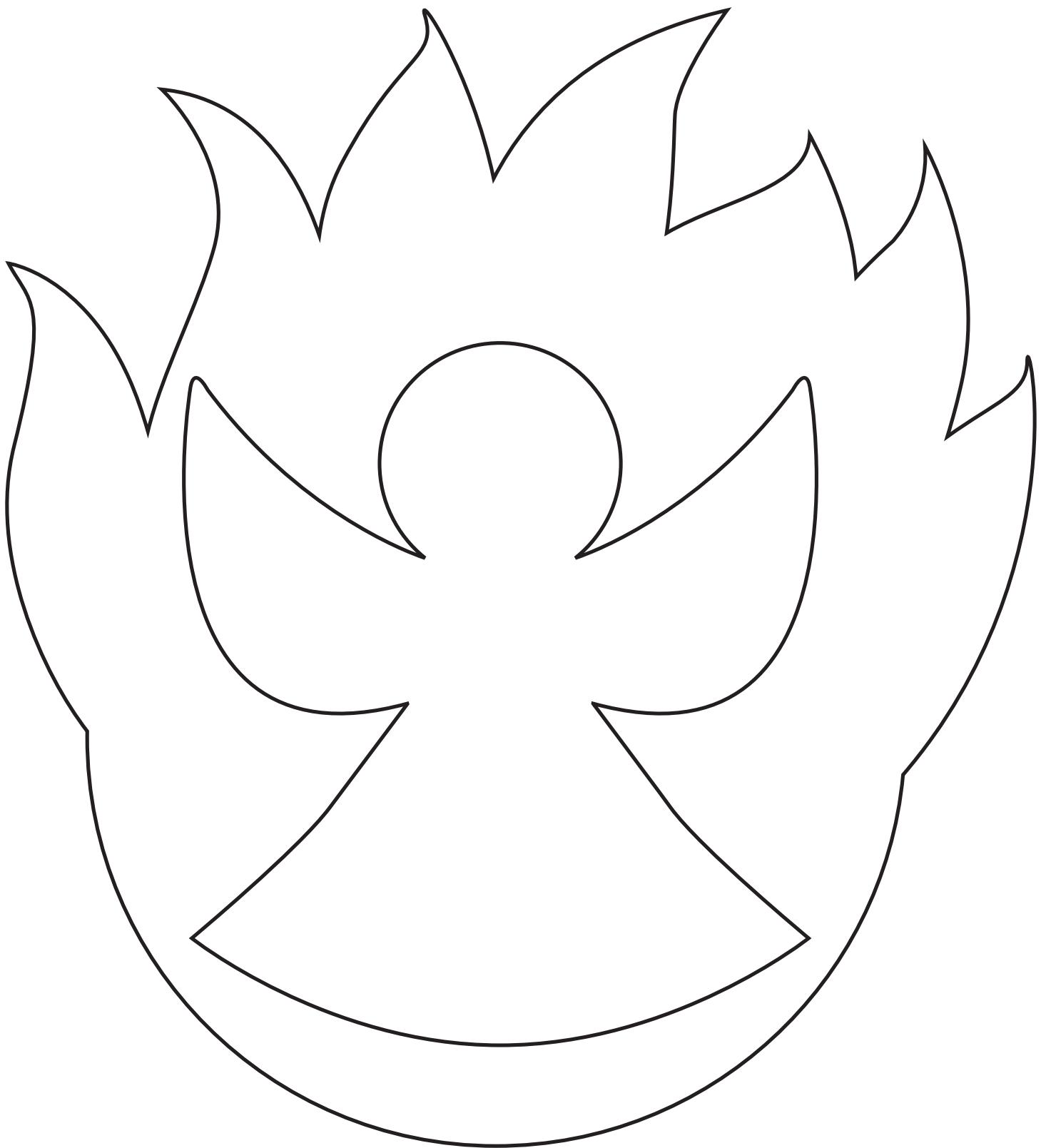
“The _____ looks like a son of heaven’s God!
This certainly is very odd.”
He called the three men with a voice of fear:
“Servants of the Most High _____, come _____!”

“Glory to the God of these three faithful men,
who came down and rescued them.
Not a whiff of smoke did cling
To robes, hair, skin, or anything!”

He turned to the people and exclaimed,
“This God is to be honored and proclaimed
as highest God! No one shall bow or pray
to any other god this very day.

“No other god, no one can _____
As this God did with these servants brave.”

Feeling the Heat



A Proud King

Do you think you know what power is? Ha! I *invented* the concept. There is no king, queen, or god greater than me in the entire universe. I'm simply amazing. You see, my name is King Nebuchadnezzar, and I rule over every people of every language and nation.

How did I get so powerful? I conquered every nation that I fought against. Then I built the magnificent city of Babylon, with its walls, gates, gardens, and *my* royal palace. It's a wonder to behold in all its brilliance. *My* greatness reached the sky, and my kingdom reached the most distant places on earth!

One night, after admiring all the delights of my palace, I went to bed proud and happy about all my accomplishments. But then I had the most terrifying dream. Immediately I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon come and interpret the dream. My foolish wise men couldn't do it. Finally Daniel came, and I told him what I had seen while lying on my bed.

I saw a tree standing in the middle of my empire. It was enormous! The top of the tree touched the heavens, and you could see it from faraway lands. The tree had beautiful fruit that fed the entire world. All people and animals received shade from the towering tree; even birds rested in its branches.

But then I heard a loud, booming voice that shouted, "Cut down the tree! Trim off its branches! Strip its leaves and throw away the fruit! Leave only the stump in the ground."

Then the nouns changed to "him"— "Let the dew make him wet, and let him live with the animals. His mind will be changed into an animal's mind. This message has come by an angel, so that everyone who hears may know that God is ruler over *all* kingdoms on earth. No one is more powerful than God."

A horrified look came over Daniel. "If only this dream had been given to your enemies, O king!" he wailed. "What is it, Daniel?" I asked. "What does it mean?"

He told me that I was the tree in the dream—that because of my fame and greatness, I provided the whole world with everything it needed. But because of my pride and arrogance, I would be cut down and sent away to live with wild animals. The dew and rain would drench me, and I would have the mind of an animal and eat grass like a lunatic. Then, after a while, God would give me my mind back and make me king again.

"Please," Daniel went on, "Repent of your prideful ways and be a kind and just king. Then maybe your prosperity will continue."

I grew cold all over and felt sick to my stomach. Would this really happen to me? I knew that Daniel had special wisdom from his God, and I was afraid. Each day, I woke up and wondered if this was the day I would be driven from my kingdom. But a year went by, and nothing happened. I began to relax a little, and then I forgot all about my dream. I started thinking that I was the greatest again and that no one was more powerful than me—not even Daniel's God!

But as soon as I began to boast about my greatness, a voice from heaven said to me, "Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven seasons of time will pass until you acknowledge that the Most High rules over all kingdoms and gives them to anyone he wishes."

Immediately, I lost my mind. I lived with animals and ate grass. My hair grew like the feathers of an eagle, and my nails looked like the claws of a bird.

But God was kind to me. One day I looked up at the sky, and suddenly I knew who I was again! But better yet, I knew who God was. I lifted up this song to God:

God's rule lasts forever:
his kingdom will last even after fathers and
their children and grandchildren have died.
People of this world are nothing compared with
God.
No one can stop God or hold him back.
No one can question God's ways.

When my servants and advisers found out I had returned to my right mind, they brought me back as their king. And do you know what our wonderful God did? God gave me even more power than I had before! God gave my whole kingdom back to me.

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, lift up, and glorify the King of heaven. Everything that he does is right. All his ways are just and fair. If you walk in pride, God is able to humble you.

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