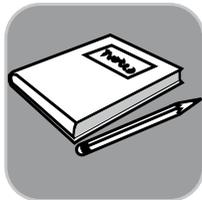


WEEK 1

The Lost Sheep

Preparation:
Read Luke 15:1-7, using the Bible study notes to help you.

Lesson Aim:
To teach that Jesus came to save sinners (us).



The 3 parables in chapter 15 should be read in the context of chapter 14. Jesus had been dining with leading Pharisees. He rebuked them for their religious pride, because of which they had misunderstood membership of God's kingdom. The Pharisees thought that they qualified for membership because of their religious correctness. In reality they were in danger of rejection because of the hardness of their hearts.

15:1-2 Jesus' ministry is to all, including 'sinners'. The Pharisees found this impossible to accept. At that time there was a common Rabbinical saying that summed up their attitude: *'Let not man associate with the wicked, not even to bring them to the Law.'* Jesus tells this parable to defend his position in taking the gospel to sinners.

15:4 'Which one of you having 100 sheep' - a Pharisee would have found it offensive to be classed with a shepherd. Although Moses was accepted as a shepherd, kings were referred to as shepherds (Ezekiel 34), and God was thought of as a shepherd (Psalm 23), in the first

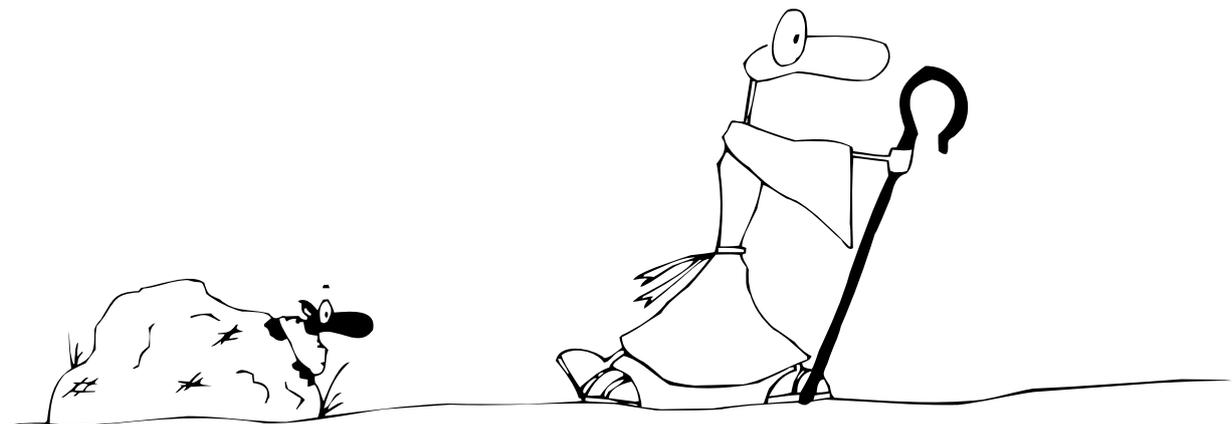
century shepherds who wandered round after sheep were considered unclean. Pharisees classed as sinners those who were immoral and did not keep the Law and those who followed a proscribed trade such as shepherding.

By starting the parable in this way Jesus is attacking the Pharisees' attitude to proscribed professions.

100 sheep was a very large flock and any one who owned that number would employ someone else to do the shepherding. In a village community people owned 5-15 sheep. For convenience, people banded together to look after the sheep and 2 or 3 shepherds would look after the whole lot. The word used for 'having' does not necessarily mean 'owning', but can mean 'be responsible for'.

'Search until he find it' - the shepherd, being responsible for the sheep, had to return with either the live sheep or its remains to prove that he had not sold it.

15:5 When a sheep is lost it lies down and refuses to move. The shepherd picks up the sheep and carries it on his shoulders. (Remember - this is not the white woolly lamb of Sunday School pictures, but a big sheep with matted wool. It was heavy!) The amazing thing is that the shepherd accepts this burden with joy.



15:6 Peasant shepherds brought their flocks home at night. Because the sheep belonged to the community, there was communal joy at its restoration. Compare this with a Jewish saying of the day: *'There is joy before God when those who provoke him perish from the world.'* This is like the Pharisees' attitude in v.2.

We are not told what happened to the 99 sheep. The assumption is that they would have been brought home by one of the other shepherds, although v.7 could indicate that they remained outside.

At the time of Jesus there was Rabbinical debate over the 'completely righteous'. Some Rabbis said that there were people who were 'completely righteous' and that God loved these more than he did repentant sinners. Isaiah 53:6 states that **all** sheep have gone astray, thus denying the category of the completely righteous. V.7 could indicate that the angels could not rejoice over the 99 'righteous' as they have not yet repented, so have not yet come home.

If you have plenty of space in the class area you can hide a model sheep for the younger children and get them to look for it. Once the sheep has been found ask the children if any of them have ever been lost. How did it feel? How did they feel once they were found? Today's true story from the Bible is a story Jesus told. Ask the children to listen carefully so that they can tell you who Jesus told the story to, (Pharisees and sinners), what the people in the story did when the lost thing was found, and why Jesus told the story (see lesson notes on v.1-2).

For the older children start by asking them if anyone has been to a theme park, holiday camp or other appropriate crowded venue. Has anyone ever been lost? Then proceed as for the younger children. Before telling the story explain what a parable is.

After the story go over the answers to the questions. Point out how hard the shepherd searched for the sheep. The sheep could not find itself. The Pharisees should have been happy that Jesus was helping 'lost' people, not angry. Teach the memory verse.

Either flannelgraph or pictures (the lost sheep can be hidden behind a bush or rock before the lesson begins). Use the figures on pages 9 and 10, making as many sheep as wanted.



3-5s

Photocopy pages 9 and 10 for each child. Prior to the lesson, cut out the sheep, rocks and bushes from page 9 and place in an envelope for each child.



Instructions

- Colour the picture and the cut-out shapes.
- Fold the rocks and bushes along the dotted lines.
- Glue the thin edge of the rocks and bushes to the picture (see diagram).
- The rocks and bushes can be lifted up to see what is behind.
- Glue the sheep behind one of the rocks or bushes. The children can ask each other to guess where they have hidden the sheep.



5-7s

Make a sheep pendant. Photocopy page 8 on card for each child. Cut out the sheep. (You may want to do this before the lesson.) Punch a hole at X. The children fill in the missing word of the memory verse and colour in the area around the legs green. On the back of the sheep the children draw in the 4 legs before colouring the area around them green. Glue cotton wool balls onto the back of the sheep for wool. Thread a length of wool through the hole so that the sheep can be worn as a pendant.

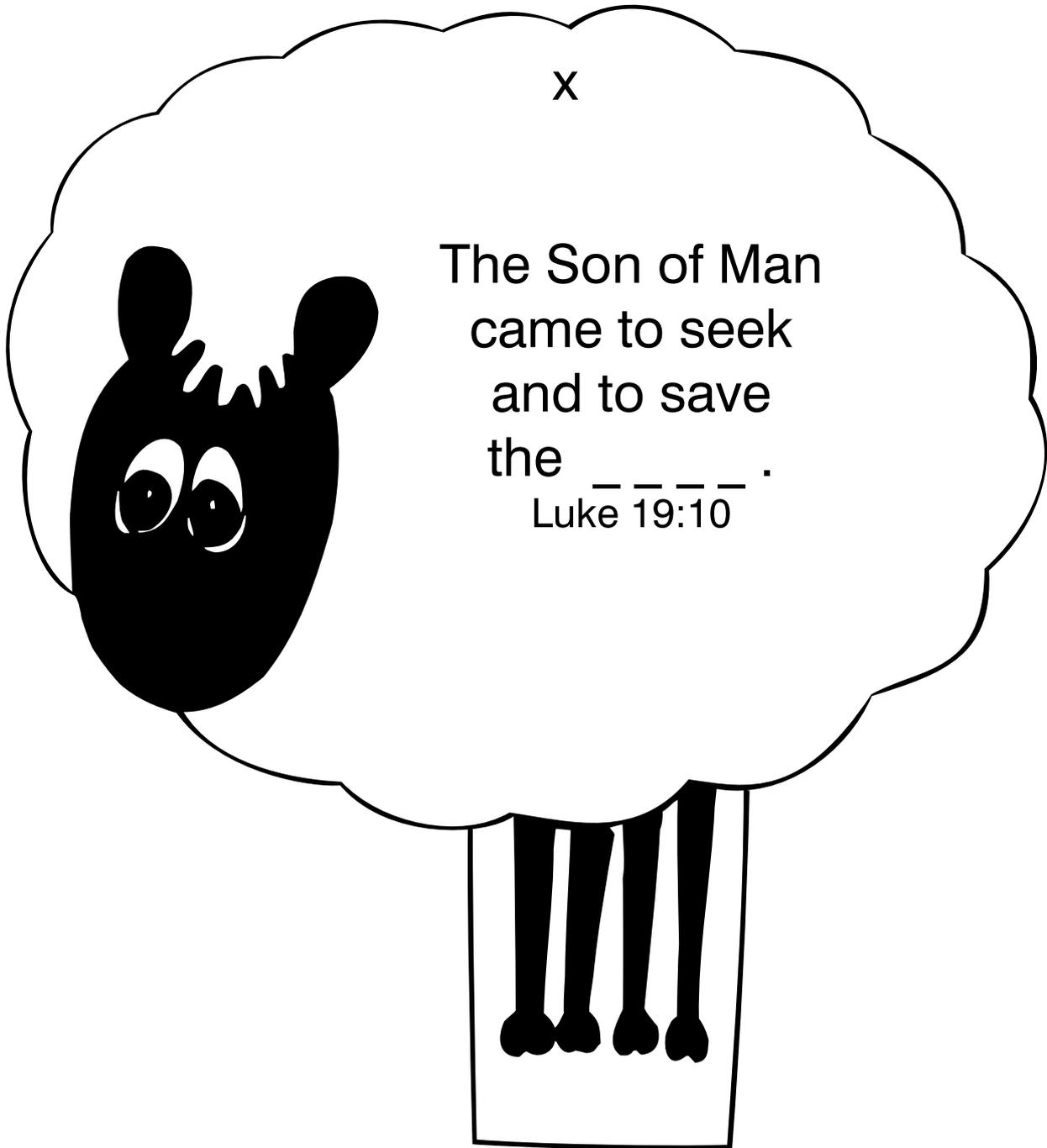
7-9s

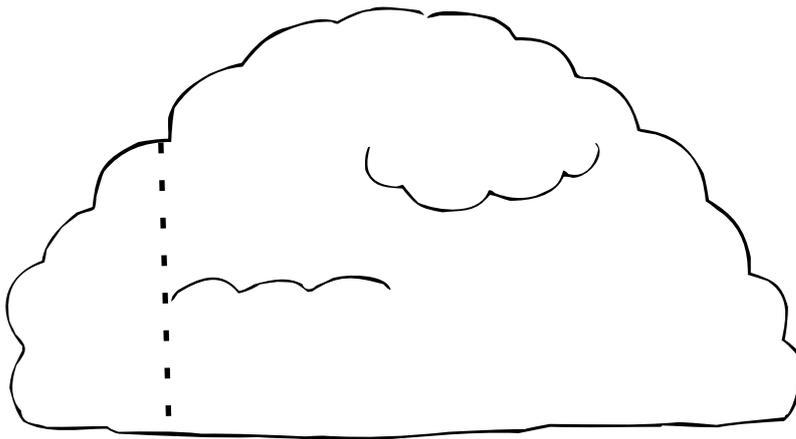
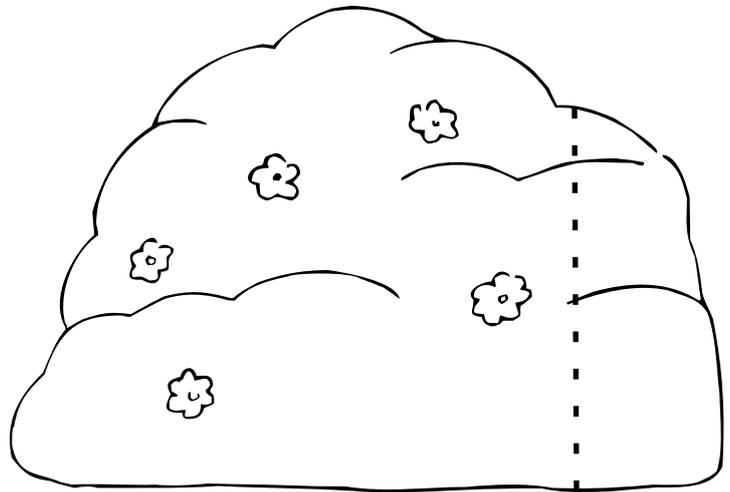
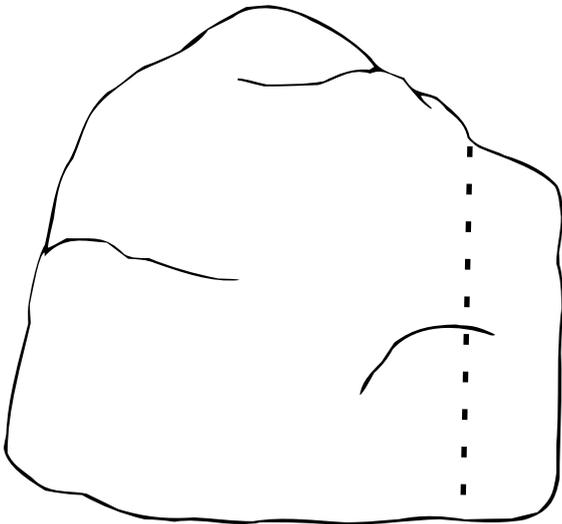
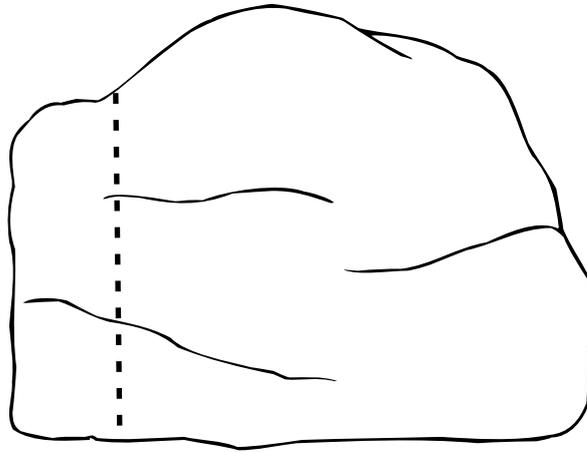
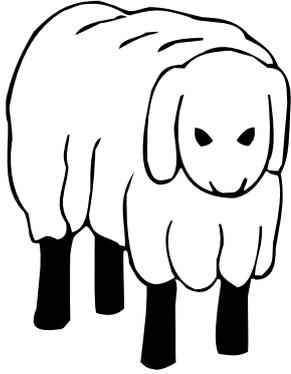
Photocopy page 11 for each child and do at the beginning of the lesson as an introduction to the series. The Gospel Booklet is done after the story and will take 2/3 weeks to complete. Photocopy pages 13/14, 15/16 and 17/18 back to back for each child. Fold in half and staple together to make a booklet. Also photocopy page 12 for each child.

As the children go through the Gospel Booklet they cut out the appropriate shapes from page 12 and glue them in place. As you complete each page do make sure that the children understand what it means. Colour if time permits. Only complete pages 1-7 this week.

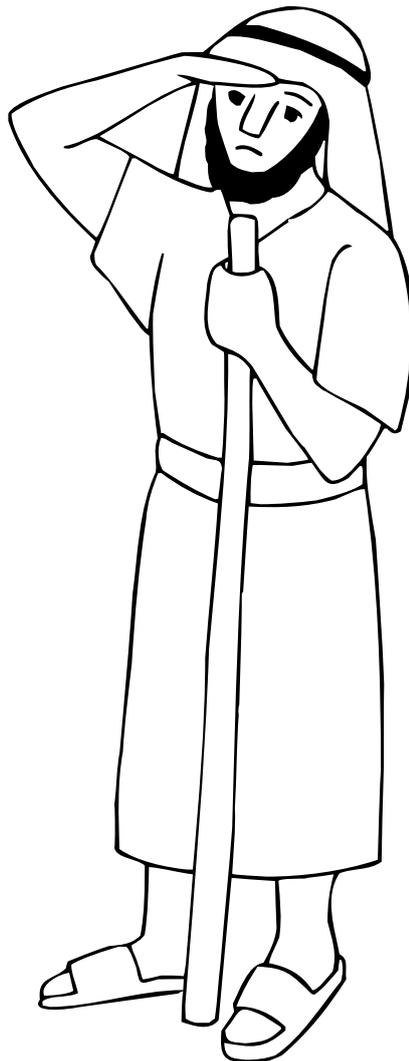
- p.2 Glue picture of earth between the sun and the moon.
- p.3 Glue tree top to the top of the trunk.
- p.4 Glue child between the arrows, facing 'my way'.
- p.5 Glue the barrier between 'me' and 'God'.
- p.6 Glue the dead child in place.
- p.7 Glue on the cross.

Use the story of the lost sheep to demonstrate God's concern for the sinner and the incredible lengths he went to in order to bring us back to himself. The remainder of the booklet will be completed as part of week 3's lesson. The Gospel Booklets should remain in the Sunday School until completed.





Can you find the lost sheep?



The Son of Man came to
seek and to save the lost.

Luke 19:10

Use the following code to work out the memory verse.

												
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m

												
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

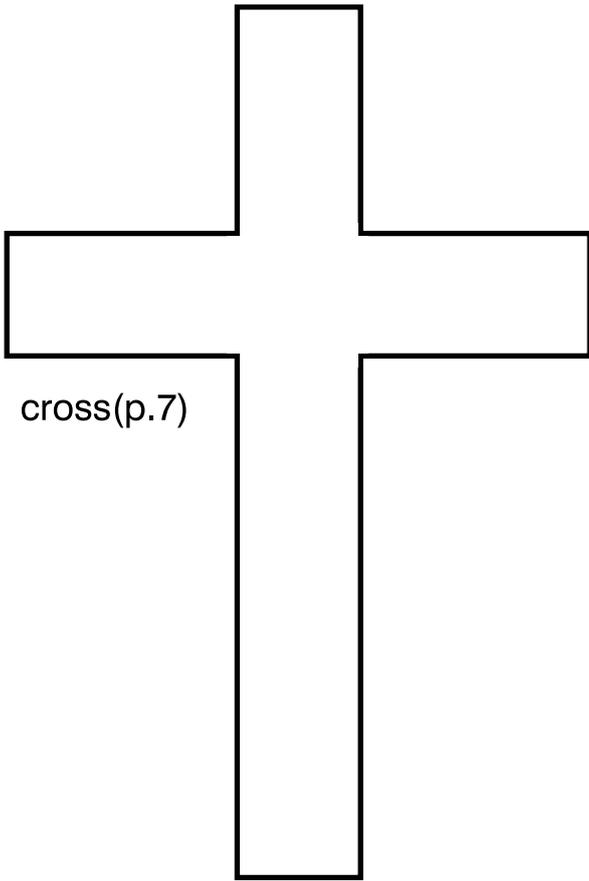
			

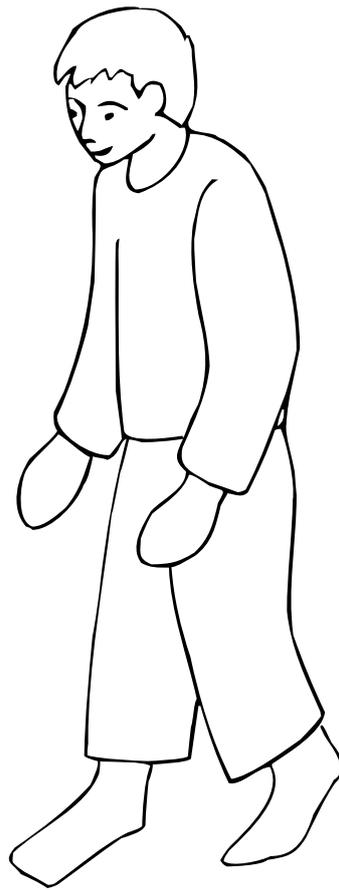
			

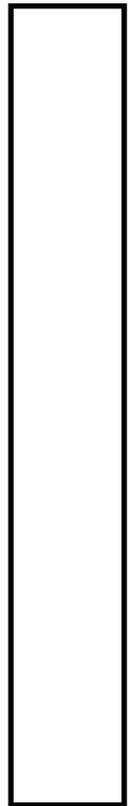
1	9	v	1	0
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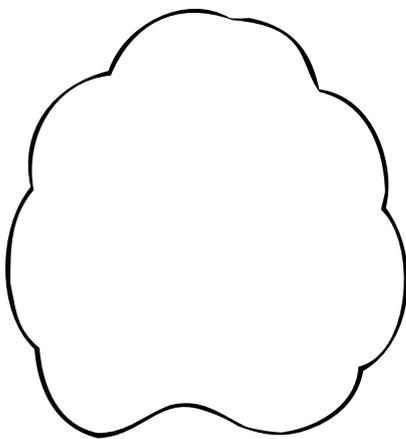
cross(p.7)



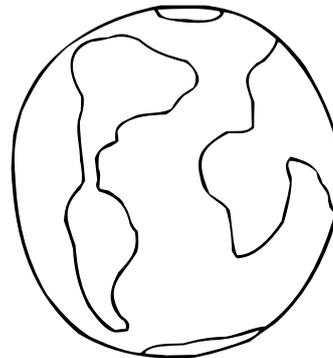
my way (p.4)



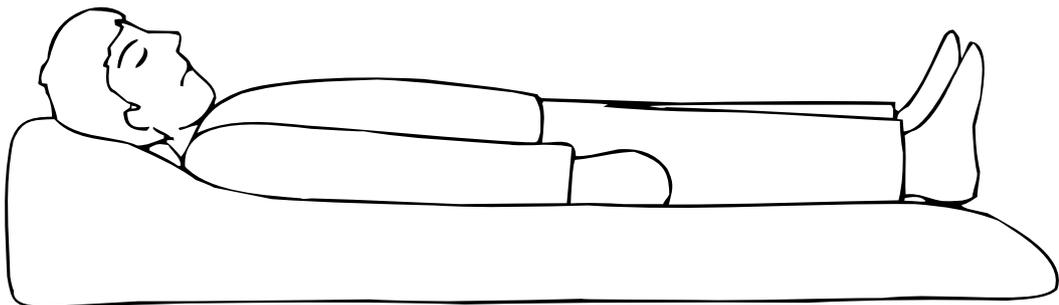
barrier (p.5)



tree top (p.3)



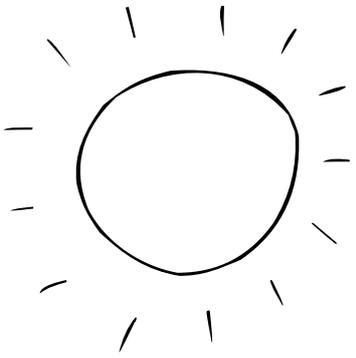
the earth (p.2)



dead (p.6)

The Son of Man
came to seek
and to save
the lost.
Luke 19:10

Good's Good News



In the beginning God created the heavens
and the earth.

(Genesis 1:1)

and I must give God his rightful position as
King of my life

(Philippians 2:10-11)

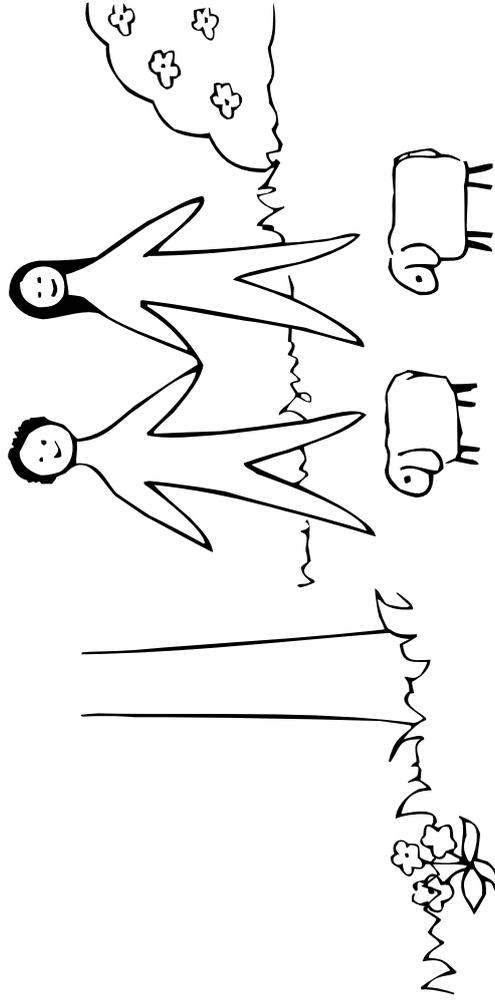
Jesus
is my
Saviour



I must believe that Jesus is God and that he can
save me ...

15

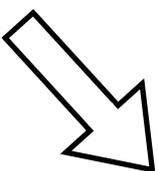
(Acts 16:31)



God saw all that he had made, and it was
very good.

(Genesis 1:31)

God's
way



my
way

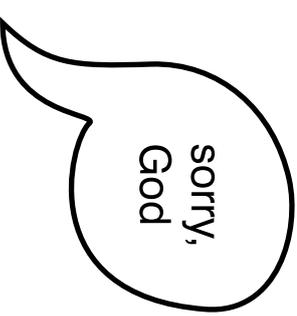


Man wanted to go his way - not God's.

(Romans 3:23)

4

sorry,
God

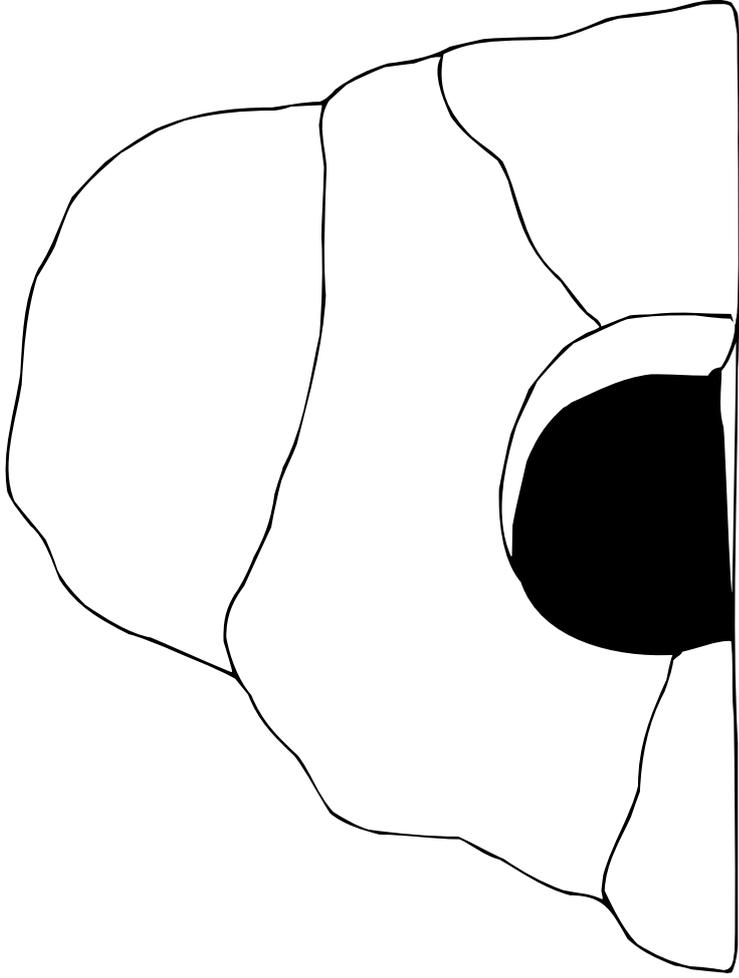


If I want to be part of God's family I must say
sorry to God ...

(Acts 2:38)

9

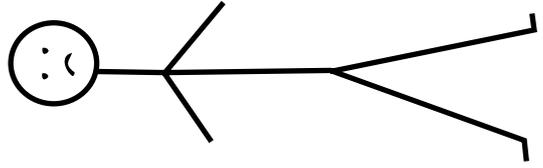
16



Jesus rose from the dead to bring new life to all who believe in him.

17

(Romans 4:25 - 5:1; 6:23)



me

God

All the naughty things I do put a barrier between me and God.

(Isaiah 59:2)

God's punishment for this rebellion is eternal death.

(Romans 6:23)

6

But God came as Jesus to die in my place.

(Timothy 1:15)

7