

# First Sunday of Lent

## Focus

A candle on a tray of sand with some pebbles (to represent the desert), a bread roll, a small crown (made from card), and a small tower (made from paper or card, or built with children's building blocks).

## Introduction

Every day we have to make choices. Sometimes it is easy to make the right choice, but at other times we find ourselves being tempted to do what we might later regret. Lent is a good time for taking a look at our lives and giving them a good 'spring clean', allowing us to clear out all the clutter that comes between us and God's love.

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 6.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Luke (4:1-13)  
(See page 387.)

## Reflection

*Why did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus into the desert?*

Jesus was preparing for his mission to reveal God's love to the world. He wanted to focus all his energy and attention on God's will for the world, to draw strength from his love, and to spend some time devoted to his heavenly Father without unnecessary distraction. The desert was an empty, lonely place where Jesus could find the peace and quiet he needed to pray and think.

*Who came to disturb Jesus by trying to tempt him?*

The devil wanted to put Jesus to the test and make him sin against the great commandment to love God 'with all your heart, all your soul and all your might'. He tried to make Jesus use his power for selfish reasons and to put God's love to the test.

*What did Jesus do?*

Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Jesus was faithful and obedient to his Father and used the truthful words of Scripture to convince the devil to go away and leave him in peace.

*Has anyone decided to 'give up' or 'go on' something for the six weeks of Lent?*

(Invite the children to share their Lenten aims or goals. What temptations might they face during the coming weeks?)

*What should we remember when we are tempted to do something wrong?*

That Jesus is very close to us when we suffer from temptation. He has shared the same feelings of uncertainty and doubt, and his Spirit is always ready to give us the strength we need to overcome moments of weakness.

*How can Jesus help us when we find ourselves being put to the test during Lent?*

As we try to draw closer to God's love, by making a special effort to please him and by choosing to do his

will, we can experience moments of weakness and doubt when we find it hard to resist temptation. At such times we can pray to the Holy Spirit to strengthen our will and determination, and know that we can depend on him to answer our cry for help.

## Activity

Photocopy the template and show the children how to fold their piece of paper to make a 'Lenten chooser'. Use it to help give them some ideas about what to do for Lent!

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

For Christians everywhere who are called to do God's will each and every day.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For agencies and organisations working for peace in our troubled world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For people who campaign for justice and equality for all.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who are tempted to turn away from God and his forgiving love.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

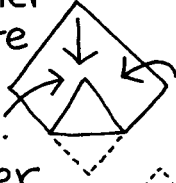
Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

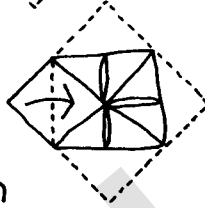
Loving Father,  
open our hearts to hear and understand your Word,  
and help us always to do your holy will.  
Grant this through Christ your Son.

**Amen.**

1. Fold each corner into the centre to make a diamond shape.



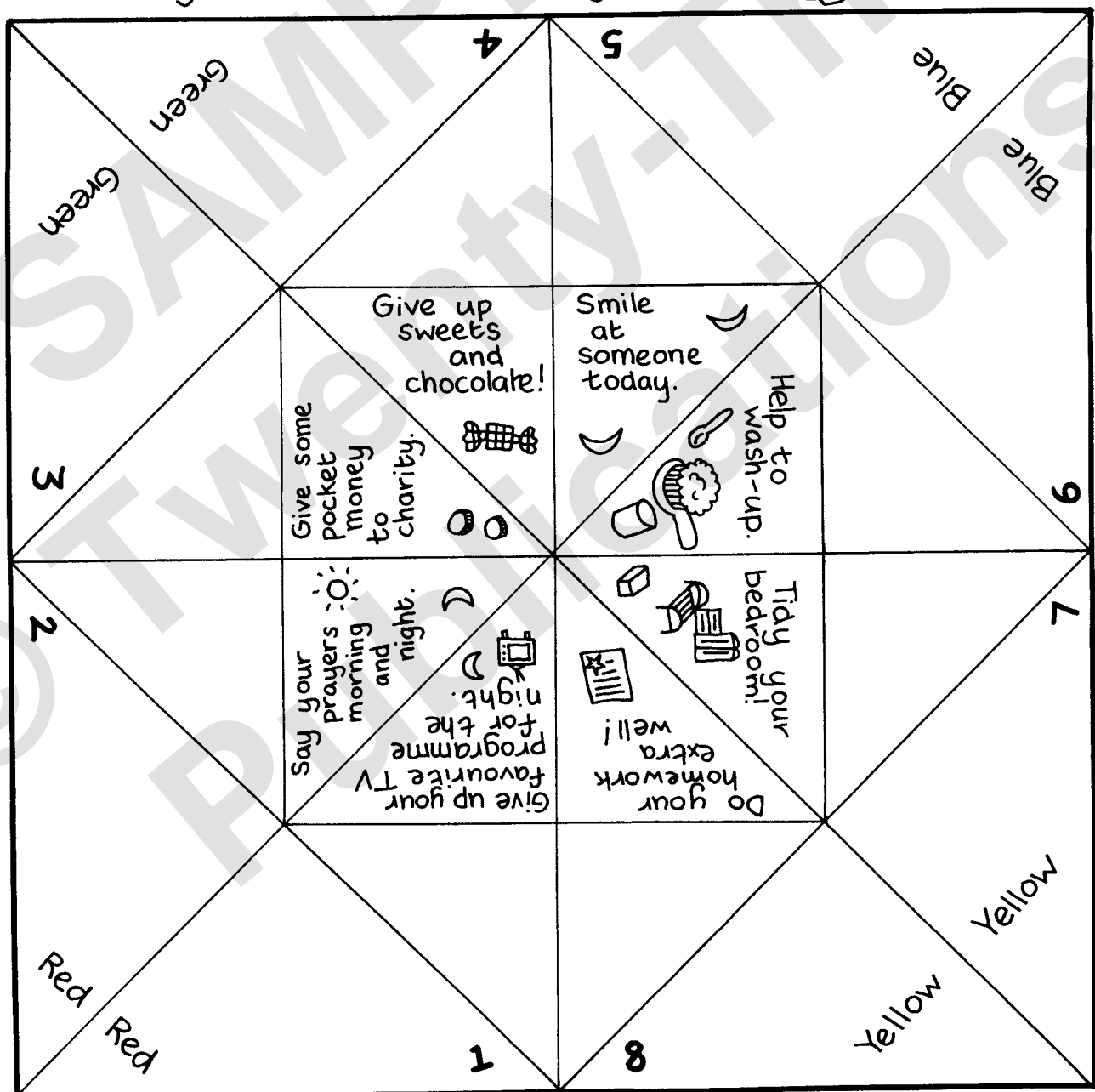
2. Turn the paper over and fold into the centre again as before.



3. Turn the Lenten chooser over and colour green, blue, red and yellow.

4. Slip a finger and thumb of each hand into the squares at the back.

5. Choose and then spell a colour, moving the chooser for each letter. Choose a number and count that out too. Read out your Lenten idea!



# Second Sunday of Lent

## Focus

A large candle simply arranged on a white piece of cloth scattered with glitter to make it sparkle.

## Introduction

Sometimes in our lives we are lucky enough to experience something so amazing and unforgettable that our memory of that occasion never fades. Every time we recall what happened or what we saw, we are filled with the same feelings of wonder and awe. In today's Gospel we hear about just such an experience that Jesus shared with his closest of friends.

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 1.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Luke (9:28-36)

With the disciples Peter, James and John, Jesus climbed a mountain to pray. While Jesus prayed, his clothes shone with dazzling white light as radiant as the sun, and his appearance was transformed!

Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared in glory next to Jesus and began speaking to him.

Peter and his friends were amazed by everything they saw, and Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, this is all so wonderful! I could build three shelters, one for each of you!'

At that moment a cloud descended and covered them on the mountain top, and the disciples were afraid. Then a voice from the cloud spoke, 'This is my Son, the chosen one, listen to what he says.'

When the voice fell silent, the disciples found themselves alone with Jesus. The three friends told no one at that time about the wonders they had witnessed that day.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Reflection

*How bright is the sun?*

Encourage the children to share their thoughts and ideas. Sunlight is so bright and dazzling that we cannot look directly at it without damaging our eyesight.

*What happened to Jesus on the mountain that day?*

His appearance was transformed as his face shone like the sun and his clothes dazzled with whiteness.

*Why did Jesus appear to shine with light?*

Jesus revealed himself to the disciples as they would know him in heaven. For a few brief moments he shared the amazing sight of his glory with his closest friends. His transfiguration was supposed to strengthen them for what they would have to go through at the time of his suffering and death. Jesus wanted them to glimpse and share the heavenly life to which they were called. It was a moment of special grace and revelation.

*When would the disciples experience their own 'transformation' or 'transfiguration'?*

Their lives were transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus poured out his Spirit on them, filling them with his life and power. They 'radiated' holiness and goodness, as they went out to the world and gave witness to God working through them.

*Can Jesus transform our lives too?*

Jesus is present and living within our hearts, ready to transform our lives with his love. We too are given opportunities in our everyday lives to glimpse his power and glory as it is revealed in the people and world around us. Such special moments of grace and closeness to God give us the strength to follow Christ wherever he leads us. What greater happiness could we hope for than to share God's eternal life and the light of his glory.

## Activity

Photocopy an activity sheet to complete and colour.

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

That the leaders of all nations will uphold and respect the dignity of human life.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That lives that are broken and damaged by violence and war can be rebuilt and healed.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That those who follow Christ in life may share his eternal life and glory.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

That the lives of the family gathered here today will be transformed by Christ's love.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

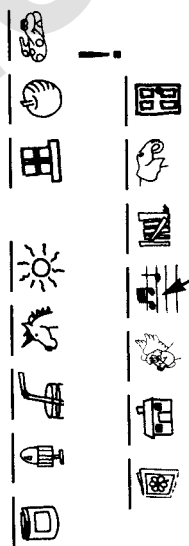
Loving Father,  
unite us in love,  
and strengthen us to share your life and Gospel with the world.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Something marvellous  
happened on the mountain!  
What did Peter, James  
and John see?

Write the first letter of each object

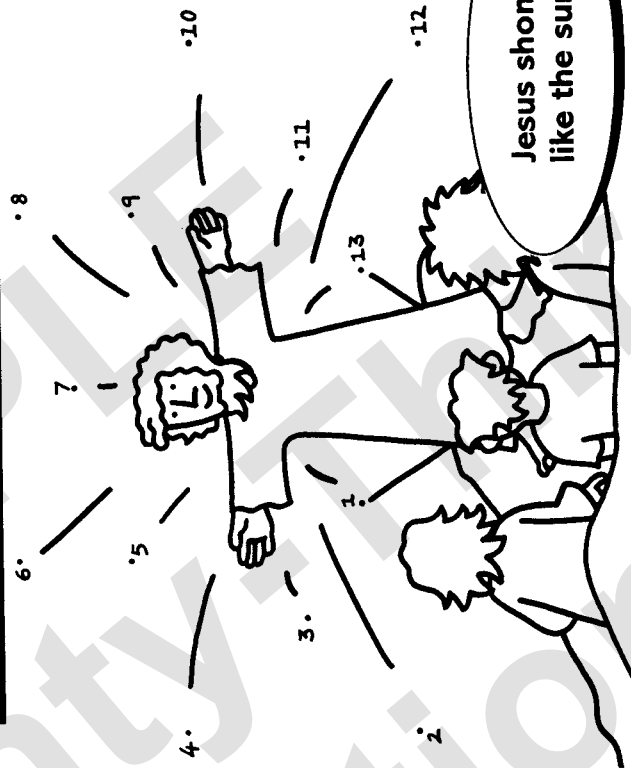


Another word for changed is



Peter, James  
and John went up a  
mountain with Jesus.  
They saw something  
amazing happen!

Join the dots to see what it was like



# Third Sunday of Lent

## Focus

A Bible open at today's Gospel, a twig or branch in a pot, some figs (available from most supermarkets), and any pictures of fig trees you can find in good gardening books.

## Introduction

Show the children the figs. Do they know what these fruits are and what they taste like? Cut one open and show them inside. In today's Gospel story, Jesus tells a parable about a reluctant fig tree that wouldn't produce any fruit.

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 8.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Luke (13:1-9)

Some of the people told Jesus about the Galileans who had been killed by Pilate while offering sacrifices to God.

Jesus said to them, 'Just because they were killed doesn't mean that they were worse sinners than anyone else. Think of the eighteen people in Siloam who died when the tower fell on them. Do you think that proves that they were guiltier than anyone else in Jerusalem? Indeed, it does not! And I tell you that you will all come to the same end unless you turn away from your sins.'

Then he told them a parable: 'A man went to check how many fruits were growing on a fig tree in his vineyard, but he found there was none. So he sent for his gardener and told him, "This tree has grown no fruit for the last three years. Cut it down and make space for another." But the gardener said to him, "Master, give the tree one more year so I have time to feed and care for it. If it still has no fruit on it, then cut it down."' "

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Reflection

*What kind of tree was the man trying to grow?*

Fig trees are quite easy to grow, but it's not always so easy to get them to produce a worthwhile crop of figs! They need regular and careful attention from a keen gardener who will do what is necessary to get such a tree to fruit, including: frequent watering, careful pruning, providing a sheltered position and protection from frost.

*What was the problem with the fig tree in the story?*

Although the tree was growing well, it had produced no fruits for the last three years. Fig trees are leafy and cast a lot of shade, and the owner of the vineyard thought that this useless tree was wasting precious space.

*What did the man want his gardener to do?*

He thought that the gardener should cut the tree down to make way for another.

*What did the gardener persuade his master to do?*

He convinced the man who owned the tree to give it one more chance to produce a crop of fruit. He was

ready to make whatever effort was needed, to encourage the tree to grow some tasty figs to eat.

*What does this story tell us about God?*

This story emphasises God's enormous patience and willingness to give us another chance to live up to his expectations. Even though we might disappoint him with our failures and shortcomings time and time again, he loves us so much that he is always ready to let us have one more go! He will help us in whatever way he can, for however long it takes, to bear the fruit of his love in our lives, to be shared and enjoyed by everyone.

## Activity

Photocopy the sheet. Staple or glue picture A on top of picture B. Show the children how to place a pencil at the bottom of the top sheet and roll it up tightly. Move the pencil up and down quickly to see the tree bearing fruit!

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

We pray for followers of Christ;  
that they may bear the fruit of his love in their lives.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people whose lives are choked  
by greed and selfishness;  
that they may grow in generosity and thoughtfulness.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people wounded and hurt by hatred and fear;  
that they may be healed by God's merciful peace.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people touched by pain and suffering;  
that they may be strengthened by God's patient care.

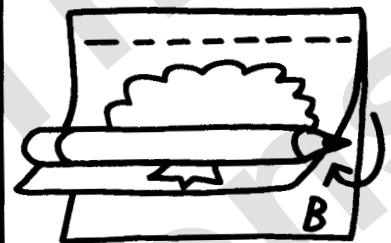
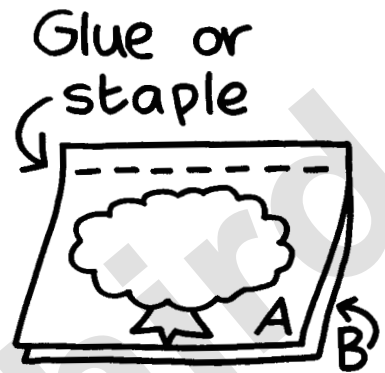
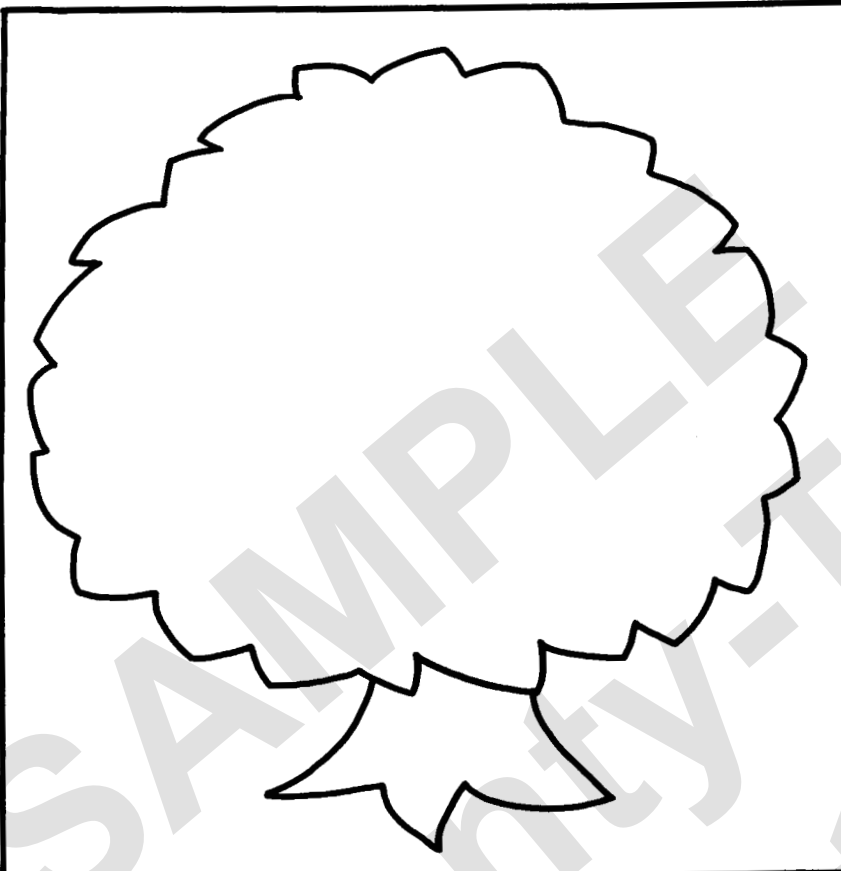
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening,  
in the silence of our hearts  
let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

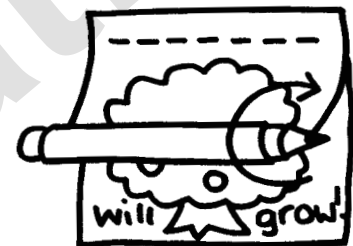
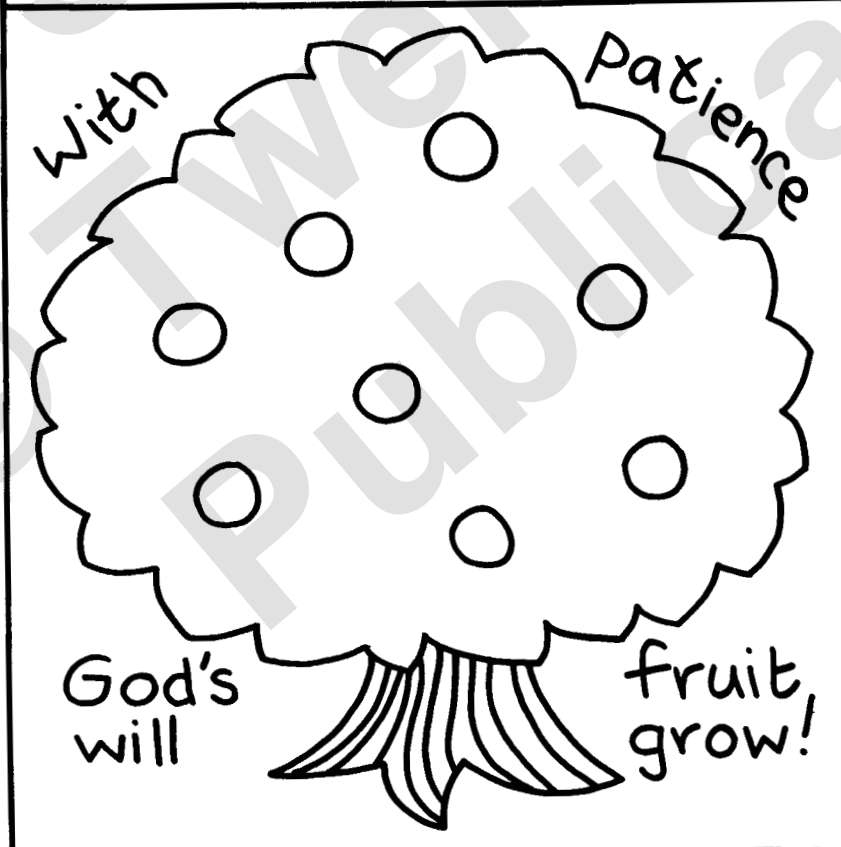
*Silence*

Loving Father,  
make our lives pleasing to you,  
as we bear the fruits of your love  
and produce a rich harvest.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



A



Tree bearing  
fruit moving  
scene.

B

# Fourth Sunday of Lent

## Focus

A Bible open at today's Gospel, with an assortment of money and a pair of binoculars.

## Introduction

A parent's love is so strong that they are prepared to forgive almost anything that their child might do when they hear a heartfelt 'sorry'. Jesus came to call sinners back to God and to tell them that God their loving Father was waiting and hoping that they would have a change of heart and return to his love.

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 1.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Luke (15:1-3, 11-32)  
(See page 388.)

## Reflection

*In the story that Jesus told, what did the man's younger son do?*

The younger son asked for his share of his father's wealth immediately, instead of waiting until the day it would eventually become his.

*What did he do once he got what he wanted?*

He left home without any further thought for his father or brother, and used his money to enjoy himself.

*Why did the younger son eventually return home?*

Having spent his money foolishly, it wasn't long before he had none left. He found himself far from home, in a country where there was no food because of famine, with no one who cared what became of him. Realising what a huge mistake he had made, he decided to return home and ask for his father's forgiveness.

*What kind of welcome did he receive?*

His father had been watching and hoping for his return. He was so pleased that his beloved son had come home that he was ready to forgive anything. The return of his son meant so much that the father arranged an extravagant party to celebrate his homecoming.

*What had the older son been doing all this time, and how did he feel when his brother returned?*

The older son had remained loyal to his father, and worked hard to please him. He had not behaved selfishly, or wasted his father's hard-earned fortune. He was jealous and angry to see what a fuss his father made of his irresponsible and self-centred younger brother. His father reassured him of his love, but insisted on celebrating his wayward brother's return and change of heart.

*What does this story teach us?*

That whatever mistakes we make, however selfish and self-centred we might be, God our heavenly Father will always welcome us back to his love. Our expression of regret and wish to return and be close to God's love give

him cause for great and justified celebration. However many times we might behave foolishly or make mistakes we regret, we know that God's forgiving love remains as strong as ever, and we can always expect a warm and loving welcome.

## Activity

Help the children to make binoculars from cardboard tubes taped together, before attaching some string.

OR

Photocopy the template and cut boomerang shapes from thick card or cardboard boxes to remind the children that however far we may travel from God's love, we can always return to him! Decorate the boomerangs.

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

We pray for our family the Church and all who are preparing to be welcomed into the community of faith.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for parents everywhere, that their love will be at the heart of family life.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for forgiveness, understanding and tolerance in our world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the sick and all who suffer in any way.

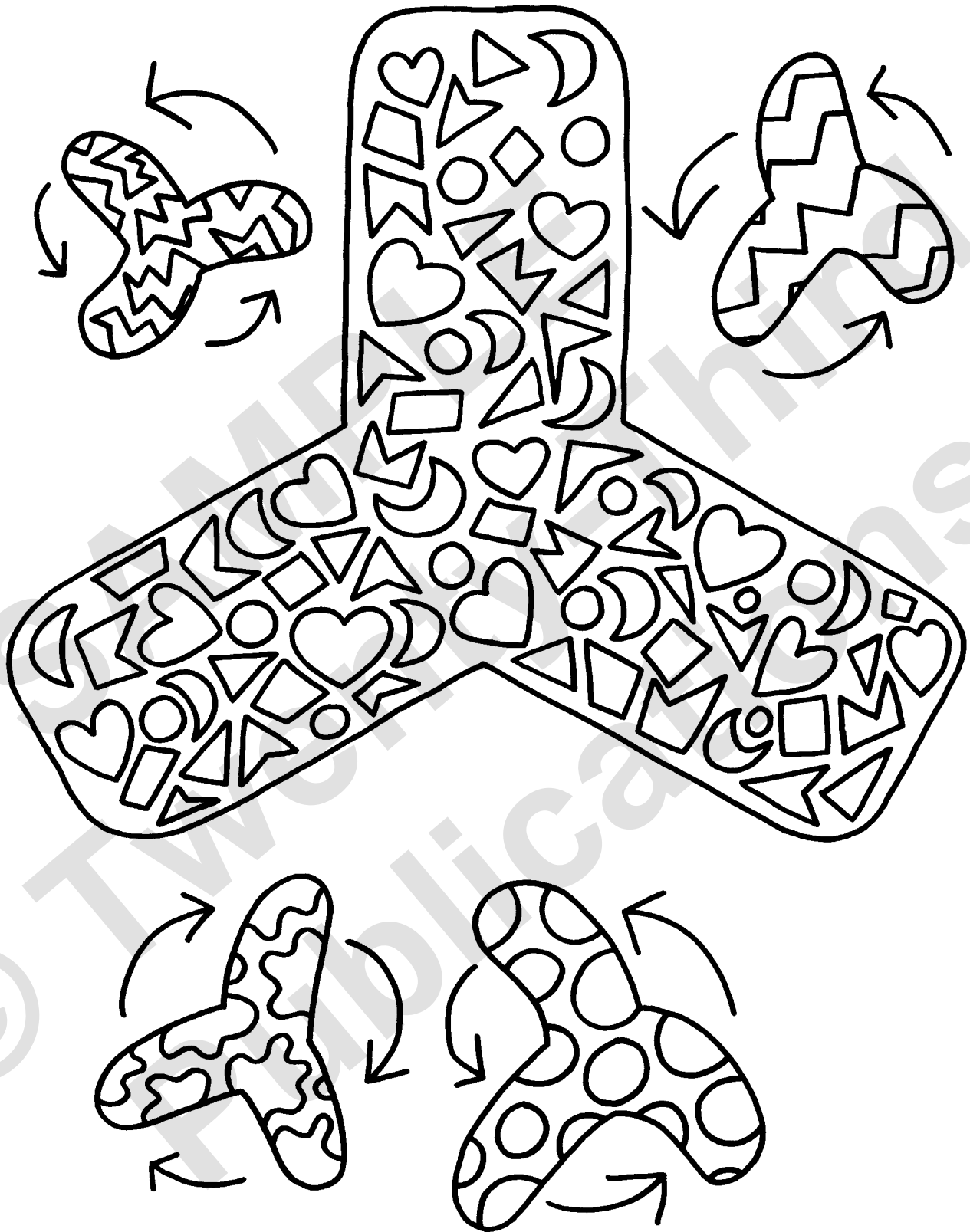
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

Loving Father,  
in your patient love,  
hear the prayers of your children.  
Make us grow in love for you and for one another.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



Boomerang Template.