

Children's Lessons for Life Groups

All-In-One lessons for kids ages 4-12

from

All-In-One Sunday School, Volumes 2 & 3

Lesson 15



Fruit of the Spirit: Love

15

LESSON AIM

To help kids understand that ★ God's love is for everyone.

OBJECTIVES

Kids will

- ✓ taste various seasonings and compare them to people,
- ✓ hear how Jesus made friends with a lonely, outcast woman,
- ✓ learn that the first fruit of the Spirit is love,
- ✓ make a conversation-starter game, and
- ✓ have an opportunity to commit to showing God's love.

YOU'LL NEED

- blindfolds
- toothpicks
- paper cups
- horseradish*
- honey*
- vinegar*
- steak sauce*
- apple butter*
- sour cream*
- sweet and sour sauce*
- orange marmalade*
- a photocopy of the "Woman at the Well" pattern (p. 81) on tan paper
- a photocopy of the "Living Water" pattern (p. 82) on blue paper
- photocopies of the "Tic Tac Go-Make-a-Friend" Game Board and Game Squares (pp. 83-84)
- scissors
- pencils

*Always check for allergies before serving snacks.

BIBLE BASIS

John 4:1-42

In Jesus' time, Jewish law and rabbinical tradition firmly delineated what was appropriate social contact and what was not. Jesus calmly and purposely crossed over the line marked "appropriate" when he spoke to a Samaritan woman at a well near Sychar. Jews looked down on Samaritans to such a degree that it was typical to extend the three-day journey from Judea to Galilee to six days in order to avoid passing through Samaritan territory. With this journey through Samaria, Jesus began quietly to break down walls of prejudice and teach that God's love is for everyone. For not only was the woman Jesus spoke with a Samaritan, she was also an outcast among her own people, shunned because of her promiscuous lifestyle.

How the high and mighty Pharisees would have been shocked to see Jesus compromise his ritual cleanness by making contact with such a person! And what marvelous teaching opportunities came as a result. Because of the woman's glowing testimony and obvious transformation, Jesus and his disciples were welcomed into a village that would otherwise have been clearly hostile territory. There they remained for two days, and as Jesus preached and taught, many Samaritans came to believe in him as Savior of the world.

Galatians 5:22-23

The very first fruit of the Spirit Paul lists is love. This is not surprising at all, because when we allow God's Spirit to transform our minds and hearts, God's love begins to flow from an eternal, unstoppable river. Before long, it overflows—we can't help it! We can resist, by clinging stubbornly to sinful attitudes. But when we totally submit ourselves to the Spirit's power, there's no avoiding it—we have to go with the flow! This great outpouring of love isn't meant to sprinkle just a chosen few family members and church friends; it's meant to go splashing and swirling around every person we touch until our world is awash with the glow of it!

UNDERSTANDING YOUR KIDS

Children tend to develop the majority of their relationships within certain comfort zones. Typically, kids' comfort zones form along lines similar to their parents'. Unfortunately, many Christian families choose to remain within the confines of a safe circle of Christian friends, seldom cultivating friendships among those who don't know Christ. If parents tend to restrict their associations to friends of their own religious community and socioeconomic class, chances are their children will do the same.

While it may be difficult for adults to learn to break those patterns, it's easy enough for children. Use this lesson to teach kids how to reach out to children who are different, lonely, and lacking in friends, to show them that God's love is for everyone.

ATTENTION GRABBER

Taste Test

Before kids arrive, set out blindfolds, toothpicks, and paper cups containing small amounts of each of the following items: horseradish, honey, vinegar, steak sauce, apple butter, sour cream, sweet and sour sauce, and orange marmalade. Cover the cups so kids can't see their contents, and set the cups around the room. Place toothpicks by each cup.

As kids arrive, help them form pairs. Let each pair decide which partner will be blindfolded.

Say: If you're not wearing a blindfold, lead your partner to one of the cups you see around the room. Dip a toothpick into the cup, and give it to your partner to taste. Blindfolded partners, when you taste what's on your toothpick, finish this sentence: "This reminds me of a person who is..." Then think of a person who's like that, but don't say the person's name out loud. Once you've thought of someone, say to your partner, "Next!" Then you'll go on to another taste test. When you've tasted what's in all eight cups, switch roles with your partner.

As kids move around the room tasting what's in the various cups, remind them what to say and what to think about. After everyone has completed the taste test, collect the blindfolds, throw away the toothpicks, and gather kids in a circle. Ask:

◆ **What makes some people happy and others crabby?** (The things that happen to them; the choices they make.)

◆ **What makes someone likable?** (If they're always nice; if they seem to care about everyone.)

◆ **What makes someone unlikable?** (No matter how nice you try to be to some people, they're always nasty; they act like they're way better than everyone.)

Say: Nearly all of us have days when we're more like horseradish or vinegar than honey. And that feels pretty bad—even for just one day. But suppose you felt like that for weeks or months or even years. Yuck! The person we're going to hear about in today's Bible story was a horseradish person, and she probably had been like that for a long time. Fortunately, she ran into someone who knew that ★ God's love is for everyone.

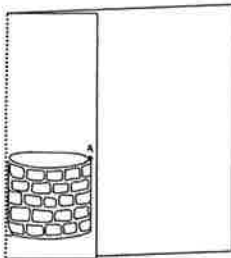
BIBLE STUDY

Jesus Makes a Friend (John 4:1-42)

Before class, make copies of the "Woman at the Well" pattern on tan paper and the "Living Water" pattern on blue paper. Practice cutting the papers while telling the story once prior to class. During the story, you'll want to hold the printed sides of the patterns so they face the children. You may want to color the well scene to add visual interest.

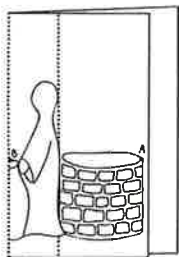
Say: **One day, Jesus and his disciples traveled to the town of Sychar (SIGH-kar). It was unusual for Jews to travel to Sychar because Samaritans lived there, and Jews and Samaritans didn't get along. In fact, they usually avoided each other, even if it meant traveling miles out of their way. But Jesus didn't mind passing through Samaritan country.**

Fold the tan paper back on Line 1 so only the well shows.



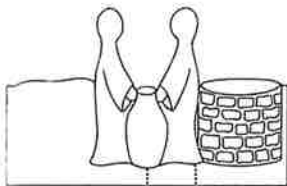
Jesus' disciples went into town to find something to eat while Jesus rested by a well on the outskirts of town. Before long, a woman came to the well to draw water.

Open the paper at Line 1, and fold it back at Line 2 so the well and one person are showing.



It was strange for anyone to come to the well at noon when it was hot. The big jars of water were heavy to carry, so most people came to the well when it was cooler. Jesus knew that this woman had come to the well alone because nobody liked her. Other women enjoyed meeting their friends at the well, but this woman had no friends to meet.

Keeping the paper folded, cut from point A to B following the outline of the well and person. Trim excess paper. Open the figure on Line 2 so both people show.



"Give me a drink," Jesus said.

The woman was shocked. Who was this Jewish man who dared talk to her?

"How is it that you, a Jewish man, are asking for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" she asked him.

Jesus replied, "If you knew about God's free gift and if you knew who I was, you'd be asking me, and I'd give you living water."

Fold the blue paper in half on Line 1 (see opposite page).

Now that left the woman feeling a little confused!

"You have no bucket, and this well is deep," she said.

"Where does your living water come from?"

Keeping the paper folded, cut from point A to B following the jar outline. Trim excess paper. Open the paper

out of kids' view, and fold down on Line 2. Then display the jar.

Jesus gave her another confusing answer. "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the living water I give...

Open the fold on Line 2, and cut from B to C following the outline. Trim excess paper.

...will never be thirsty again. The water I give will become a well of water within him...

Tip the jar and "pour" the stream of water.

...springing up to eternal life."

Now Jesus really had the woman's attention!

"Sir," she said, "give me this water!"

Jesus replied, "First, go and bring your husband."

The woman was embarrassed. "I have no husband," she answered.

"You're right," he said. "You've had five husbands, and you're not married to the man you're living with now."

The woman could hardly believe her ears. This stranger knew all about her! He knew why she had no friends—no one wanted to be friends with a woman who had such a bad reputation. The woman realized that Jesus must be someone special.

"I know that God is sending the Messiah," she said. "The Messiah will tell us all about God."

Jesus said, "I am the Messiah."

The woman gasped. Could it be true? She got so excited that she left her water jar and went running back into town. "Come see this man I talked to," she told the townspeople. "He knew all about me! Do you think he could be the Messiah God promised to send?"

A crowd of people followed the woman back to the well to meet Jesus. They begged him to stay in their town and teach. So Jesus stayed two more days, and many people believed that he was the Savior God had promised.

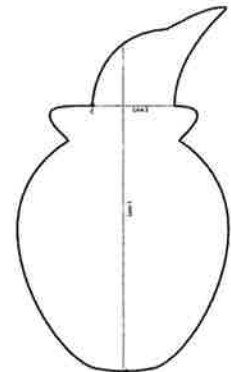
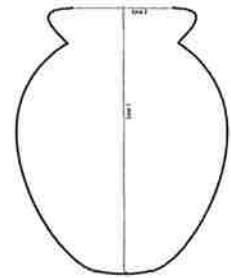
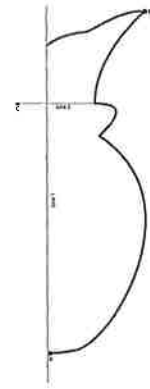
Ask:

◆ **How did Jesus make friends with the woman at the well?** (He asked her for a drink; he spoke to her, even though she didn't expect him to.)

◆ **Why did he bother to make friends with her?** (He knew she was lonely, and he cared about her; he knew he could help her.)

◆ **What good things happened because Jesus took time to make friends with this woman?** (She believed in him, and so did lots of her neighbors; a whole town got to hear Jesus.)

Say: Jesus came to show us that ★ **God's love is for everyone. He was ready and willing to offer his friendship to a total stranger. But he became much more than her friend—he became her Savior.**



LIFE APPLICATION

Tic Tac Go-Make-a-Friend!

Ask:

◆ **When the people of Sychar looked at the woman Jesus met, what did they see?** (Someone with a bad reputation; someone they wanted to avoid.)

◆ **When Jesus looked at the woman, what did he see?** (Someone who was lonely; someone who needed to be forgiven of her sins.)

◆ **Which of the seasonings you sampled earlier do you think best represents this woman?**

Say: **One of the amazing things about Jesus was that he knew how to make friends with people—how to approach people who were hurting without scaring them or looking down on them or driving them away. His first act of friendship was simply to ask for a drink of water.** Ask:

◆ **Tell about a time you made friends with someone who was unfriendly at first and hard to get to know.** (I had to keep being friendly to my new neighbor for a long time before she started being friendly to me; I kept smiling at this boy and trying to think of nice things to say.)

Say: **It's easy to make friends with people who are cheerful and outgoing. But vinegar/horseradish people are another matter—they can be quite a challenge. ★ God's love is for everyone, including horseradish people. Jesus showed us by his example with the woman at the well that people who are hard to get to know need God's love just as much as everyone else. But making friends with them might seem a little risky.**

Let's have some fun making a game called Tic Tac Go-Make-a-Friend. The game will help us learn how to reach out and make friends with people, even those who might be a bit difficult to get to know.

Distribute scissors and photocopies of the "Tic Tac Go-Make-a-Friend" handouts. Have kids cut apart the game squares; then show them how to fold the game board page into an envelope, and drop the game squares inside. Have kids write their names on the outside of their envelopes. Distribute pencils and say: **Once you've finished making your game, find a partner—preferably someone you don't know very well. Arrange the game squares in any order on the game board. Play the game just as you would Tick-Tack-Toe. When you lift a game square, answer the question or do what the card says; then lightly mark your initial in that square on the game board. Try to get four squares in a row in any direction.**

Let kids play two or three rounds of the game with different partners if time allows.

COMMITMENT

The First Fruit

Bring everyone together. Ask:

◆ **When and where could you use this game to reach out and make a new friend?** (On the playground; at recess; with my new neighbor.)

◆ **Why would you want to reach out to someone who's not very friendly?** (To show God's love; so I could eventually tell that person about Jesus.)

Say: **During this lesson we've learned that ★ God's love is for everyone. Love is the first item on a list the Bible calls "the fruit of the Spirit." Listen carefully as I read about the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23.**

Read Galatians 5:22-23 aloud.

Say: **It's important to understand that these things come from God's Holy Spirit. When we open our lives to God and invite his Holy Spirit to work in our hearts, God puts these things in our lives. Right now I have a great song that will help you remember the fruit of the Spirit in a really unique way.**

Teach kids this song to the tune of "Rock Around the Clock."

The Fruit of the Spirit

(to the tune of "Rock Around the Clock")

Love and joy.

Love, joy, peace.

In your heart may they increase.

We're talking patience, kindness, goodness, too.

And faithfulness to last your whole life through.

Gentleness and self-control—

God's Spirit in you!

(Repeat.)

Say: **Good job! Keep singing that song this week, and you'll know what to be watching for as God helps you grow.**

CLOSING

Open Hearts

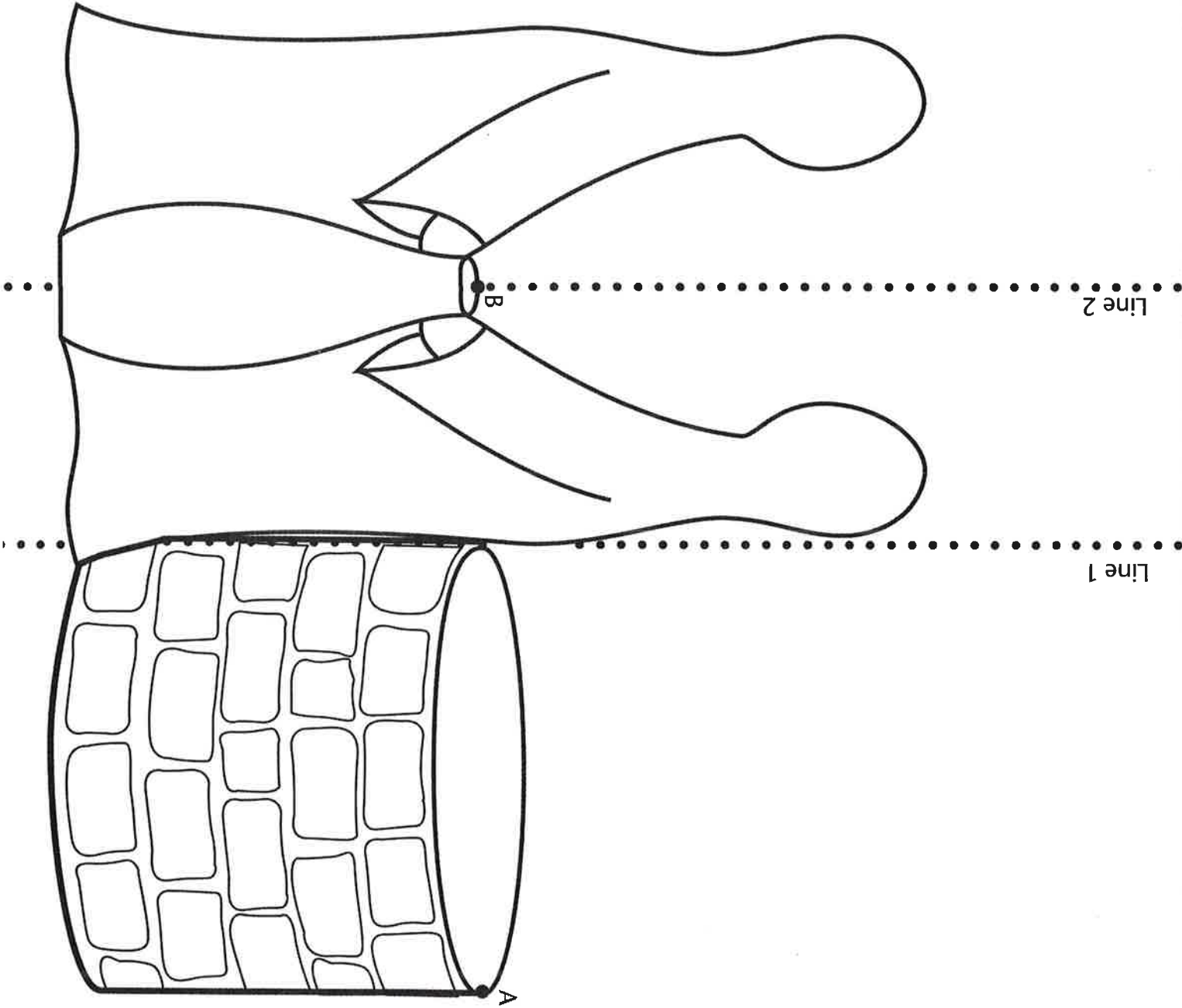
Show kids how to make a heart with their hands by bending their fingers, touching the fingernails and heel of one hand to the other. The space between their hands will be the shape of a heart.

Say: **Let's end today by opening our hearts to God and asking the Holy Spirit to be at work in our lives.** As you speak, turn your hands so that the palms are facing upward, and straighten your fingers to "open" the heart. **As we pray, I'd like you to close your eyes so that you don't see what others are doing. If you'd like to make a commitment to God to show his love to others this week, make that heart with your hands, and open it in the same way we just did as I pray.**

Pray: **Dear Lord, thank you for showing us that ★ God's love is for everyone. Please help us this week as we look for ways to reach out to people who seem unfriendly and unhappy. Lord, we open our hearts to you. We ask your Holy Spirit to work in our lives and bring forth the fruit of love. In Jesus' name, amen.**

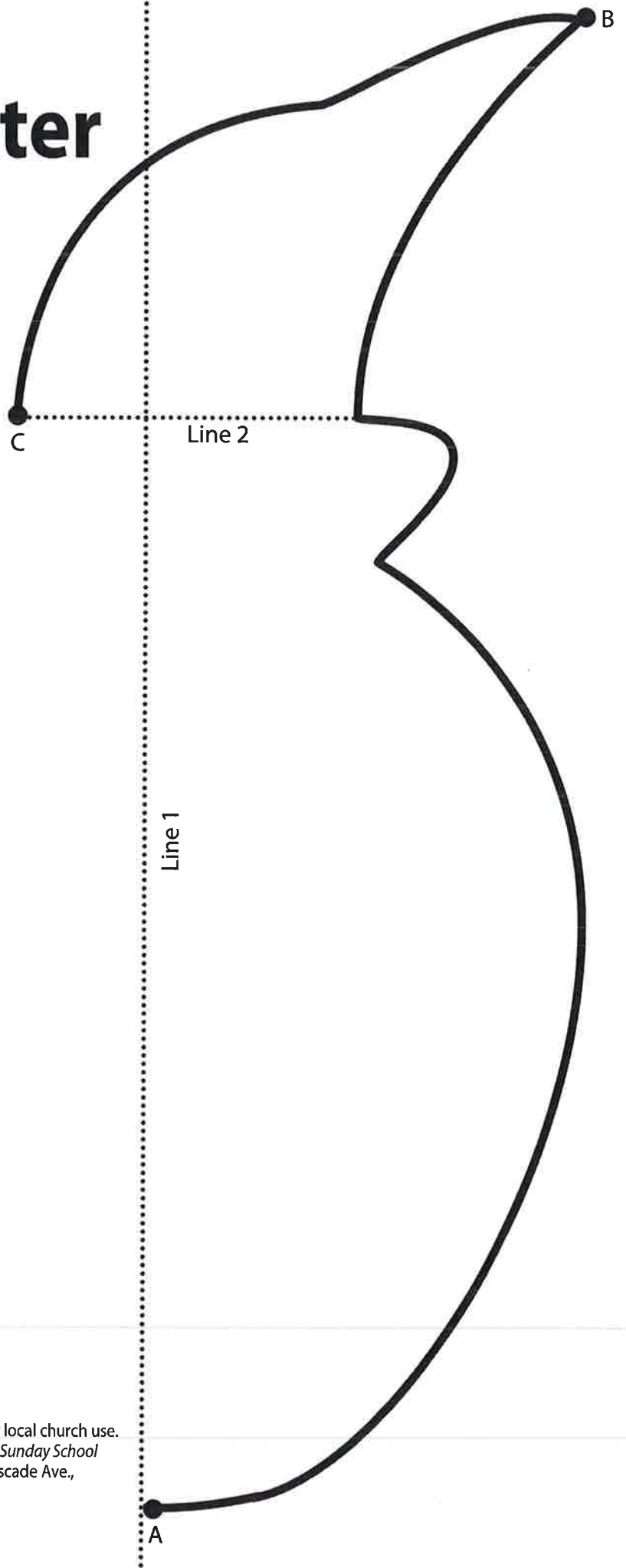
Remind kids to take their games. Encourage them to use the game to reach out in love and make a new friend this week.

The Woman at the Well



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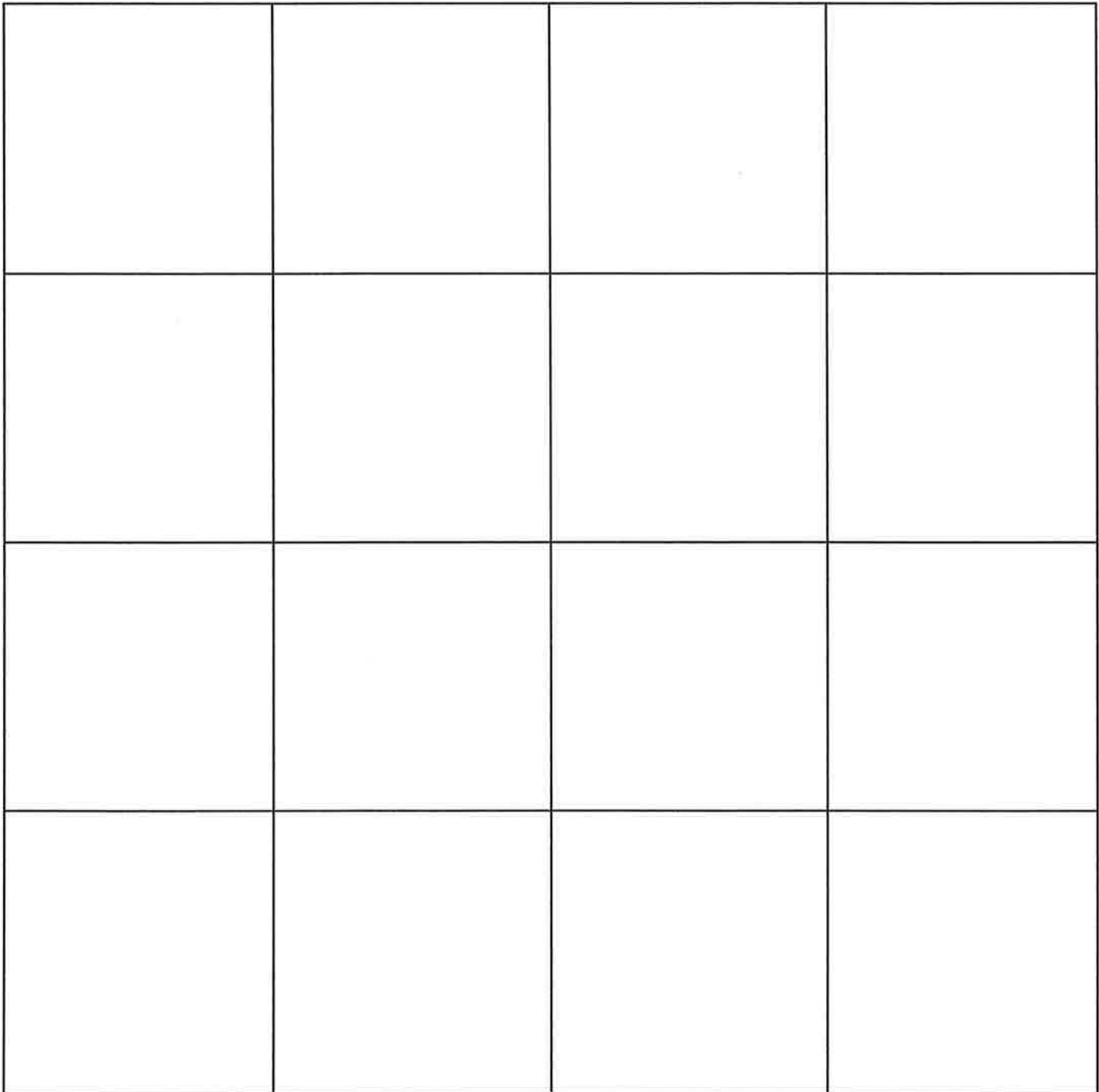
Living Water



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Tic Tac Go-Make-A-Friend

Play this game like Tick-Tack-Toe. To claim a square, lift the game piece, do what it says, the write your initial lightly on the game board. The first person to get four squares in a row in any direction wins.



1. Fold the game board in thirds horizontally on the dotted lines.



3. Fold the left end into a point.



2. Make two more folds on the vertical dotted lines.



4. Turn both ends toward the center. Tuck the point into the right end to make a handy envelope in which to store your game squares.

Tic Tac Go-Make-A-Friend Game Squares

<p>If you could go anywhere at all for a vacation, where would you go?</p>	<p>Sing two lines of your favorite song.</p>	<p>Who's your favorite relative? What do you like about that person?</p>	<p>Tell about a time you were really, really happy.</p>
<p>Name three games you like to play.</p>	<p>What's your all-time favorite movie?</p>	<p>What's your middle name?</p>	<p>Tell what you know about who Jesus is.</p>
<p>Who's your favorite singer? your favorite group?</p>	<p>What do you think you'd like to do when you grow up?</p>	<p>What was your best-ever birthday present?</p>	<p>What's your favorite food?</p>
<p>Tell about a time you were really, really sad.</p>	<p>If you could meet anyone who's ever lived, who would you want to meet?</p>	<p>What's your favorite sports team?</p>	<p>When has God answered a prayer for you?</p>