

Play through the Bible

Alice Buckley

**Extra play ideas
download**

Here comes Jesus (Luke 3 v 15-22)

Chat and play

Say the words 'wait' and 'get ready!' a lot while you play this week.

Playing anyway

Prepare for family members arriving home from work and school, or try inviting a friend round and getting things ready in anticipation. Remind your child of the waiting and getting ready in the story.

Jesus in the desert (Luke 3 v 15-22)

Create

Try making real bread together (you can buy ready-to-mix dough from most supermarkets). Talk about all the things that you need to make bread. Remind your child of the story. (Later on, as your child discovers more about Jesus they will see that he could have made bread if he wanted to—but listening to God was the most important thing.)

Active

Sing songs where your child has to listen for instructions such as 'If you're happy and you know it'. Or 'Here we go round the mulberry bush', with verses like 'this is the way we eat our lunch / put on our shoes / have a nap.'

Playing anyway

Whenever there is the chance to include listening in a game, really emphasise the word and celebrate the moments your child listens and does what you say.

Try activities where there are two voices to listen to—one saying the right thing and the other the

wrong thing. You can make it silly! For instance, Daddy says 'put your shoes on your feet' and Mummy says 'put your shoes on your knees'. Or Mummy says 'let's drink our juice in the garden' and Daddy says 'let's drink our juice on the moon'.

Jesus makes lots of people better (Luke 4 v 40-44)

Chat and play

It may be that your child is unwell this week – while this means you may not manage many play activities, it offers a great opportunity to remind them of Jesus' power and care. Show them that Jesus still cares as you pray asking for God to help your child feel better again.

Playing anyway

When your child has a bump while they're playing, offer to make it better just by touching it (as long as it won't make them feel more upset!). Show them that you can't do it! Your child may be used to you saying 'I'll rub/kiss it better' so you may need to help them see that when you say that you're trying to comfort them and help them not feel so sore and sad but that you can't really fix the bump or stop the pain with a rub or a kiss.

So many fish! (Luke 5 v 1-11)

Messy

Cut fish shapes out of craft foam and put them in a food bag with a zip closure. Add some hair gel (the cheap tubs of gel work well – I used two tubs for the bag I made for our children).

Seal the bag, adding some tape to make it more leak-proof. Let your child squish the bag and see whether they can spot the fish. Adding a small squirt of shampoo or dish soap makes the gel bubbly. Try taping the bag to a window. These squidgy bags are not leak-proof (we learned this the hard way!). Your child shouldn't be left alone with the bag and it won't last forever.

Active

Play follow my leader and talk about the fishermen deciding to follow Jesus.

Playing anyway

Play at catching fish. Your child could hold a chunky magnet and use it to catch paper clips hidden in a sea of balls or marbles. Alternatively, try chopping up a pool noodle to make lots of small rings and use these as fish, 'catching' the fish with a pole or coat-hanger—use a paddling pool, blanket or hula hoop as the lake.

Jesus helps a man who can't walk

(Luke 5 v 17-26)

Messy

Do messy play that involves bringing two separate things together. Use the idea of separation and coming together to talk about forgiveness and being friends with God.

Shaving foam and cornflour:

Experiment with different ratios of each ingredient. Put cornflour in a tray or bowl and add shaving foam and encourage your child to combine the two ingredients using their hands. Using lots of foam will create a slimy consistency and using less will create a firm, crumbly dough. The more you work this mixture the firmer it gets. It smells quite strongly of shaving foam so make sure it's a scent you like!

Cloud dough:

Mix 1 part cooking oil with 8 parts plain flour. Mix together with a fork until combined. This mixture is crumbly and soft but can be moulded and squeezed. Try putting it into jelly moulds or silicone cake cases to create different shapes.

Playing anyway

As you play this week try forgetting one crucial item. Help your child understand you really 'need' the scissors to cut out the paper people you want to make or that you 'need' to get the cars out if you're going to play with the toy garage.

Playing anyway

When you play or get food ready encourage your child to bring the separate things together—like bread and slices of cheese at lunchtime.

Out and about

Make pictures with chalk on paving stones or walls. Rub out the pictures with water when you have finished. If being outside isn't possible, you could do the same type of play using a magnetic sketcher or white board. Each time you wipe away a picture say things like 'your picture was there and now it's gone!'. You could add more conversation by saying 'sometimes it's sad when something is gone (like lovely cake or a really brilliant picture) and sometimes it's really good when something's gone (like a sore knee or a picture you didn't like)'. As you play tell your child that God wipes our bad things away for good - it's really good that they're never here again!

Active

Invite a friend or two round to play some games that require them to play together—try parachute games (use a blanket if you don't have a parachute!) or playing with a ball. Help your child notice how good it is to be friends (and how sad it is not to be, if they end up fighting!). Talk to them about how much God wants us to be his friends.

Try these parachute games:

Hold the parachute or blanket at the edges and do gentle shakes making it ripple, then try big shakes too.

Hold the parachute low and then pull it up as high as you can.

Put a ball or a teddy bear on the parachute and try to keep it on while you shake.

Create

Help your child make a chain of paper people and decorate it to look like their friends. Talk about how good it is being friends. Talk about what things make it hard to be friends. You can use the template on the next page.

Create

Make a friendship picture by drawing or making a collage from photographs.

A powerful man needs help

(Luke 7 v 1-10)

Out and about

Try to call out to each other from a distance and see how far your words can go. Obviously make sure the distance isn't so great that your child isn't safe.

Chat and play

If your child has any sniffles or bumps this week try 'telling' their body to feel better. Talk about how amazing Jesus is that he could make someone better just by talking—even when he was miles away! (Obviously only do this if it won't upset your child or seem mean!)

A woman loves Jesus

(Luke 7 v 36-50)

Create

For older children, make a smelly bottle together (see instructions below). For younger ones you could make a few in advance and help them explore different scents (e.g. perfume, mint, chocolate, flowers, grass, spices, coffee beans, a teabag, a stinky sock!). Use the bottle to remind them of the story.

Find a bottle with a sports cap and clean it well. Put something that smells nice inside: Try cotton wool with a few drops of essential oils or sprayed with perfume, cinnamon sticks, cloves or chocolate. Be aware that ground spice (or any other small item) will be able to escape from the lid and could be messy or hazardous! Enjoy experiencing the scents as you squeeze the bottle. Some children can experience allergic reactions to certain fragrances, so avoid this activity if you have any concerns. Be vigilant with the lids too as they are small and could be dangerous.

Chat and play

Make 'feelings' faces by drawing faces on paper plates. Have a mouth shape which can be stuck on with blu-tack or a split pin. Change the mouth to look happy or sad depending on how your child is feeling. Talk together about the things that make us happy and sad—try to major on relationships, e.g. 'how do you feel when your brother gives you a hug?', 'do you feel happy or sad when your sister pulls your hair?'. For older ones you could help them think about other people's feelings in response to their own actions.

A storm stops (Luke 8 v 22-25)

Pretend

Pretend you are in a boat during a storm. Use the props from the story, and try adding some more:

A bottle or snack tube filled with rice to evoke the sound of the rain.

Sit on or walk on a sheet of bubble wrap. Rustle tin foil or shake a silver emergency blanket (these can be bought cheaply from outdoorsy shops and are brilliant for a multitude of play!).

Squeeze a sponge into a bowl of water
Flash torches for lightning.

Pick someone to be in charge, make as much racket as possible and when they say 'stop!' the storm must stop.

Chat and play

Notice moments that your child listens and does what they're told—talk about the listening to Jesus and doing what he said.

Playing anyway

Notice times that your child is feeling very safe and cosy or feeling worried and scared. Use these moments to remind your child of key ideas from the story like 'safe' and 'scared' and talk about how the disciples felt. You could create a den full of lots of things that make your child feel safe and secure.

Out and about

Whatever the weather is for you this week enjoy exploring it while you're outside. Play a fun game of telling the weather to change and see if you're as powerful as Jesus! Tell strong winds to stop, ask the rain to turn to snow, tell the sunshine you want rain. Help your child to notice that when Jesus spoke the weather changed immediately - we can't do that!

Jesus feeds lots of people (Luke 9 v 10-17)

Print and cut out the two fish shapes at the end of the download to help you tell the story.

A very ill lady (Luke 8 v 40-48)

Messy

Play 'stop that water' (see p. 27 of *Play Through the Bible*) with a mixture of cornflour/cornstarch and water for a really oozy, slimy experience. Put some cornflour in a bowl and gradually stir in water until it looks a fun consistency to play with! You could add a few drops of food colouring too. If you would prefer to avoid mess try this at bathtime or outside over a bucket of water.

Pretend

Try some doctor play. Don't worry if you don't have a doctor's kit—you can use tea towels and toilet paper as bandages, use stickers or real band-aids to cover 'wounds' and use your usual spoons or dosing syringes for giving pretend medicine. Our children like it when I use silly things to play doctors, like pretending to mix up their tummies with a wooden spoon or using their plastic saw to 'chop off' broken arms. They enjoy getting their own back when I am the patient!

Now and then, as you pretend, find ailments you can't fix. 'I'm terribly sorry sir, I can't mend your broken leg'. Remind your child of the lady in the story—the doctor couldn't make her better even when he tried.

Chat and play

Help your child understand what it means to be the boss by noticing 'boss' moments during

your days: a dog owner telling their pet to 'sit', a parent telling their child to hold hands at the road, a shop assistant being asked to carry out a task by their manager. Talk about what the boss does and why they do it.

Create

To help your child understand what it means to be 'the boss' try using the printable puzzles below. Print off the puzzles, glue onto some card and get your child to decorate them before cutting into pieces. Help your child to complete each puzzle and match the person who is the boss to the correct puzzle:

Sheep and a farmer.

School children and teacher.

Children and parent.

A girl who dies

(Luke 8 v 40-56)

Messy

See what broken craft items you can revive and use this to talk about death. It can be helpful to talk to very young children about death by using the idea of something that stops and won't start again. You could:

Try drawing with colouring pens that have dried up—this could be a chance to sort through all your pens and work out which ones are still usable!

Test blunt or broken pencils. Let your child help you sharpen them.

Experiment with dried up play dough. Try adding water to see if it goes back to how it used to be. Dry homemade play-dough can sometimes be revived by adding water but dried or baked salt-dough won't—you could try having examples of both, using the recipe opposite.

Chat and play

When there are things that are too hard for you to do this week, ask your child to help. This might be opening a jar, reaching the top shelf, fixing a broken item, etc. Talk about how some things are just too hard to do and tell your child that making a dead person alive again is too hard for any person except Jesus.

Salt dough recipe

1 part table salt,

1 part water,

2 parts plain/all purpose flour.

Mix ingredients together and knead into a dough.

Roll out the dough and make shapes.

To make the dough harden, leave to air dry or put shapes on greaseproof paper and place on a microwavable plate. Cook in the microwave for 2-3 minutes, watching out for burning. Allow to cool fully. If you don't have a microwave cook in the oven on a very low heat until hard.

Play dough recipe:

(Measuring cups can be bought cheaply from most supermarkets)

2 cups of plain/all purpose flour

1/2 cup of table salt

2 tbs cream of tartar

2 tbs vegetable oil

1 1/2 cups boiling water

food colouring

Put all the ingredients except for the water and food colouring into a bowl and mix together. Add the boiling water and food colouring you are using and stir until the mixture forms a dough. Allow the dough to cool and when it's cool enough knead the dough until it's no longer sticky—this may take a while but if it's not happening add a little more flour.

Peter starts to see (Luke 9 v 18-27)

Messy

Hide some (cleanable!) toys in different substances and encourage your child to rescue them. Use phrases like 'Oh no, your toy is in trouble! Can you save it?', say your child's name: '..... to the rescue!'. You could try:

Scooping toys out of a bowl of water with a net.

Rummaging through shredded paper.

Digging in soil.

Put flour and the toy in a sieve and get your child to shake the flour out to rescue their toy.

This would also work with sand, salt or rice in a colander.

Set a toy in jelly.

Freeze a toy in ice and bash it out.

Playing anyway

Point out familiar characters or people as you play, read books, watch TV or go out. Encourage your child to tell you who they are based on what they say or do. For instance, 'Ooh, she's driving an ambulance—who is she?'. Children's TV characters are handy for this—builders, firefighters, postal workers, doctors, gardeners, vets, etc.! Add some silly ones so your child can catch you out: 'Look at this picture—I see something with eight legs swimming in the sea! It must be a monkey!'

Pretend

Do a guessing game while you pretend to be different animals or characters. Take it in turns to give clues like:

'I stop fires and I wear a helmet' (fire fighter).

'I am very tall, I have a long neck and I like eating leaves' (giraffe).

'I am furry and I like chasing mice, I have pointy ears' (cat).

'I have a stethoscope and help you when you're ill' (doctor).

'I look after animals and grow plants for you to eat' (farmer).

This game can help us see that we know who or what someone is by what they do. You could even add some clues about Jesus based on what your child has learned about Him so far!

Party time! (Luke 15 v 1-32)

Playing anyway

With a little bit of planning you could act out the story through the week or through a day.

Pretend to have lost something special (but not so special that your child will be very worried or upset. Choose something of your own to lose, not their favourite teddy bear!). Mention it now and then through the day/week and keep 'looking'. When you find it go overboard with celebrating! Ring friends (forewarn them!) and have them come round for a party with party games and food. Tell your lost and found story—you could even share your Bible story with them too.

Pretend

Let your child pretend to be a detective - give them a hat with earflaps and a magnifying glass if you have them. Hide something and get them to find it. Give clues and call out 'warmer! / colder!'. Celebrate when it is found.

Chat and play

If your house is like ours you will probably lose a puzzle piece, a shoe, a library book and a hairbrush at least once a day. Make the most of these moments by reinforcing the message of the story. Involve your child in searching, talk about the story and celebrate together when you find your lost item.

Messy

Playdough recipe:

(Measuring cups can be bought cheaply from most supermarkets)

2 cups of plain/all purpose flour
1/2 cup of table salt
2 tbsp cream of tartar
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups boiling water

food colouring. For this activity you might like add essential oils or food flavouring (e.g. chocolate, orange, peppermint or vanilla extract)

Put all the ingredients except for the water and food colouring into a bowl and mix together. Add the boiling water and food colouring you are using and stir until the mixture forms a dough. Allow the dough to cool and when it's cool enough knead the dough until it's no longer sticky—this may take a while but if it's not happening add a little more flour.

Mr. High and Mr. Low (Luke 18 v 9-14)

Pretend

Dress up as athletes for the day (sweat bands, tracksuits, lycra—the sillier the better!). Spend your day doing challenges which have surprising winners:

A slow race

Play snakes and ladders but go up the snakes and down the ladders

Who can eat their apple the most quietly or loudly?

Who can get dressed the quickest?

Who can bite their cracker into the most interesting shape?

Who can bump down the steps on their bottom whilst singing 'twinkle twinkle little star' without laughing?

Who can undo a puzzle and get it back in its box the fastest?

Who can make their hair the wildest when you wash it at bath time?

Give out prizes and medals for everyone. Take pictures through the day and look through your sporting highlights at the end. Talk about surprising winners.

Out and about

Go and visit a friend. Talk about what you like about your friends and how special it is that we can be God's friends.

Messy

Make salt-dough medals and decorate them. Wear these in your games through the week.

Salt dough recipe:

1 part table salt,

1 part water,

2 parts plain/all purpose flour.

Mix ingredients together and knead into a dough. Roll out the dough and make shapes.

To make the dough harden, leave to air dry or put shapes on greaseproof paper and place on a microwavable plate. Cook in the microwave for 2-3 minutes, watching out for burning. Allow to cool fully. If you don't have a microwave cook in the oven on a very low heat until hard.

Chat and play

This is a great week to let your child hear you speak openly about your own weakness and failure. You don't need to be in sackcloth and ashes, but do show your child that you're quick to say sorry to God and to them. Show your child your confidence that God loves and accepts you by thanking God for His forgiveness and joyfully moving on! Encourage your child to do the same if appropriate but don't pressure them into feeling sorrow—we want them to know they can be real with God not teach them fake humility!

Zacchaeus

(Luke 19 v 1-10)

Messy

Put some baking soda in a few bowls. Have different liquids lined up and allow your child to add small amounts of liquid to each bowl and see what happens. Try vinegar, water, salt, dishsoap, paint, milk. Ask questions like 'what made it change?' and 'what do you think will happen if...'

Messy

Begin with a few different colours of paint (red, yellow and blue are good to start with) and see how many different colours you can mix. Notice how the colours change. Create pictures with all the colours you've created.

Chat and play

Talk about what makes a good friend. Talk about why Jesus is a good friend to have.

A meal with Jesus

(Luke 22 v 7-23)

Create

Make hand or foot prints in salt dough. Decorate them when they are dry and keep them as a memento. If you have any similar mementoes from when your child was little show them to your child. Talk about how some objects and things can help us remember special events.

Salt dough recipe:

1 part table salt,
1 part water,
2 parts plain/all purpose flour.

Mix ingredients together and knead into a dough. Roll out the dough and make shapes.

To make the dough harden, leave to air dry or put shapes on greaseproof paper and place on a microwavable plate. Cook in the microwave for 2-3 minutes, watching out for burning. Allow to cool fully. If you don't have a microwave cook in the oven on a very low heat until hard.

Jesus is taken away and put on trial

(Luke 22 v 54-71)

Tell it

Print out the illustration of angry crowd and important men from the download and use it to help you tell the story.

Out and about

Play outside making marks with chalk or mud then try to get rid of the marks you've made.

Jesus dies

(Luke 23 v 26-53)

Playing anyway

When you build towers, or play with construction toys, talk about the story and how Jesus was strong but allowed himself to be broken up and knocked down.

Messy

Another way you can decorate your tomb is by covering it in diluted white glue and strips of paper. It takes quite a while to dry. (Warning: I found doing this with a three year old rather infuriating!).

Jesus is alive!

(Luke 24 v 1-43)

Active

Play sleeping lions. Your child must pretend to be a sleeping lion and stay asleep no matter what you do to try and wake them up!

Sing the sleeping bunnies song:

See the bunnies sleeping till it's nearly noon

Shall we wake them with a merry tune?

They're so still, are they ill?

Wake up little bunnies!

Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop

Hop, hop, hop - Hop, hop, hop

Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop

Hop, hop, hop...

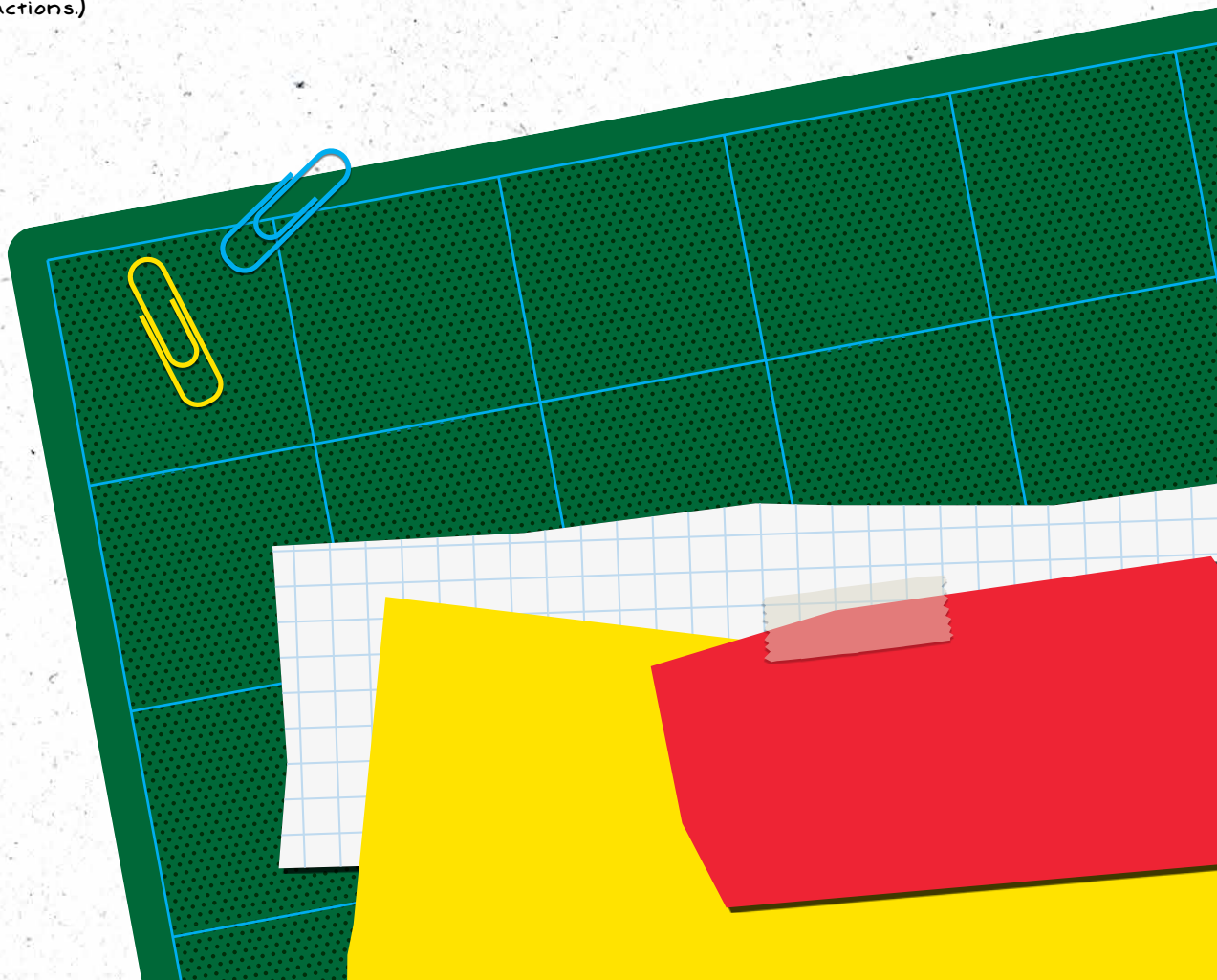
(Look on YouTube for a video with the tune and actions.)

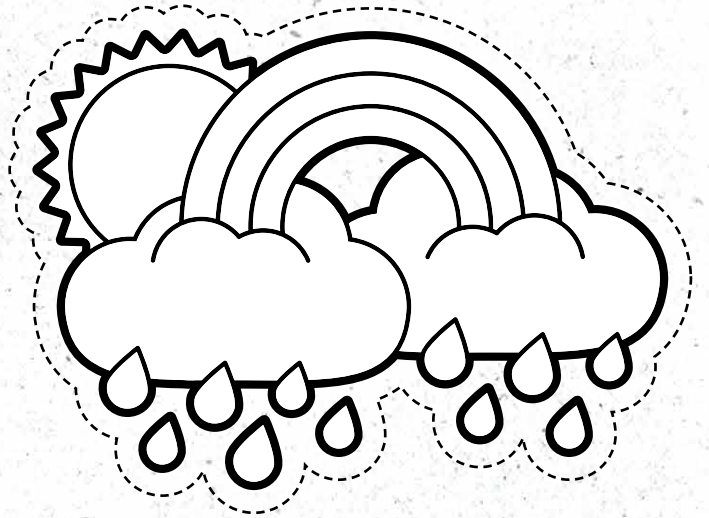
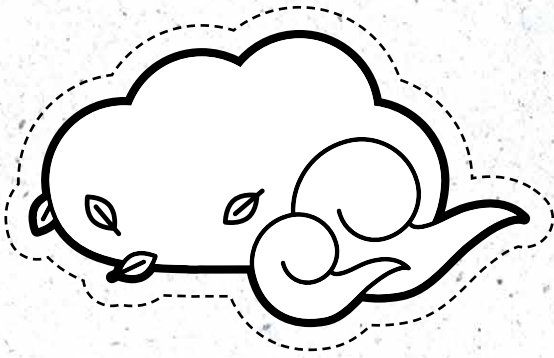
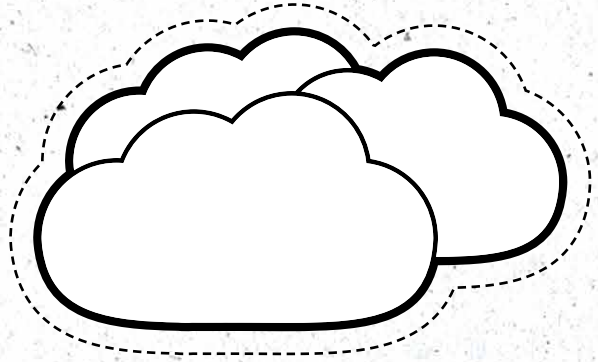
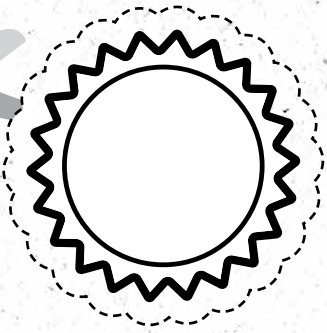
Time for Jesus to go

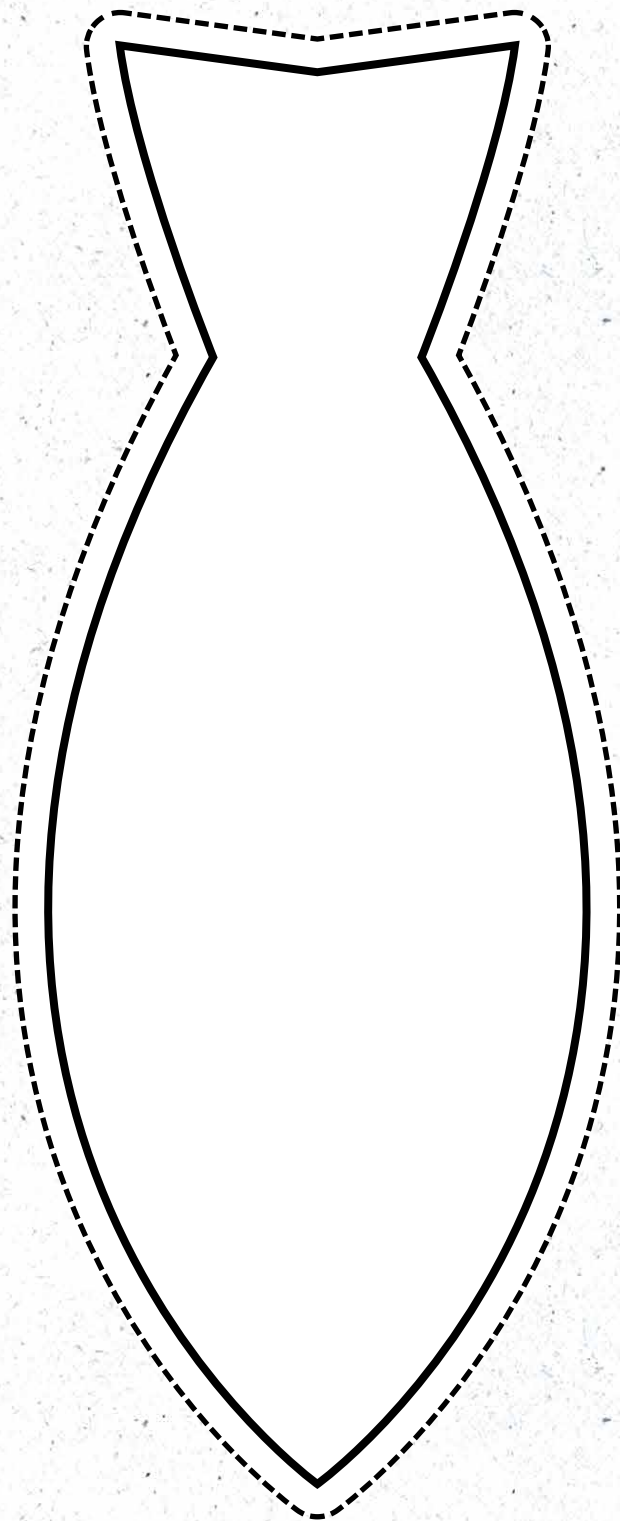
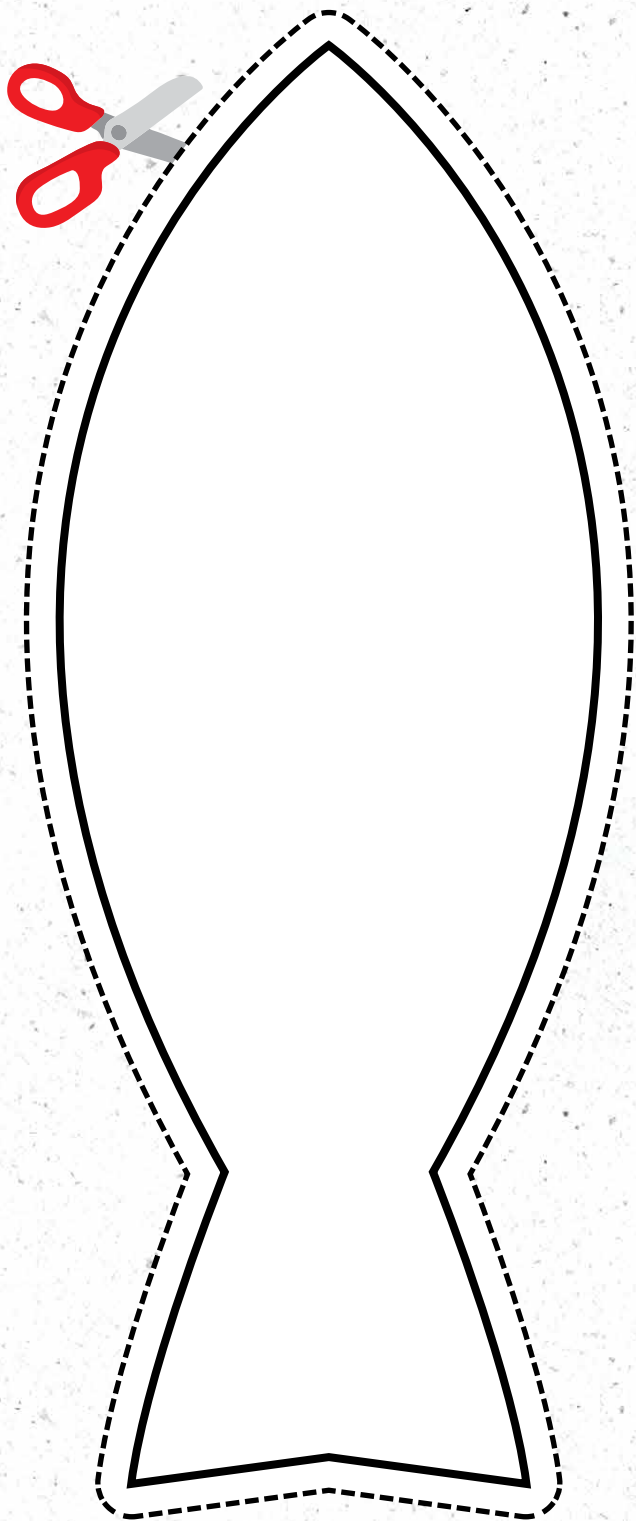
(Luke 24 v 44-53)

Playing anyway

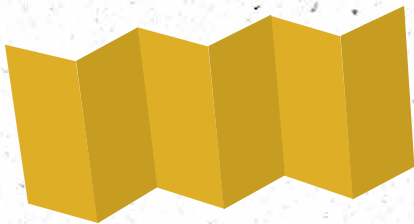
Any time you do games that involve memory (matching pairs, Kim's game, etc.) talk about remembering.







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