

Jesus Chooses His Twelve Disciples

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- white paper
- markers, crayons
- construction paper
- yarn; other left over scraps
- scissors
- glue



Scriptures

Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16

Bible Truth Objective(s)

Jesus prayed constantly for God's guidance to help Him preach the good news about God's salvation

Behavioral Objective(s)

To pray to God before we make decisions, and pray for others who need God's help

Memory Verse

"He went out to the mountain to pray." (Lk 6:12)



Bible Knowledge

The Twelve Disciples

From the hundreds of people who followed Him from place to place, Jesus chose twelve disciples to be with Him and be sent out to preach, cast out demons and heal the sick (Mt 10:5-15; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 9:1-6). The word "disciple" comes from Latin, meaning "learner" or "pupil." In Matthew 10:2, the disciples are referred to as apostles, given greater responsibility and authority. The English word "apostle" comes from the Greek term *apostolos* which means messenger, or ambassador. It refers to someone who is sent on behalf of another; in this case, on behalf of Jesus Christ.

According to Matthew 10:2-4, the twelve disciples were: Simon Peter, Andrew, James (son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. The names are recorded in pairs, probably because they were sent out that way. Interestingly, the Gospel of John does not have a listing of the twelve disciples, but it does mention someone named Nathanael. This

Nathanael is thought to be the one called Bartholomew in the other gospels.

What was the criteria for choosing these specific people? Jesus certainly did not choose them to be His associates because of their faith; their faith often faltered. They panicked when the storm rocked their boat. Peter denied knowing Jesus after spending several years with Him. Jesus didn't choose them because of their talent either; no one stood out with unusual abilities. In fact, they came from all walks of life-- there were fishermen, a tax collector and a Zealot. The one characteristic they did all share, though, was their willingness to obey Jesus. Even though there was much they did not understand while Jesus was with them, after Jesus' ascension, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to carry out special roles in the growth of the early church.

Although the twelve are the most well-known of Jesus' followers, He had many more disciples. Luke 10:1-17 records that Jesus sent out seventy disciples on an evangelical mission. Acts 1:15 speaks of 120 believers gathered together on the Day of Pentecost.



Understanding Your Students

Your four- and five-year-olds know that God is a great source of power. They know He can heal the sick and make thunder roar. There is nothing God cannot do. Because they can understand His power even at this young age, they have likely been encouraged to pray for others who need God's help, and to pray for themselves too if they are sick or scared. These are good beginnings to their life of prayer because these are simple and obvious examples of when they can approach God.

One of the behavioral objectives for this lesson is to encourage the students to also pray to God before making decisions. This is a bit more difficult for them to do since it is not as obvious as when someone is

sick. Decision-making often involves a judgment call. At this age, children tend to follow the crowd. Since they are young, they will need to have some concrete examples. Here are some possible scenarios: when they see a friend make fun of another (because he is dirty, doesn't speak English or too young to play with them), instead of just following the lead, what can they do? When they see a cool toy on the ground near someone's house, do they just take it or is there something else they can do? In any situation, they should be encouraged to think about what God would want them to do. Remind them to keep God in their mind and thoughts all the time! They can always pray to God when they don't know what to choose, or what decision to make. Remind the students that prayer isn't just reserved for chapel services or the end of class. We can pray anywhere to God and He will listen and help us.



Vocabulary

Salvation

when people go to heaven one day and they can be with God forever

Disciple

a follower of Jesus; he learns from Jesus' teachings

Wisdom

to know right from wrong; to do things according to God's will



Before You Teach

What does it mean to be a good disciple? This is a question for us to ponder upon as we set good examples for our students. Looking at the legacy that the disciples left behind, we know that being a good disciple is simply a matter of following Jesus with a willing heart. What does it mean to follow Jesus with a willing heart? The four fishermen dropped their livelihoods and left everything behind to follow Christ. When Philip was called, he gladly accepted the invitation to join Jesus, and even went to tell his friend Nathanael all about his great fortune. Are we willing to submit ourselves to God's calling like the disciples did? Of course, we may not do so to the degree of leaving our family behind as some of the followers did, yet there are still many things we can do to show God our willingness to be His disciple. When God calls us to help

another brother by offering our time and money, are we willing? When He calls us to study the word of God more each day, are we willing to set aside the time and effort? When God calls us to change a bad habit, are we willing to ask Him for help so that He may transform us? These are just some of the ways we can demonstrate our heart of willingness to submit to Jesus.

Another mark of a good disciple is one who constantly prays. Jesus always took time to go off by Himself and pray. He prayed before He chose the disciples; He prayed so that He would not be tempted by Satan; He prayed so that He would have the strength to continue on the difficult path into Jerusalem. By praying, Jesus performed spiritual check-ups on Himself, drew power and wisdom from God, and most importantly, made sure that He fully understood what the will of God was. Are we, as teachers and disciples entrusted by God, remembering to do the same in our journey? Let us continue to pray for guidance and power from above.



Bible Story

Jesus Shares the Good News With Everyone

In previous lessons, we talked about how wonderful Jesus was. Every day, Jesus went around doing many good things for others. Boys and girls, do you remember some of the good things that Jesus did? Can you turn to your neighbor now, and share one good thing Jesus did that you remember? (Give students a minute or two to talk to their neighbor.) Now, would anyone like to tell us what your neighbor has just told you? (Call on some students to share, and briefly mention several miracles Jesus performed. For example, Jesus healed the sick, He showed kindness by helping the poor, and the needy etc.) Jesus was a very busy person. Boys and girls, why do you think Jesus was so busy everyday? Well, Jesus was busy because He was telling people about God's love, and making sick people well. That was His job while He was living in the world. It is just like grown-ups who have jobs. Some of the parents we know work with computers. Some work in hospitals. Some stay at home to take care of the children and house. Each of us has a job to do while we are on earth. Jesus' job was to tell everyone about God and His kingdom. Sometimes He talked to just one person. Sometimes He talked to hundreds and hundreds of people. He traveled many miles to go to different places to spread the good news. Sometimes He rode in a boat; other times He walked. Jesus was busy from early morning until late at night every day of His earthly life.

Jesus Always Prays

Even though Jesus was very busy, He always took time out to talk to His heavenly Father in prayer. The Bible tells us that Jesus would often find a quiet place at the end of the day to pray to God. He wanted to be close to God and to do the things God wanted Him to do. Jesus knew that God would help Him with any problem. He also prayed for other people who needed God's help. Most importantly, Jesus always prayed before He made important decisions.

Jesus Prays Before Choosing His Disciples

One night Jesus prayed for a long time. He thought about all the people who had not yet heard

about God's salvation. There was a lot of work to be done, and it was hard for Jesus to do everything all by Himself. Therefore, Jesus decided in His prayer to choose twelve special helpers to help Him spread the good news. These chosen helpers were called the disciples. (Ask students to repeat the word "disciples" after you.) What do disciples do? Does anyone have any ideas? Well, the disciples' jobs were to go around telling other people about God and God's wonderful salvation. Jesus knew that He really needed to pick the right people for this very important job. So He prayed very hard, and He prayed all night long. Jesus asked His Father in heaven to give Him wisdom and help Him choose these disciples.

Boys and girls, have you ever prayed all night long for anything? Not many of you have had this experience of praying all night without going to sleep. You would probably be tired even after praying for ten minutes. But Jesus stayed up to pray. He didn't go to sleep, but prayed for a long time. Why do you think Jesus prayed all night long to ask God to help Him choose the twelve disciples? (Wait for students to answer.) Do you think it was easy to pick someone to be Jesus' disciple? No, it was not simple at all. There were so many people to choose from. How would Jesus know which ones were the right people to pick? Jesus wanted to make sure He picked people who really wanted to help Him, and believed in God. It was a hard task to do which is why Jesus prayed to God. He wanted to know who would be willing to follow Him wholeheartedly.

Jesus Chooses His Disciples

Finally, after spending a long time praying, morning came. Jesus was ready to find the twelve special helpers known as disciples. In the last quarter, we learned about how Jesus chose four fishermen to be His disciples. Do you remember their names? They were Simon Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, and his brother John. Does anyone remember what happened when Jesus first chose these four disciples? (Encourage students to answer.) Jesus went to the Sea of Galilee to find them, and asked them to follow Him after He helped them catch a lot of fish. When Peter, Andrew, James, and John heard Jesus calling their names, they went and followed Jesus right away.

Then Jesus called four more disciples. Their names were Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and

Thomas. These men also went and followed Jesus. Then Jesus called four more people. They were James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas. These men went and followed Jesus too. When Jesus finished choosing His special helpers, He had twelve disciples who would be with Him.

Do you remember why Jesus needed these disciples to help Him? He needed people to help Him tell others about God and how much God loves them. But before they could do that, they needed to learn from Jesus. He had to teach them about God's kingdom. They were glad they could learn from Jesus because He was a great teacher. Jesus also gave each of His disciples power to heal every kind of sickness. Now that Jesus had the help that He needed, He prayed that these disciples would be able to learn all that He had to teach them. Then they could help Him tell other people about God.



Check For Understanding

1. **What did Jesus do before He chose His disciples?** (Jesus prayed to God because He wanted God to help Him choose the right people to be His special helpers.)
2. **How many disciples did Jesus choose?** (12)
3. **What did Jesus want the twelve disciples to help Him do?** (Jesus wanted them to help spread the good news about God's salvation.)
4. **Jesus prayed all the time to God to ask for**



Life Application Story

Praying For Others

Mrs. Mandy is a kindergarten class teacher at church. One time she planned a field trip for the class. She wanted to take the kids to explore nature. After much thought and discussion with other teachers and parents, Mrs. Mandy decided to

We Should Always Pray

Boys and girls, Jesus prayed for God's guidance in everything He did, and He prayed even more before choosing the twelve disciples to help do God's work. Do you also pray to God before making important decisions? Let's say a friend asks you to go to his birthday party on Saturday. Will you decide to go or come to church to worship God? When things like this happen, do you pray to God to give you the wisdom to choose what is right? (Teacher may wish to hold a quick discussion on how to make right choices at this time.) We can learn from Jesus to always pray to ask God for help when we don't know what to do. We can also ask our parents or a grown-up we trust for help. We should remember that praying can help us because when we pray, God is listening to us. He will hear us and help us when we pray to Him.

help, wisdom and guidance. Can you think of the times when you pray to God each day? (Students' answers may vary-- praying in the morning, at meal times, at night, at church)

5. **What do you pray to God about?** (Allow students to answer.)
6. **Can you think of a time when you prayed to God first before you made a decision?** (Students' responses may vary. Teacher may want to encourage the students with an example first or share some possible scenarios for them to choose from.)

take her class to visit a local beach. Everyone was excited about this outing! Mrs. Mandy told the kids that they were going to the beach to discover all the interesting things God has made.

Soon, the day of the outing came. All the students who were going, along with some parent volunteers, met at church. Before they left, Mrs. Mandy did a head count and discovered that a student was missing. She called the missing student's home. After her phone call, Mrs. Mandy came back

to where everyone had gathered and asked the class, "Who do you notice is not here today?"

Everyone looked around. Who was missing? Susie raised her hand.

"Tommy is not here today, Mrs. Mandy."

"Right, Susie," Mrs. Mandy said. "Tommy had a stomach ache last night. I just called his mom, Mrs. Lewis. She said that they had wanted to come but Tommy still isn't completely well. She said that Tommy is resting at home right now, so he can't go to the beach with us today."

"I had a stomach ache one time before," commented Susie.

"I'm sure it doesn't feel good when your tummy hurts," replied Mrs. Mandy. "Before we leave, let's all kneel down and pray for Tommy so that Jesus will make him feel better soon. Let's also pray for our trip today. We should ask God to protect us, so that we may all get there and come back safe and sound."

Everybody knelt down to pray that Jesus would keep them safe on their outing. They also prayed especially for Tommy so that he would get better soon.

Then everyone piled into the church van and headed out to the beach. When they got there, Mrs. Mandy split the students up in groups to do different things. She asked the parents to help the groups. One group went to look for seashells. Susie was in this group. She found many seashells of different colors. Another group went looking for sand crabs. Juan was in this group. He dug into the sand a little bit and a little sand crab quickly ran out.

Juan laughed. "It's funny that God made sand crabs run sideways," he said.

The last group went and built sand castles. John and Rachel were in this group. They piled some wet sand into buckets, packed them down and turned them upside-down. Then they poked holes into the sand to make small windows. Everyone was having a great time.

Soon, it was lunchtime. Mrs. Mandy and some parents were spreading out the picnic items onto a picnic table. As everybody lined up to get their sandwiches and drinks, they saw someone run up to their table. It was Tommy! His dad was walking right behind him.

Everybody was so surprised to see him. It

seemed that everyone asked all at once, "Tommy, we thought you had a stomach ache last night, and you were resting at home today. How come you are here?"

"I feel much better. And my dad drove me here," Tommy said with a shy smile on his face.

Susie jumped in, "We prayed for you at church this morning before we came here."

Mr. Lewis walked up just as Susie finished speaking. "Thank you all for praying for Tommy. He is feeling better now."

Mrs. Mandy added, "Praying for others is really powerful. God truly listens to our prayers. We thank God for bringing Tommy here safely today. When any one of us needs help, let's remember to pray for each other."

Tommy spent the rest of the day looking for seashells and sand crabs. He also helped build a sand castle. And he thanked God for making him feel well again and giving him such a wonderful day at the beach.

Questions to Think About

1. **Where did Mrs. Mandy decide to take her kindergarten class for their field trip?** (They went to visit a local beach.)
2. **Why couldn't Tommy join the trip at the beginning?** (Tommy had a stomach ache.)
3. **What did everyone do before they left on the trip?** (They prayed to God. They asked God to help Tommy feel better. They also asked God to keep them safe on their trip.)
4. **How come Tommy was able to join the class at the beach at lunch time?** (He was feeling better.)
5. **What did Mr. Lewis say to everyone?** (He thanked them for praying for Tommy.)
6. **Have you ever prayed for others who needed God's help? Tell the class what happened.** (Students' responses may vary. Some suggestions for the students if they aren't sure: they prayed for their parents when they were sick, they prayed to God for their friends who were sick.)



Activity 1

Jesus Calls His Disciples

Look at Jesus' disciples. Can you count them all? Write the numbers under each person to help you count. Can you say their names? (Teacher may need to refresh their memory about the names by writing them on the board.)



Activity 2

How Can We Pray For Others?

Look at the pictures. What can each person say to pray for the other? Fill in the blank spaces with the right word from the word bank. (Teacher, please read or describe the scenario below to the students before they fill in the blanks.)

1. Your dad is flying to a faraway place for work. What can you say in your prayer? ("Lord Jesus, please keep my dad _____ (safe) on the plane.")
2. You are bringing a friend to church for the first time. What can you say in your prayer? ("Lord Jesus, please open my friend's _____ (heart) to hear your words.")
3. Your family is taking a vacation. What can you say in your prayer? ("Lord Jesus, please _____ (guide) us during our trip.")
4. Your brother is sick in bed. What can you say in your prayer? ("Lord Jesus, please help my brother get _____ (better) soon.")



Activity 3

We Are God's Disciples Too

Materials:

1. blank white paper
2. markers, crayons
3. construction paper
4. yarn; other leftover scraps
5. glue
6. scissors

Directions:

1. Provide each student with a piece of white

paper.

2. Help the students draw a self-portrait on the upper half of the paper. Remind them to write their names under their portrait. (If the teacher can take photos of each of the students in a prior week, they can use these pictures instead of drawing a portrait.)
3. Help the students cut a length of yarn and have them glue it around the portrait and name.
4. Put the papers aside and help the students brainstorm some of the good qualities they have (e.g. likes to share, is loving and kind, is helpful, always smiling, etc.)
5. Now help each student write down two of those words that describe who they are under the picture. They can decorate the remaining space with scraps or drawings of their own.
6. Encourage the students as they complete the activity that they are also Jesus' disciples. They are His followers too. The disciples Jesus chose obeyed Him. The students also have good qualities that make them good followers of Jesus.



Optional Activity

I Can Do Things Jesus Did

(Sung to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

Jesus is my special friend,
 Special friend, special friend.
 I can do things Jesus did.
 I know that God loves me.

I can talk to God in prayer,
 God in prayer, God in prayer.
 I can talk to God in prayer,
 I know that God loves me.

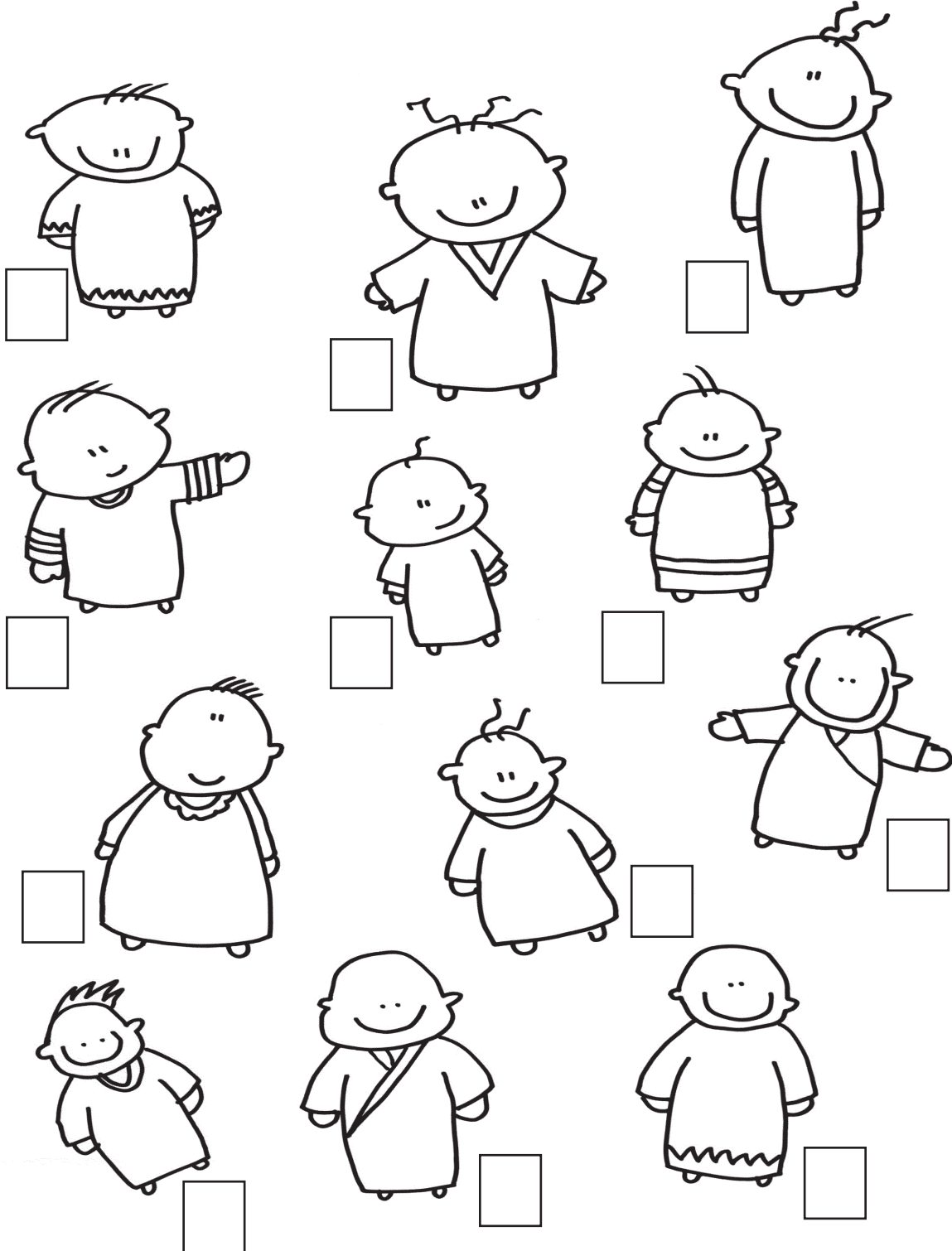
I can tell of God's great love,
 God's great love, God's great love.
 I can tell of God's great love,
 I know that God loves me.

Optional: Pass out shakers or other musical instruments for students to add additional rhythm to the song. You can also teach hand motions to make sing-along even more fun!

Activity 1:1

Jesus Calls His Disciples

Look at Jesus' disciples. Can you count them all?
Write the numbers under each person to help you count.



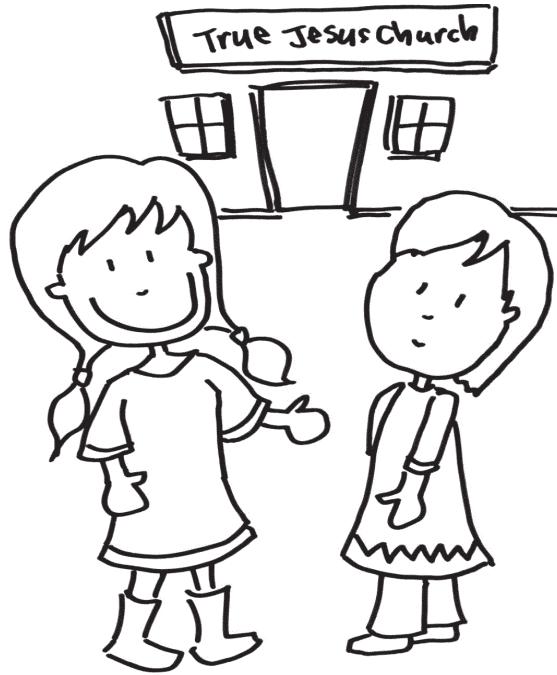
Activity 1:2

How Can We Pray For Others?

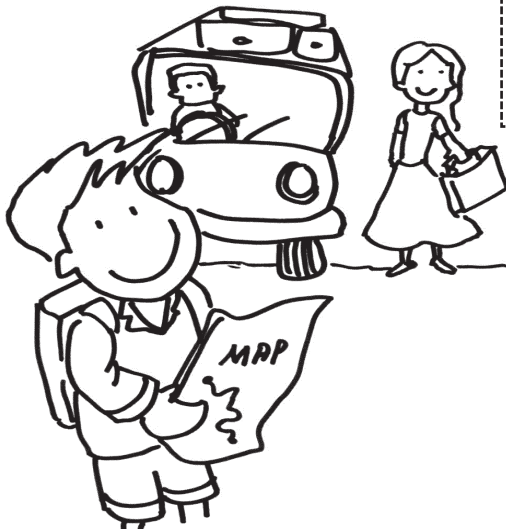
Look at the pictures. What can each person say to pray for the other?
Fill in the blank spaces with the right word from the word bank.



1. "Lord Jesus, please keep my dad _____ on the plane."



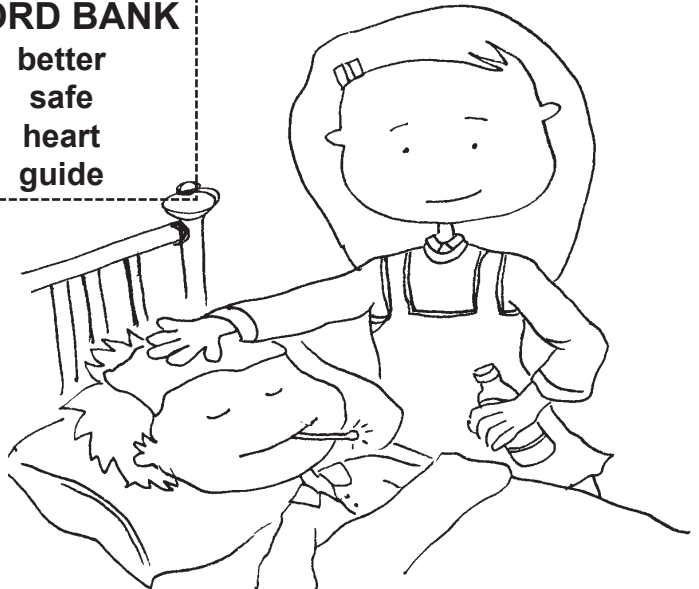
2. "Lord Jesus, please open my friend's _____ to hear your words."



3. "Lord Jesus, please _____ us on our trip."

WORD BANK

better
safe
heart
guide



4. "Lord Jesus, please help my brother get _____ soon."