

July 6, 1997

Ezra 7 - 10

4's, 5's & K

3EZR42PK

The God of Israel Keeps His Promises!

Materials I Need:

Memory Work:

The Prophet - Ezra

The Principle - God had a promised plan for the Promised Land.

The People - Exiles returning from Babylon to Jerusalem

God's Attribute - The God of Israel keeps His promises.

Aim Questions:

1. Was Ezra a prophet of God? What did God ask Ezra to do in today's lesson? (He was a priest and teacher of the Law and he led a group of Israelite exiles back to Israel.)
2. Why was Ezra so upset and sad in our lesson today? (The exiles were marrying men and women who worshipped idols.)
3. What did Ezra do when he heard this sad news? (He tore his tunic, pulled out his hair, fasted and prayed to God.)
4. What had God said about marrying people who worshipped idols? (Don't marry idol worshippers because they will lead you away from the God of Israel. Exodus 34:11-16 and Deuteronomy 7:1-4)
5. What did Ezra and his fellow priests and leaders decide to do? (They set their hearts to obey God and separate themselves from anyone, even their wives, who kept on worshipping idols.)
6. How can we stop being influenced to do wrong? (Set our hearts to obey God's Word and separate ourselves from anyone who leads us toward wrong things.)



Hook:



**Prophets Clothespin Match: (3EZR42ECGF5)** Glue or tape the prophets' faces around large plastic cups. Stick the faces around the top of the cup with a space between each one. Tape the corresponding prophets' faces on the tips of the clothespins. The children match the clothespin face to the same face on the cup by putting a clothespin above each face. Since this is a popular activity, prepare more than one set of cup and clothespins.




**Cameras For the Trip to Jerusalem: (3EZR42ECGF6)** Pretend like you are taking pictures along the route back to Jerusalem with cameras made from egg cartons. With tops and bottoms remaining attached, each egg carton must be separated into three sections of four cups (see figures 1 and 2). Paint each section of the egg carton black (if desired) and let dry completely. This is the body of the camera (see figure 3). Glue on the milk bottle caps for assorted buttons and settings (see figure 4). Now the children are ready to take pictures. Pretend you are going back to Jerusalem, as the Israelites did with Zerubbabel in last week's lesson. Take picture of animals you see along the way. Take pictures of the campsite, the long caravan of people, and Jerusalem in the distance. Take a picture of the happy celebration after the temple was rebuilt.




**Separating Activity:** Talk about what it means to separate from something. Give the children several "separating" activities, including macaroni and beans, pennies and nickels, Puffed Oat cereal

and Cheerios, mailing pellets and macaroni, toys and books, duplos and blocks, or beans and rocks. Talk about beans as good to eat and you want to separate them from something that is bad for you. Sometimes we need to separate from something bad. What are things the children should separate from? Talk about children who say bad words, get in trouble, talk back to their parents, are not careful with others' property, etc.

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 **“Going to Jerusalem” Shoe Game:** Find an area where the children can sit on the floor with their feet in plain view. Have them remove one shoe. Place these shoes in a large paper bag. Stand in front of the children. Reach into the bag and pull out a shoe at random. Describe the color and special details of the shoe as you show it to the children. Tentatively match the shoe to obviously wrong shoes, pointing out the differences. Finally, match your choice to the correct shoe, pointing out the similarities. The child whose shoe you picked becomes the next player. Let the child pull a shoe from the bag and have her describe it. Let the child find the mate to the shoe she picked. Do not let the children put their shoes back on until the end of the game. The game is over when the last shoe has been pulled from the bag and matched to its owner. Bring in many different types of shoes--(ballet, snow, hiking, tap, cowboy, sandal) and discuss their specialized uses. Ask which kind of shoes you think the Israelites wore in the hot desert on the way back to Jerusalem. Sing last week's “The Israelites Trusted in God Alone” as the children march to “Jerusalem” in their own shoes.




 **“What Is Right?” Center:** Ask two teachers to act out a situation where they are playing at a friend's house and one asks the other to go into the kitchen and sneak some cookies out of the cookie jar. What is right to do? Another situation might be two people walking down the street and one starts making fun of an older person. He wants you to join in. What should you do? Use other situations that are applicable. Ask children to tell you what is the right thing to do.

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### **Book:**

#### **Presentation Ideas -**

-  Use the camera you made during Hook time to “look at” the scenes you want the children to remember.
-  Review the Ezra chant you learned in last week's lesson.
-  Show the 3EZR42ECGF1, 3EZR42ECGF2, 3EZR42ECGF3, and 3EZR42ECGF4 pictures as you tell the Bible Adventure.

#### **Bible Adventure -**

*(Say the Ezra chant and show his picture.)* Ezra is the name of the book in the Bible we learned from last week. Ezra was not a prophet. Ezra was a teacher of God's Word. Ezra, like Daniel, liked to study God's Word and do what it said. Most of all, Ezra wanted to obey God and teach other people what God said so that they could obey Him, too. Ezra did his best job of doing what God wanted him to do. You would have liked having Ezra for a friend because he would have helped you love and obey God with all your heart. Your mom and dad would have liked you to have Ezra for a friend, too, because he would have helped you do right, good things. Our Adventure today tells about some people who had wrong friends. Do you think they listened to Ezra and had him for a friend? Listen and find out.

*(Show last week's 3EZR41ECGF1 picture.)* Remember from last week, the God of Israel was moving His people back home to Jerusalem after seventy years as exiles in Babylon. Does anyone remember why they had to go live in Babylon? Yes, they had been disobedient and not obeyed God's Word. They had been warned to change their ways or be punished but they continued to disobey. God always knows what is best for us. Now the seventy-year punishment was over and Zerub-ba-bel had taken some of the Israelites back to clear the rub-ba-ble! They rebuilt the temple and were worshipping the God of Israel with joy in their hearts.

*(Show last week's 3EZR41ECGF3 picture.)* Israel was a country that was divided into twelve sections because Jacob had twelve sons. Each Israelite lived in one of those twelve sections, depending on which of Jacob's sons was his ancestor. When the Israelites returned from Babylon, each family went back to its own little area of the country. The Ephraimites moved to their land, the Judahites to their

land, etc. Some other people were already living in the area. These people didn't love the God of Israel. They worshipped idols instead of the God of Israel.

The Israelites moved next door to these people. They planted their fields right next door. They started growing crops in the fields next door. They were happy to meet their neighbors and soon made friends with them. Some of the Israelite men noticed the cute girls who lived next door and down the road. These girls were from families that worshipped idols. These young Israelites didn't care what God said; they did just what they wanted to do. They said, "What is wrong with dating an idol worshipper? There's nothing in the law that says you can't be friends with one, is there?" It wasn't long before they were saying, "I love this girl and I want to marry her." They had been told that it is wrong to marry idol worshippers. They didn't listen to God's Word and obey it. They did what they felt like doing. They married idol worshipping girls. Oh, no! What would happen to Israel now?

Do you ever want to be with kids who do wrong things, like saying mean words or talking back to their parents? Do your parents ever say to you, "I really don't want you to play with those kids. They are getting into trouble and pretty soon you would be, too." Your parents know best and want you to grow up doing good, right things. They might have to tell you to separate from certain friends because you might start doing the wrong, bad things they do. We talked earlier about what it means to separate from something. The Israelites had been told to be separated from idol worshippers in marriage. They were choosing not to separate from idol worshippers. They were not listening to their parents and they were making a big mistake.

God was going to use Ezra to help his people be separated from idols. Ezra was still in Babylon. (*Show the 3EZR42ECGF1 picture.*) One day he walked up to King Artaxerxes and asked if he could go to Jerusalem with a group of people. The king was glad to help him make the trip. He wrote to Ezra and said, "Any Israelite who wants to go with you to Jerusalem may go. I am sending with you the things that were taken out of the temple so you can use them to worship in the new temple. People have shared their gold and silver so you can take that, too. I will send with you anything you need for worship." Isn't God wonderful? He was keeping His promise to Israel.

(*Show the 3EZR42ECGF2 picture.*) Ezra got everyone together who wanted to go to Jerusalem. They camped together by a river for three days. Ezra knew the dangers of traveling with millions of dollars worth of gold and silver on a nine-hundred mile journey without any soldiers to protect them. He knew that robbers would be waiting for them by the road. Ezra also knew who was their best helper. Ezra asked everyone to fast and pray to God for a safe journey. Ezra believed that God was powerful enough to keep them and their treasures safe. If God could work in King Artaxerxes' heart to give them the treasure, He could certainly keep the robbers away. Do you believe God could do this?

It was a long bumpy road to Jerusalem. There were a lot of tired people tramping down the dusty path for nine-hundred miles. God kept them safe, every day, all the way home. The exiles who were already living in Jerusalem were so glad to see their old friends. They were happy when they heard how God had protected them and kept the robbers away during their trip. Ezra and the people rested for a few days and then gave the treasures to the temple officials. It was good to be in Jerusalem at last!

One day as Ezra was going about his business, some Israelite leaders came to him with some bad news. They said, "Ezra, we think you should know this. Some of the Israelites that came back with Zerubbabel have married women who are worshipping idols." Ezra couldn't believe his ears! He was so sad to hear the bad news. He groaned all day. To think that the Israelites were marrying idol worshippers! How could this happen? They knew what had happened last time they worshipped idols and had to be punished. Ezra talked to God about his sadness. He said, "Oh, Lord, God of Israel, we are wrong and I don't know what to do about it!" Ezra, in the temple, cried and prayed to the Lord.

(*Show the 3EZR42ECGF3 picture.*) Israelites gathered around him to see what was wrong. Pretty soon a large crowd of people were hearing the sad news. They cried, too. They were sad to hear that the Israelites were doing wrong things like they had done before. A man with an idea came running to Ezra with a suggestion. He said, "We have been unfaithful to the God of Israel. There is hope if we separate ourselves from these wrong influences. Let's make a promise to God. Let's be separated from these idol worshippers." Ezra sent word around to all the towns for the men to come to Jerusalem within three days for a meeting. It was the rainy season and the men were not happy about sitting out in the rain for so long. The meeting day came and Ezra stood up in front of all the men and said, "You have been unfaithful to the God of Israel by marrying idol worshippers. We are in big trouble again. The only hope

for our people is for you to tell God you are wrong and separate yourselves from all idol worshippers, including any of the wives you may have.”

All the men said, “You are right! We must stop marrying idol worshippers. We must be set apart to God.” It wasn’t long before all the men agreed to separate themselves from idol worshippers so that Israel would not be punished again for disobeying.

*(Show the 3EZR42ECGF4 picture.)* God wants His set apart children to marry men and women who are also set apart to God in their hearts. God wants you to be careful who your friends are because it is easy to do the wrong things they are doing. You might live next door to people who don’t love God but you can tell them about Him. We should be kind and friendly to people who don’t love God, but we should never do the wrong things that they do. We must choose the right path, the way God wants for us.

Ezra was a good man who made right choices to listen to God and obey His Word. Ezra would have been a good person to have for a friend.

**Prayer:** Most High God, Your ways are the best ways. I want to be set apart to You and Your words. Help me follow you and not follow friends who are doing wrong things. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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### Look:



**Staying "Set-Apart":** God had instructed the Israelites to remain pure and devoted to Him, but they had disobeyed by marrying men and women who worshipped idols. Ezra told them that they needed to stay set-apart for God. Use this illustration to help the children understand what it means to be set apart. Take equal parts water and a clear, white oil (like canola). In a sealable container (a salad dressing bottle would work well) mix food coloring into the water so that it is a dark brown color. Then add the oil on top. Shake the bottle so that the water and oil are mixed, then watch as the oil moves to the top. This is how God wanted the Israelites to be--set-apart from the idol worshippers.



**Praying to God Activity Page: (3EZR42ECGF2 & 3EZR42ECGF9)** As the children color their GF2 pages, talk about how Ezra trusted God to keep them safe on the long journey. They prayed for three days. Let the children glue small GF9 tents on their pages. They can draw fish in the water and tear small pieces of green construction paper to glue on the tree and grass. God is always with His people who love Him.



**Stay On God’s Path Activity Page: (3EZR42ECGF4)** Ask the Children’s Department to cut out small hearts or include small heart sequins along with this activity page. The children can glue the hearts on the people who love God’s Word and were obeying it. They can glue an idol on the path that is leading the Israelites away from God’s Word. Talk about wanting to obey God’s Word, the Bible.



**Heart Actions Coloring Page: (3EZR42ECGF12)** Have the children color the picture as you talk about the fact that what is in our hearts affects all that we do. Then have them put a Bible sticker in the heart. If we have God’s Word in our hearts then we will see with God’s eyes, listen with God’s ears, do what God wants us to, and speak God’s right words. Ezra knew God’s Word very well, in fact, he was a teacher of God’s Word and he wanted to help the Israelites to know God’s Word better. If you want, you could even put a Bible sticker at each of the outside illustrations as you talk about seeing, listening, doing and speaking as God desires.

**Songs:** Review the songs from last week.

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### Took:

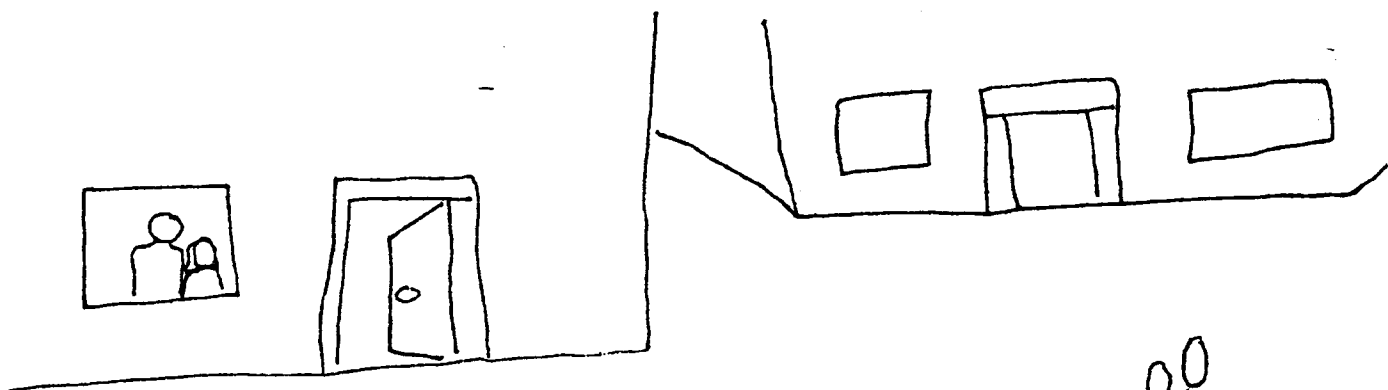


**Follow the Right Path Center: (3EZR42ECGF10)** The children can color the picture of the back of a child with colors they are wearing today. Talk about who they like to play with and what they like to

do with their friends. Using a stamp made out of a potato cut in half, stamp the Bible shape to make the path the child should follow. This could be done as a group on large newsprint.

 **Making Right Choices Wheel: (3EZR42ECGF11)** Color the pictures of children making choices. On another paper plate, cut out a wedge and cut off the border to make it smaller. Attach the two plates with a brad in the center. As the children turn the outer plate, they say “no” or “yes,” telling you if the choice shown is a good choice for them to make.

 **“My Ezra Book” Center: (3EZR42ECGF7 & 3EZR42ECGF8)** Follow the instructions on the GF7 page to make a booklet for each child to take home. Either write “My Ezra Book” on the front of each booklet or cut the words and glue them to the cover page. Let the children tell the story with their books.

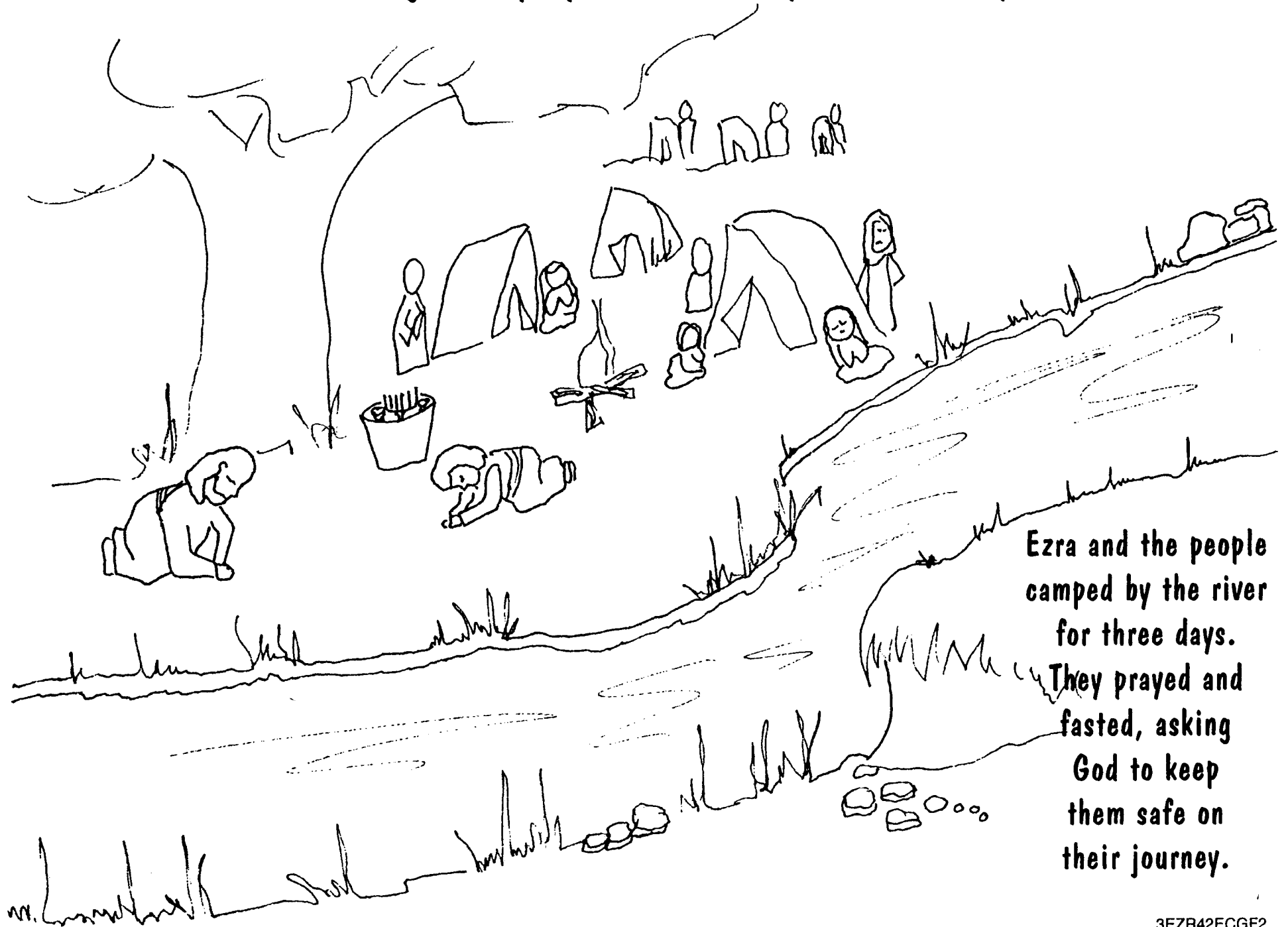


God prepared peoples' hearts to go with Ezra to Jerusalem.  
King Artaxerxes sent a letter saying that  
any Israelite could go with Ezra.

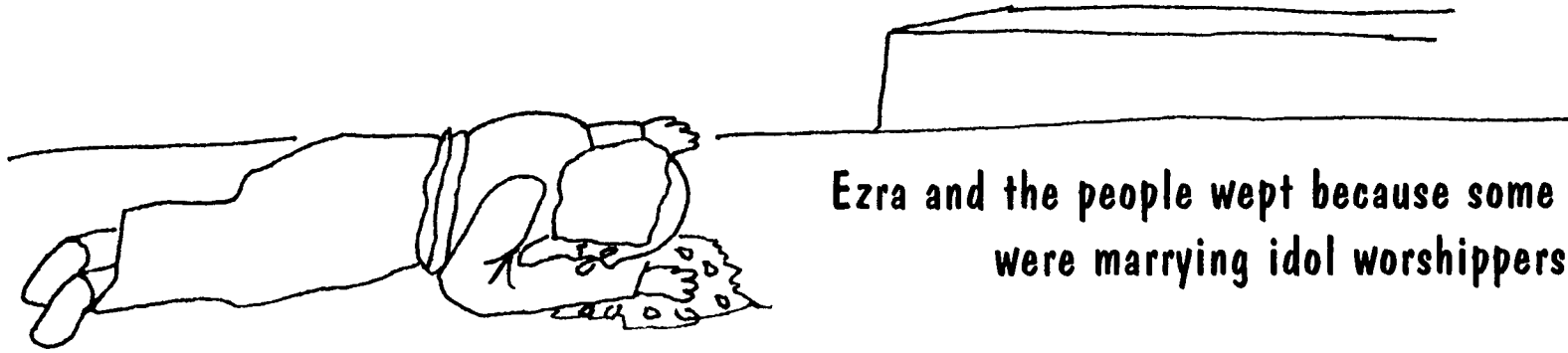


The king sent gold and silver  
articles for temple worship.

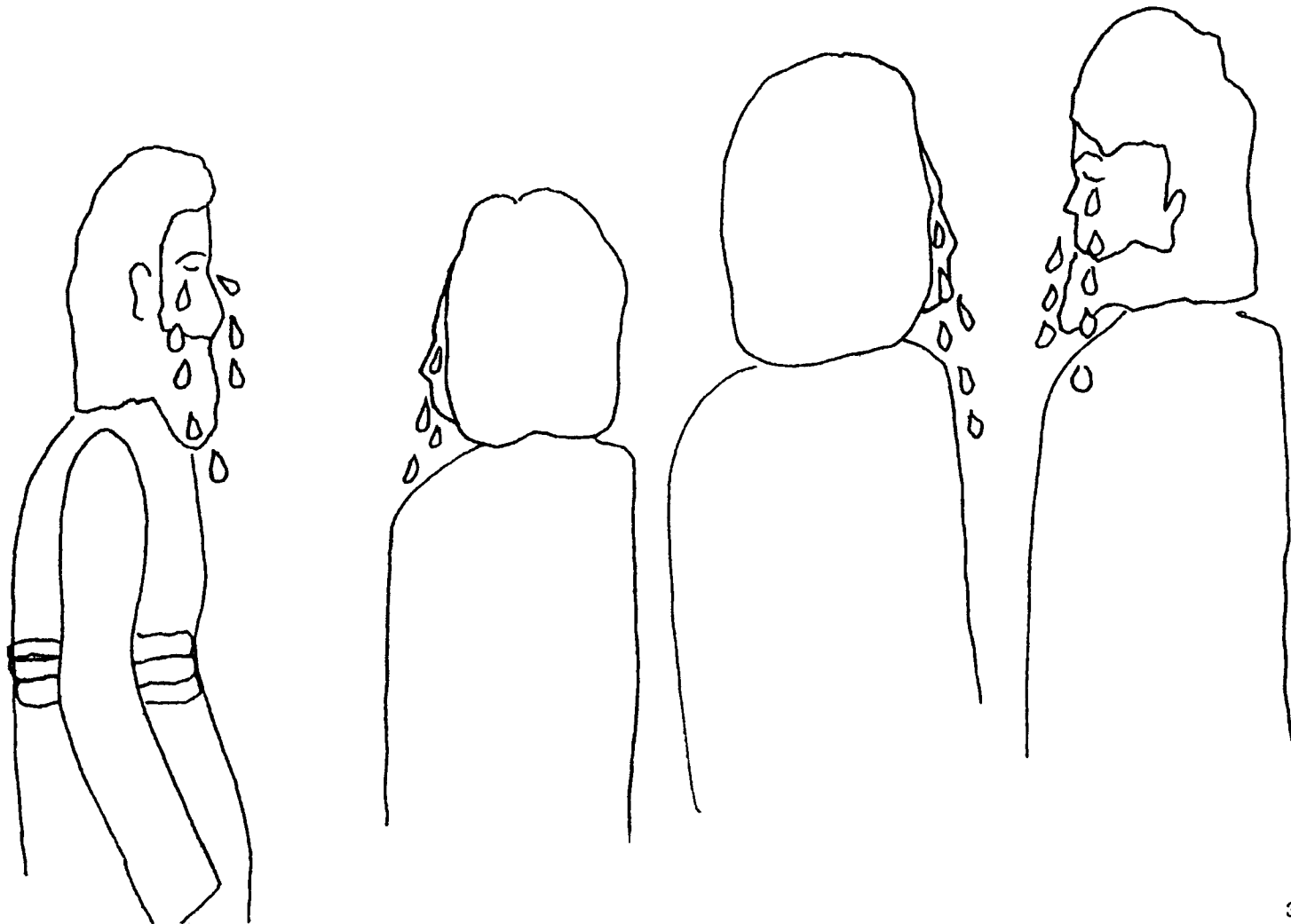
**Ezra believed God could get the people and the temple items safely to Jerusalem.**



**Ezra and the people  
camped by the river  
for three days.  
They prayed and  
fasted, asking  
God to keep  
them safe on  
their journey.**



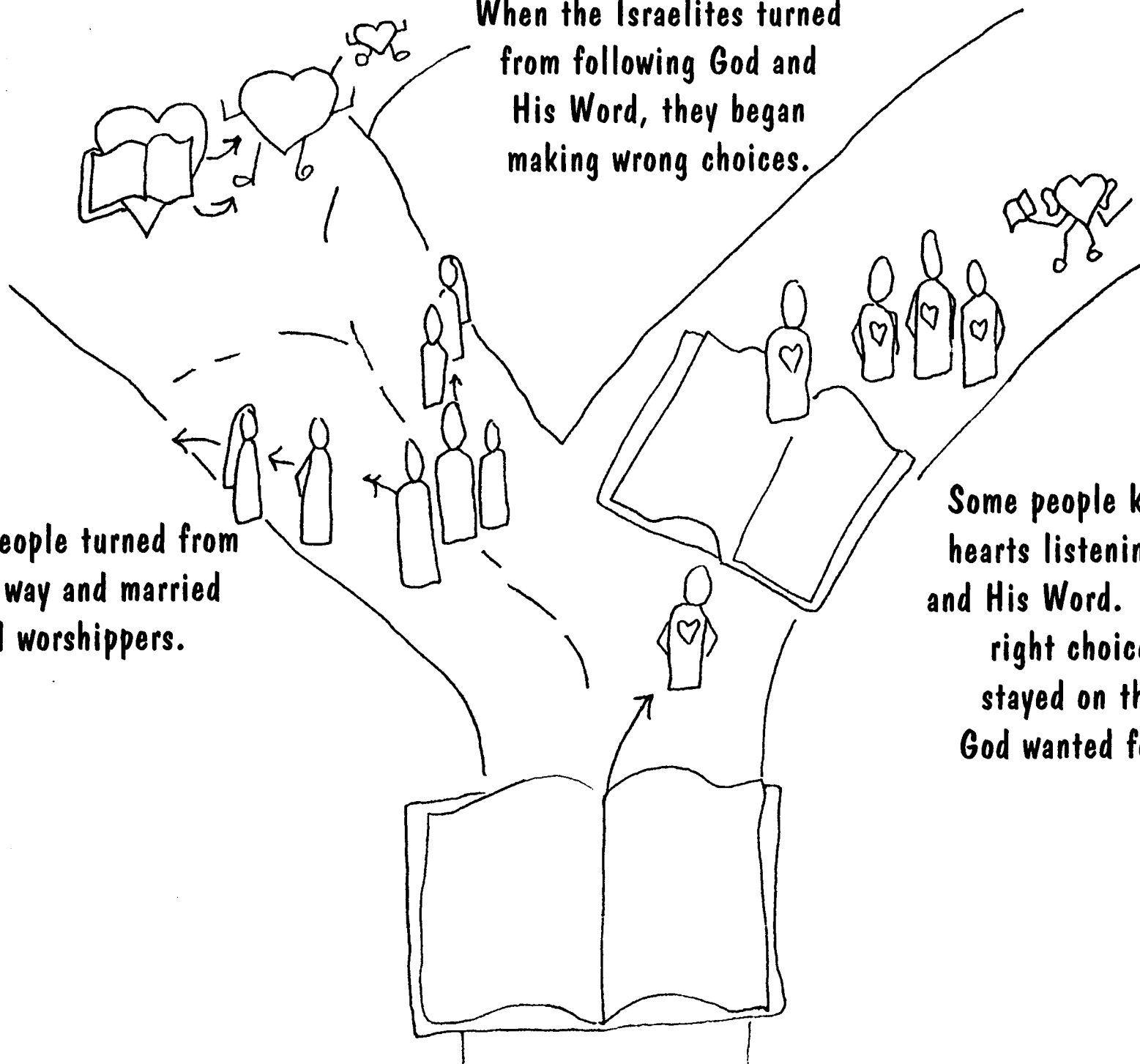
**Ezra and the people wept because some Israelites were marrying idol worshippers.**



When the Israelites turned from following God and His Word, they began making wrong choices.

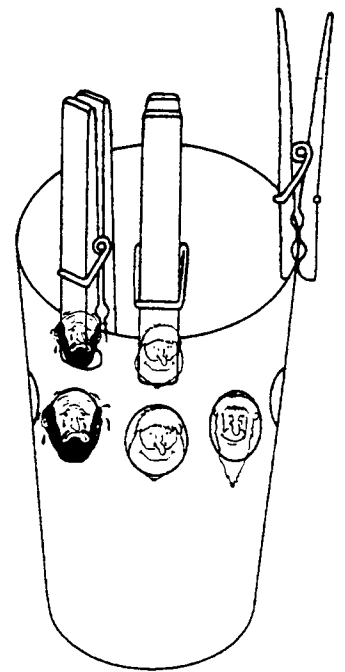
Some people turned from God's way and married idol worshippers.

Some people kept their hearts listening to God and His Word. They made right choices and stayed on the path God wanted for them.

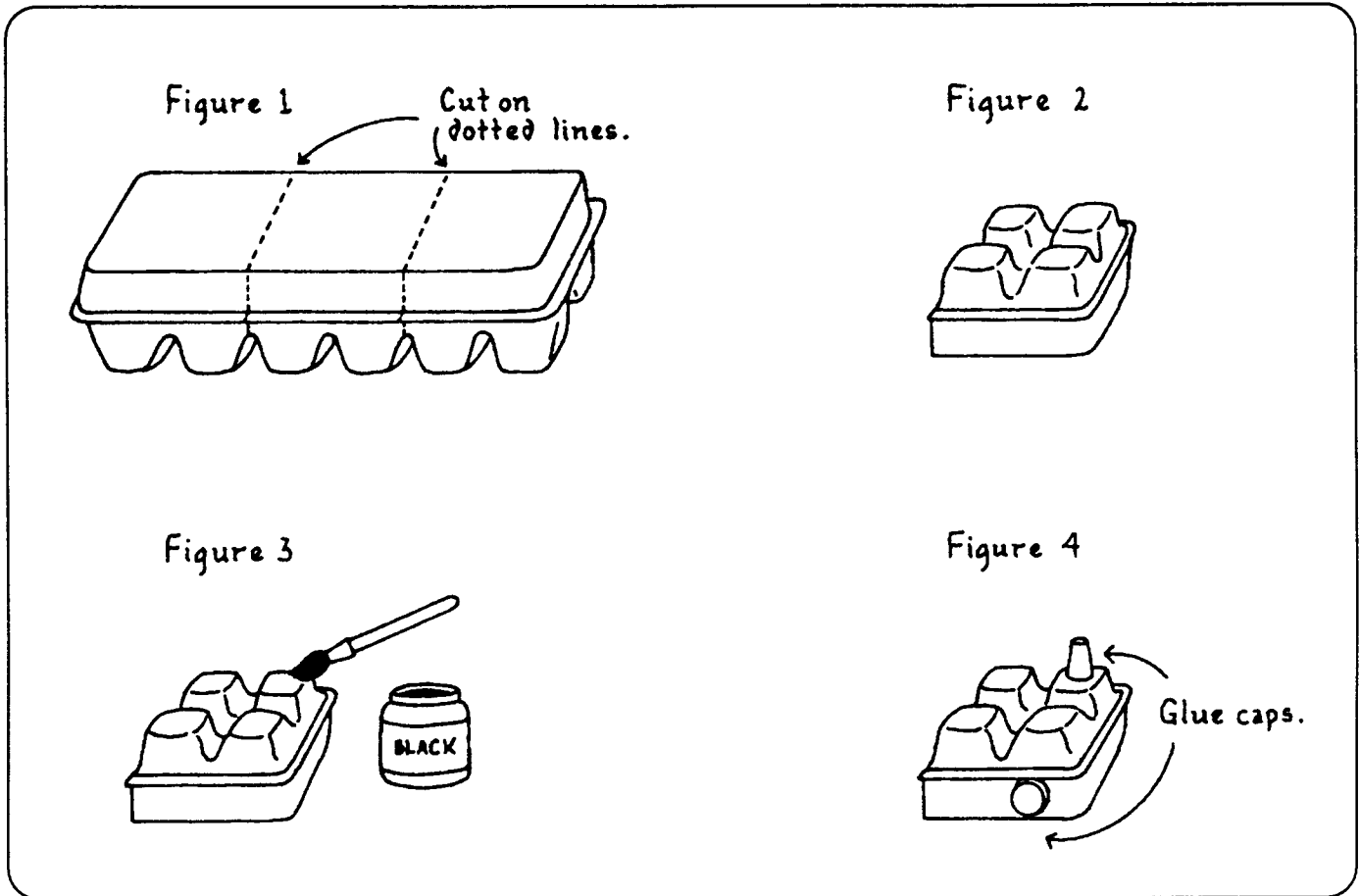


# Prophets Clothespin Match

Prophets Clothespin Match: Glue or tape the prophets' faces around large plastic cups. Stick the faces around the top of the cup with a space between each one. Tape the corresponding prophets' faces on the tips of the clothespins. The children match the clothespin face to the same face on the cup by putting a clothespin above each face.



# Egg Carton Cameras for the Trip to Jerusalem



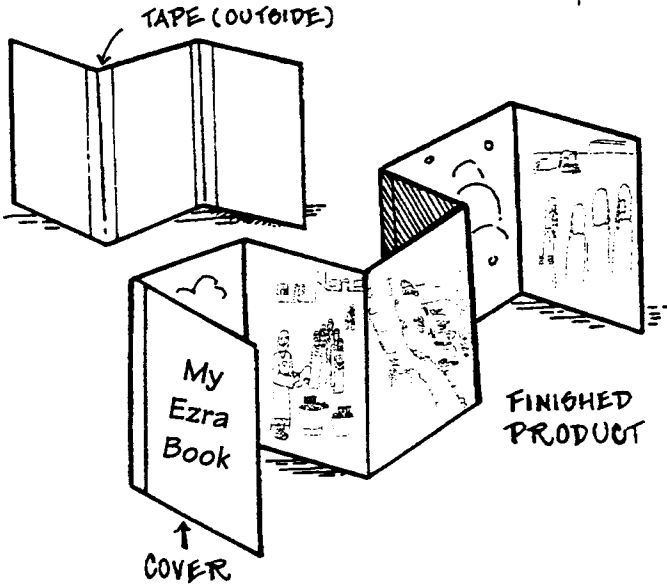
With tops and bottoms remaining attached, each egg carton must be separated into three sections of four cups (see figures 1 and 2).

Paint each section of the egg carton black (if desired) and let dry completely. This is the body of the camera (see figure 3). Cut off the closed ends so the children can see through the camera.

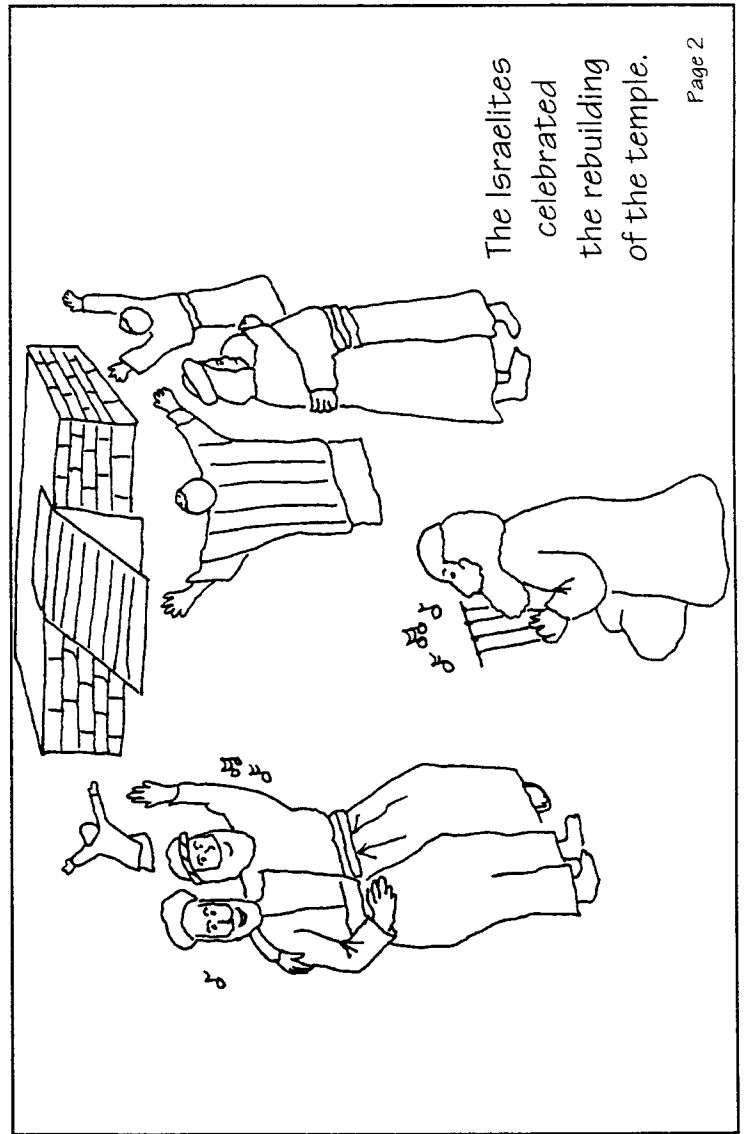
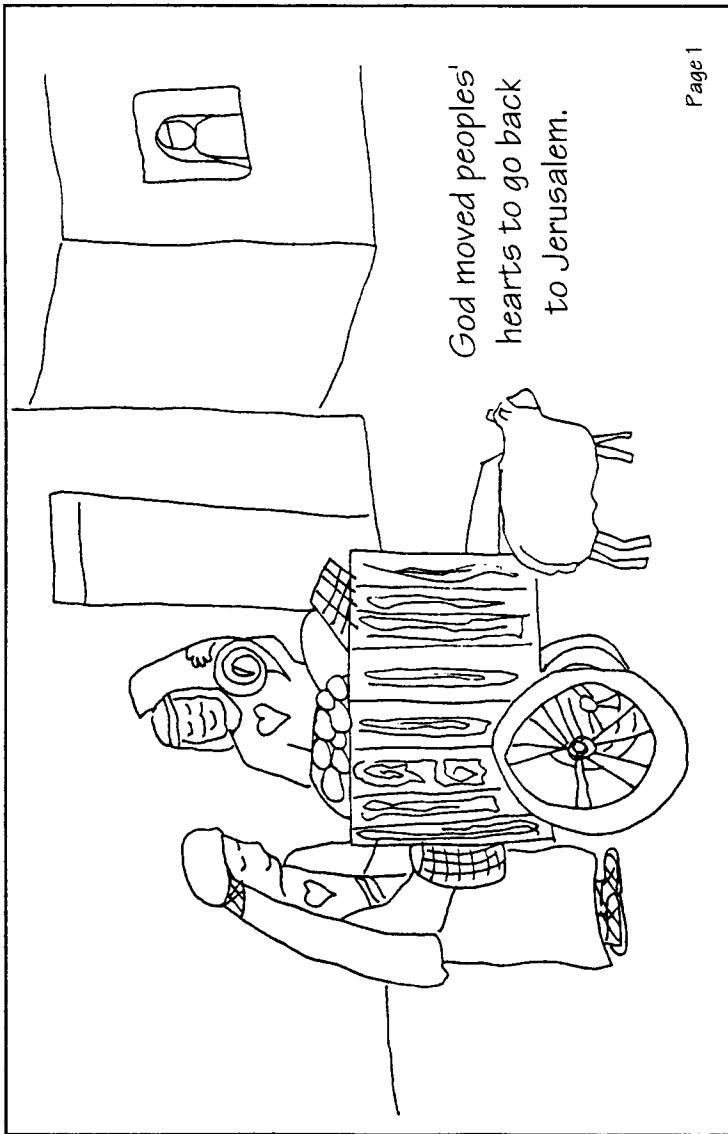
Glue on the milk bottle caps for assorted buttons and settings (see figure 4). Now the children are ready to take pictures.

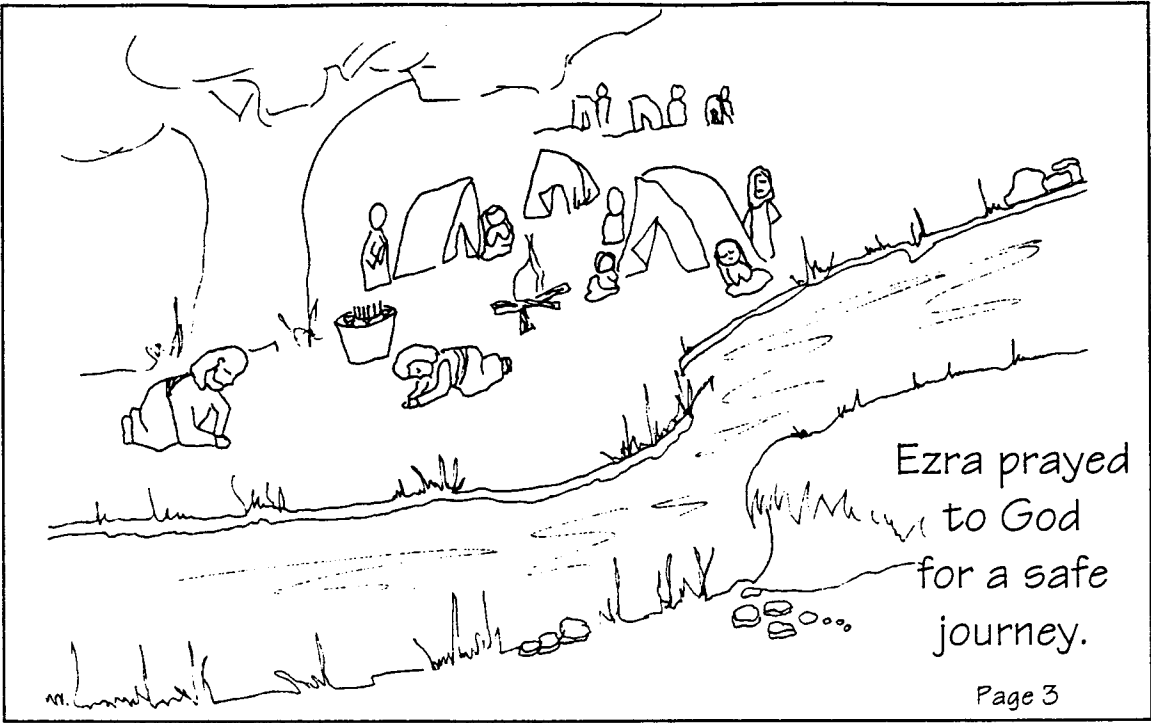
# My Ezra Book

Use two pieces of cardstock for the cover. An adult should tape the picture pages together with masking tape or cloth library tape so that the pages fold in an accordion style. Add the cover pages with tape. Fold the zigzag book into a book shape or display the opened gallery on a table.

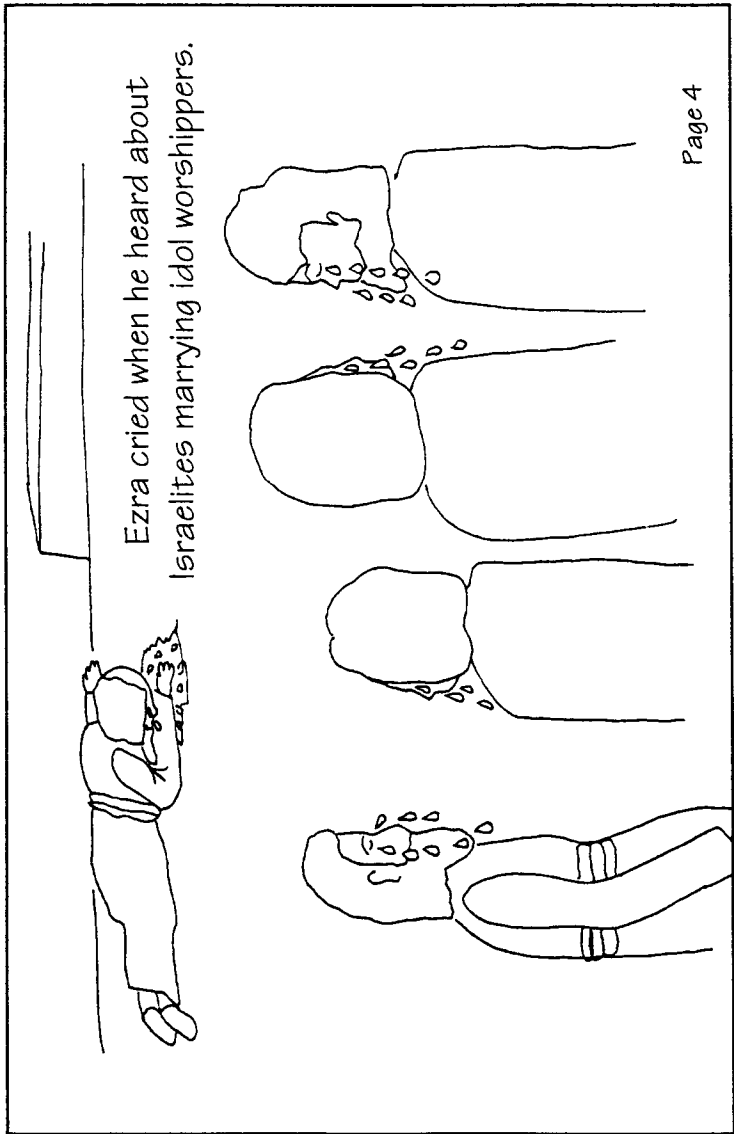


# My Ezra Book

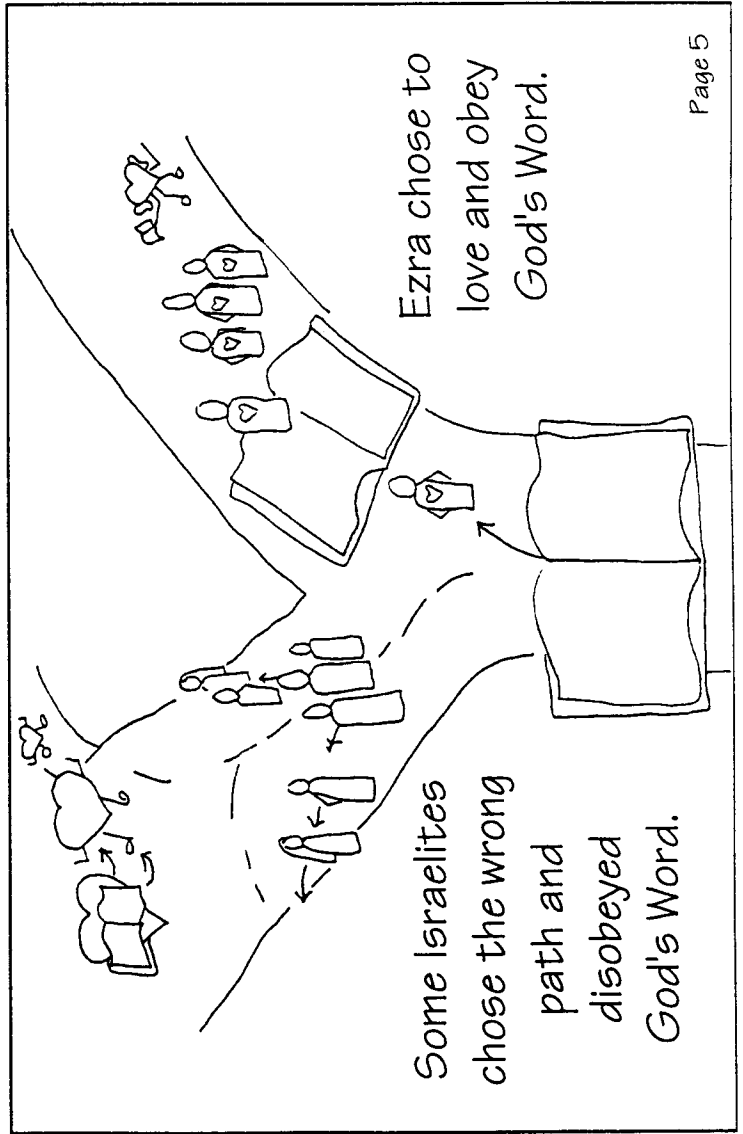




Ezra prayed to God for a safe journey.



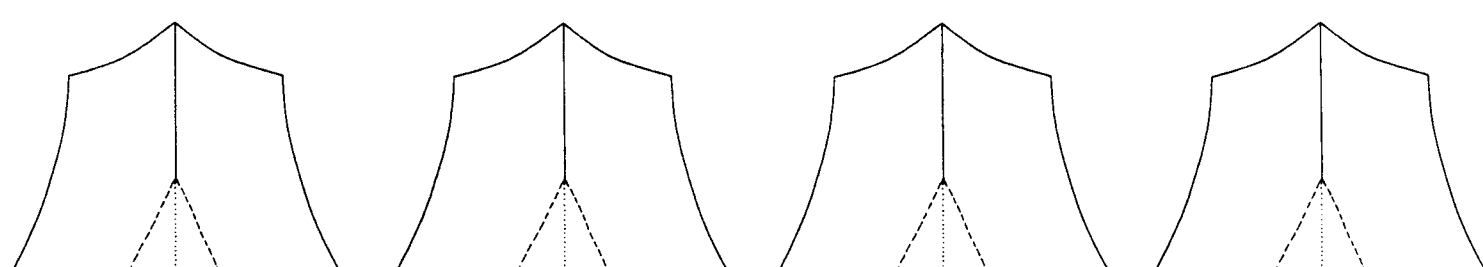
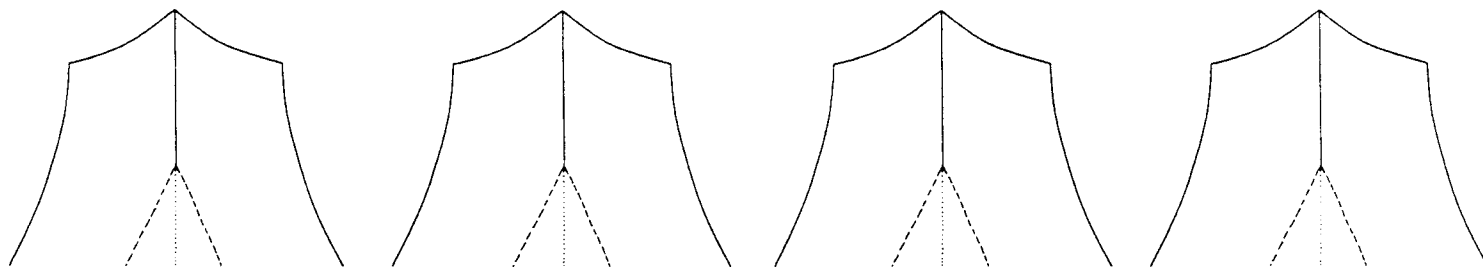
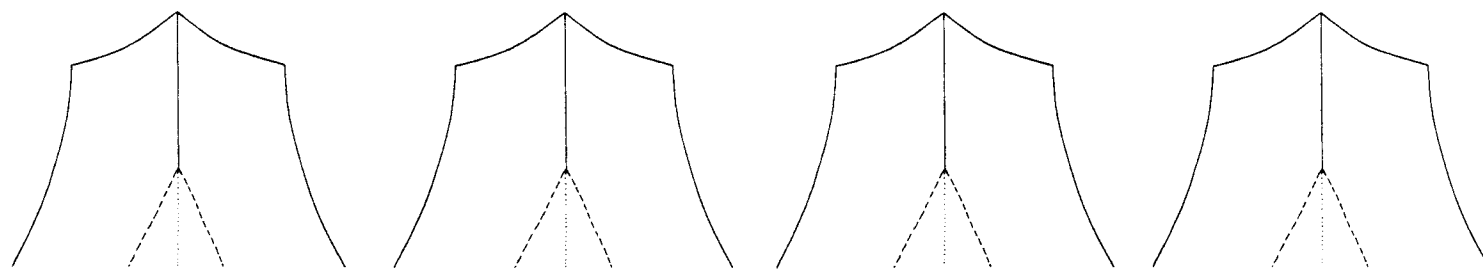
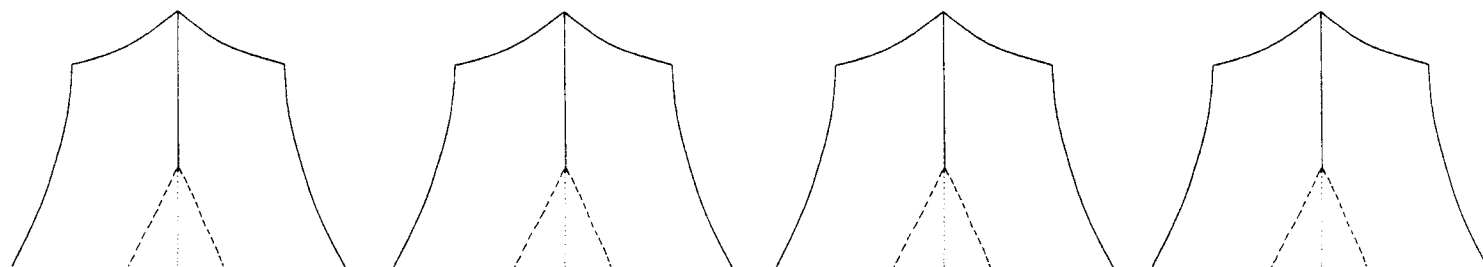
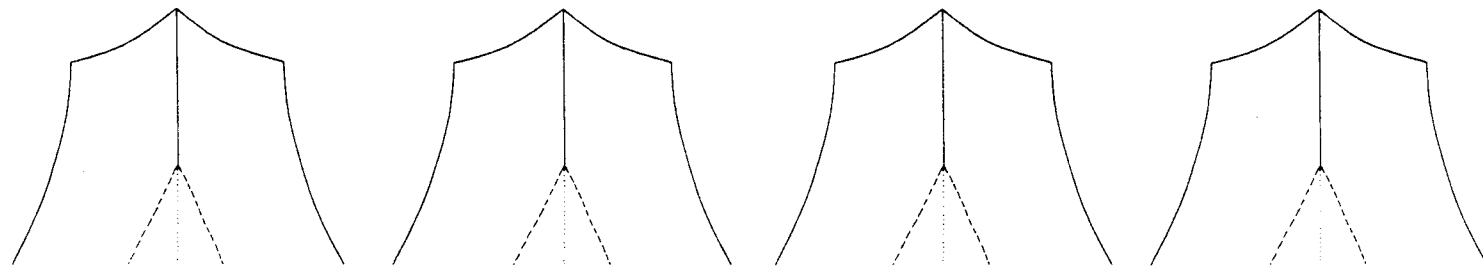
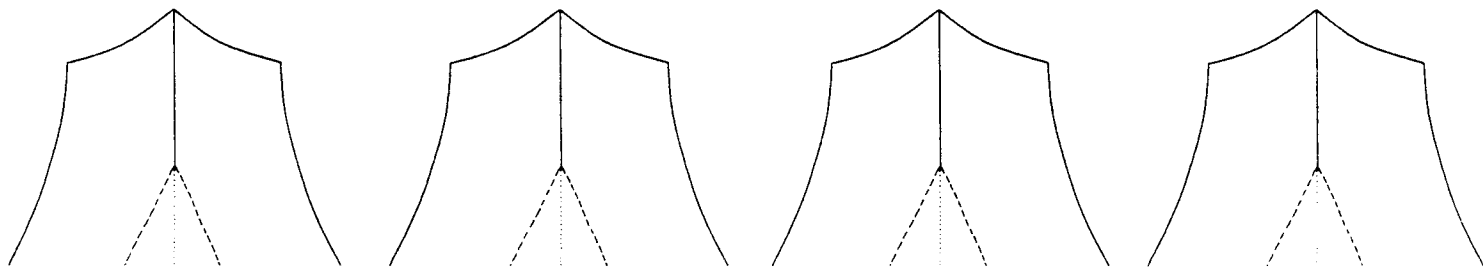
Ezra cried when he heard about Israelites marrying idol worshippers.



Ezra chose to love and obey God's Word.

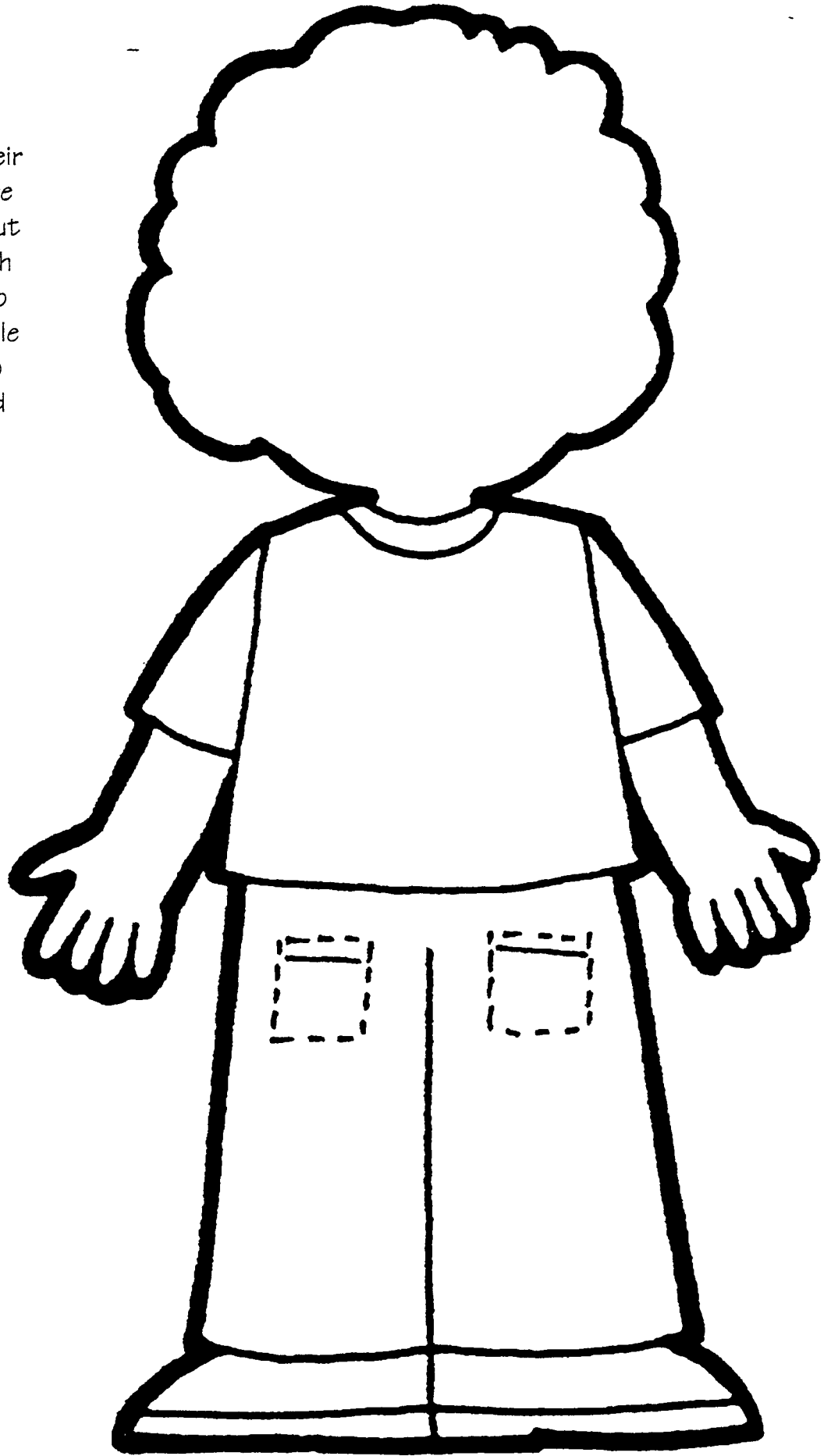
Some Israelites chose the wrong path and disobeyed God's Word.

Camping Tents for gluing to the 3EZR42ECGF2 page.



## Follow the Right Path Center

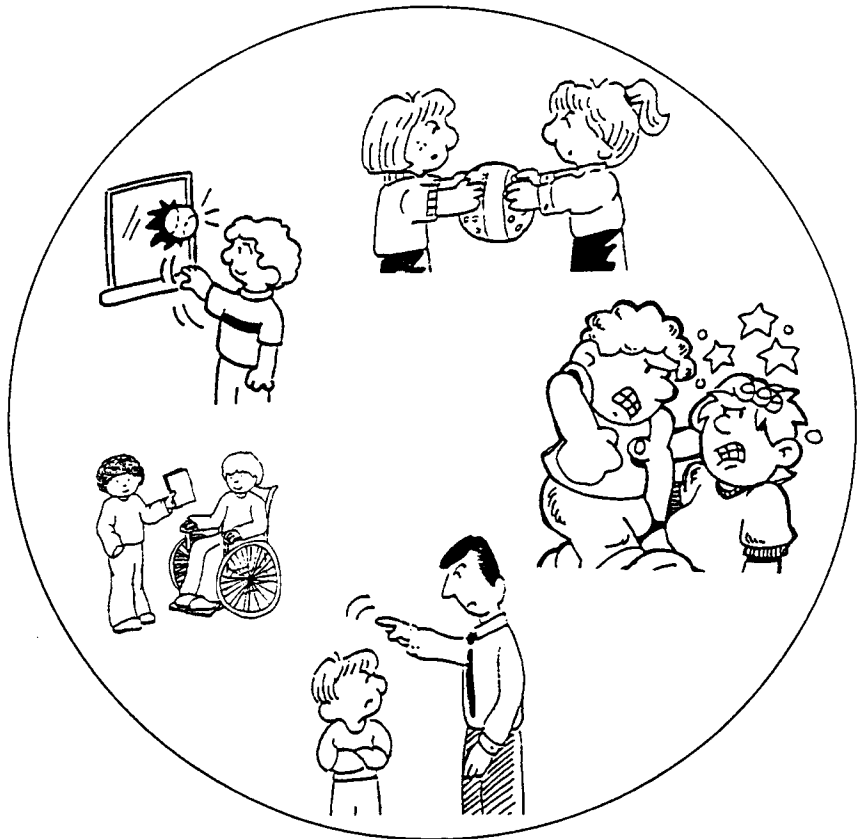
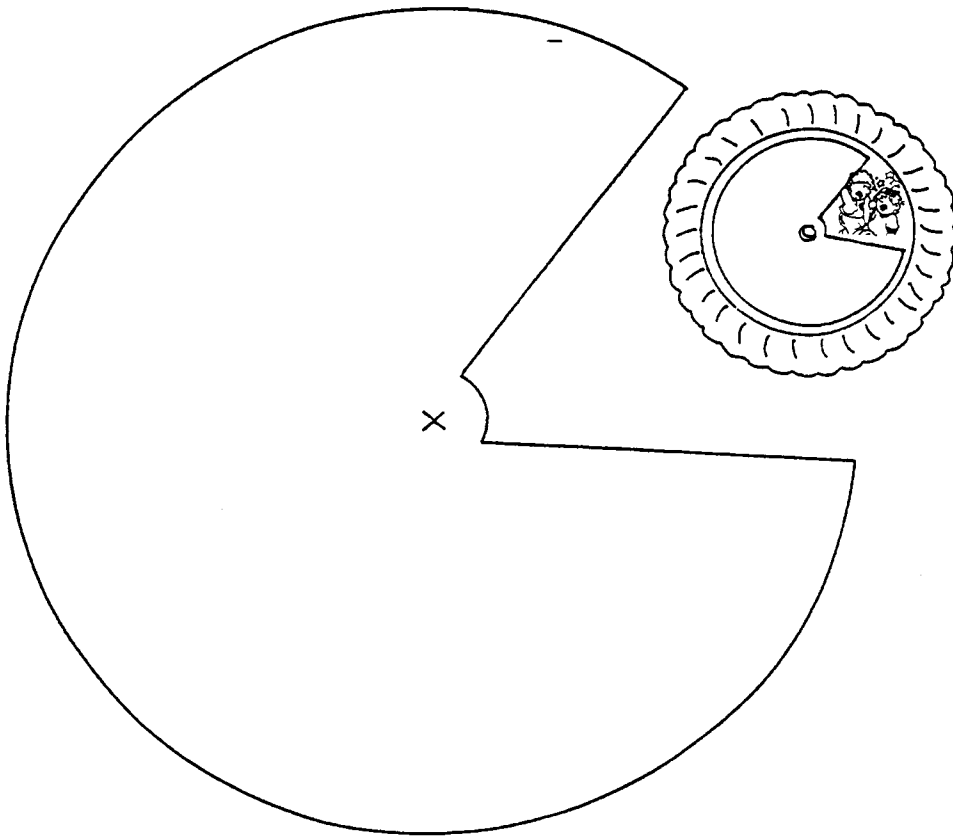
Let the children color their child with colors they are wearing today. Talk about who they like to play with and what they like to do with friends. Make a Bible stamp and stamp it to make the path the child should follow.



## Making Right Choices Wheel

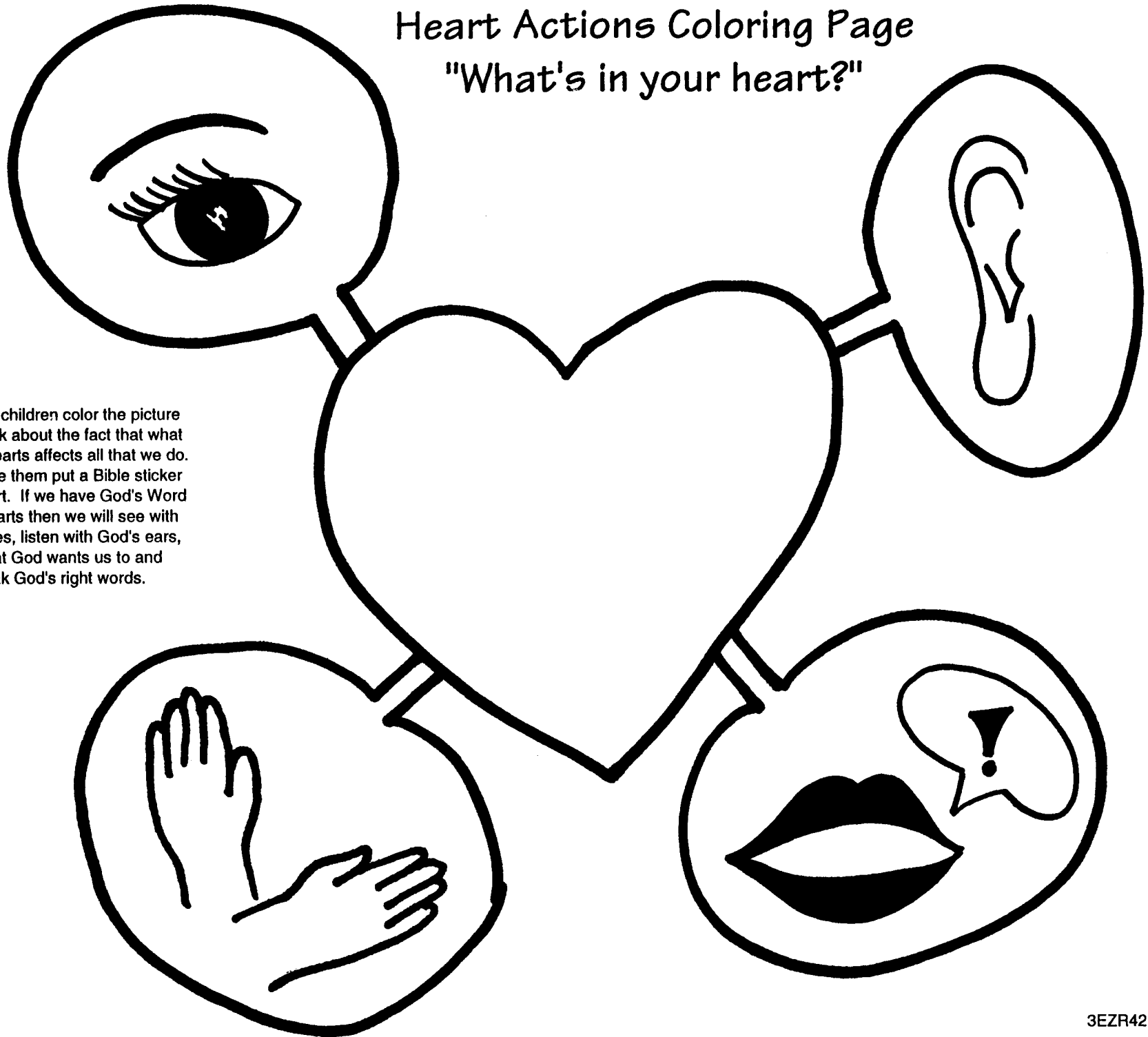
Color the pictures of children making choices, cut out the circle, and glue it to a 6-inch paper plate. On another paper plate, cut out a wedge and cut off the border to make it smaller. Attach the two plates with a brad (paper fastener) in the center. As the children turn the outer plate, they tell you if the child is making the right choice.

**Alternative Idea:** Copy this page on cardstock, eliminating the need for paper plates.



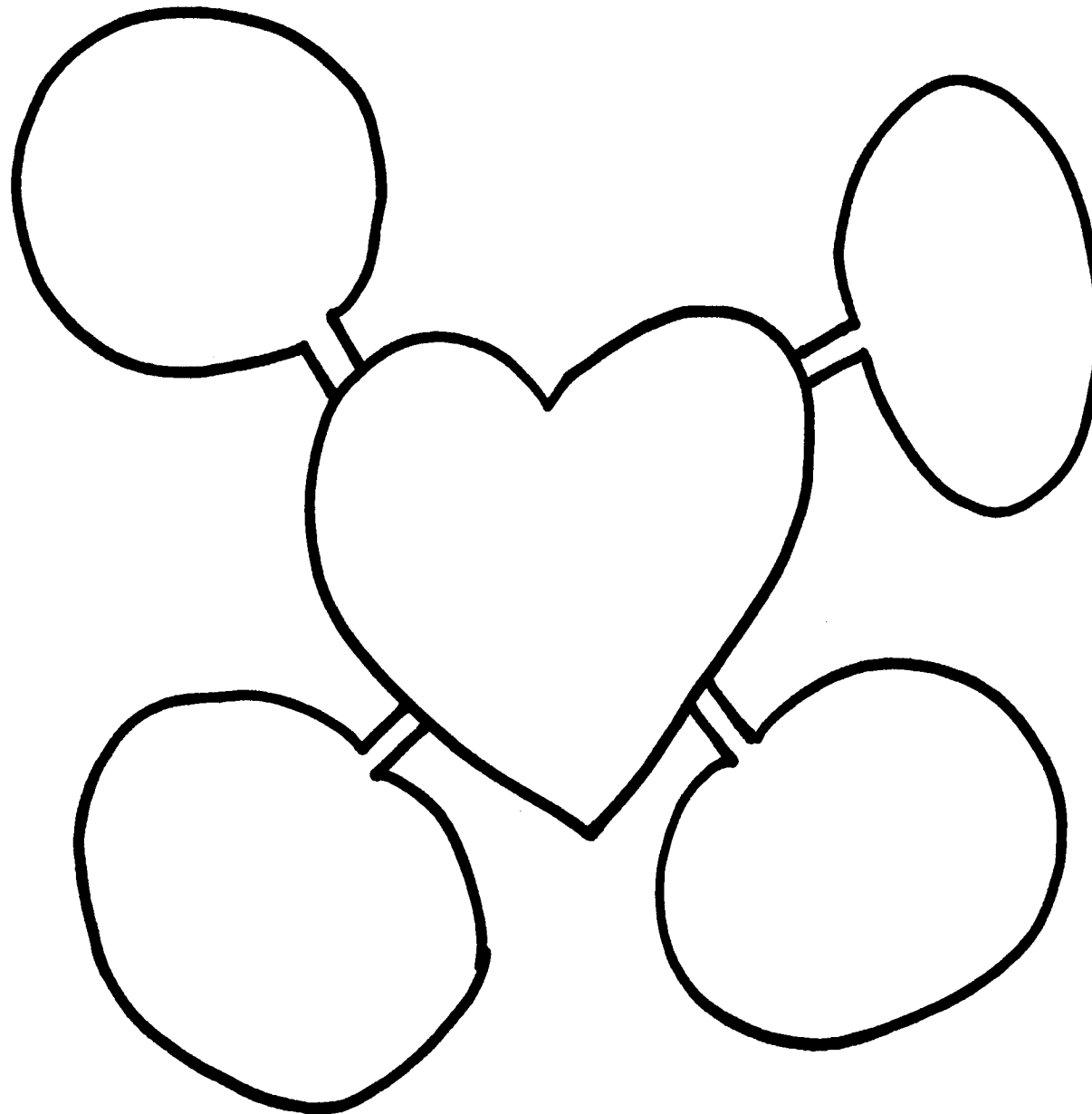
# Heart Actions Coloring Page

## "What's in your heart?"

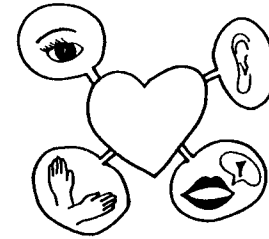


Have the children color the picture as you talk about the fact that what is in our hearts affects all that we do. Then have them put a Bible sticker in the heart. If we have God's Word in our hearts then we will see with God's eyes, listen with God's ears, do what God wants us to and speak God's right words.

# WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART?



sample



Cut around each of the circles below. Let the children tape or glue each picture to one of the heart branches. Then have them put a Bible sticker in the heart. Remember, if we have God's Word in our hearts then we will see with God's eyes, listen with God's ears, do what God wants us to, and speak God's right words! Ezra was a teacher of God's Word and he wanted to help the Israelites know God's Word.

