

May 28, 2000
Early Childhood

James 2
JAM02EC

True Faith Doesn't Show Favorites but Helps People in Need.

Memory Verse:

Two- and three-year-old verse: James 1:22: Do not merely listen to the Word. . . Do what it says.

Four- and five-year-old verse: James 1:22: Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Aim Questions for 2's & 3's:

1. Does James tell us not to "show favoritism" to people with fancy clothes? *(Yes. God loves all kinds of people and looks at what is in our hearts, not at what we're wearing.)*
2. Does God want us to help someone in the church who needs food or clothes? *(Yes. God wants His people to help people with food and clothes if they need them.)*
3. Should you listen to the Bible and then do what He says? *(Yes. Say the memory verse.)*

Aim Questions for 4's, 5's & K:

1. What does James mean when he tells us not to "show favoritism" to rich people? *(We should not be kinder to people in fancy clothes and do more to help them than we do for a poor person.)*
2. Why is it wrong to show favoritism? *(God loves all kinds of people and looks at what is in our hearts, not at what we're wearing. God wants His people to be rich in faith, not money.)*
3. If you know someone in the church who needs food or clothes, what does God say to do? *(God wants His people to help people with food and clothes if they need them.)*
4. Should you listen to the Bible and then do what God says? *(Yes. Say the memory verse.)*

Key for symbols:

- This box symbol represents ideas that can be used for two-year-olds through kindergarten. Please remember to slow down the pace for two-year-olds and keep the pace moving for five-year-olds.
- ② This symbol represents ideas that are best used for two- and three-year-olds.
- ④ This symbol represents ideas that are best used for four-year-olds through kindergarten.

Background Information for Teachers:

James 2: The Test of Favoritism

Synopsis

James writes to Jewish believers who have been scattered abroad Palestine and Asia Minor in order to encourage and exhort them to bear fruit in keeping with their profession of faith. One of the fruits that expresses genuine faith is impartiality. Christianity at the time was available to anyone regardless of a person's social status, ethnic background, or gender. It was not an "exclusive" religion.

The truth of impartiality is rooted in the character of God. In Acts 10:34-35, Peter said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right." As the Gospel spread from a primarily Jewish origin into the Gentile world, Jewish believers saw that God's plan of salvation was not merely for Israel, but for the entire world. God is not one to show favoritism to any person or people!

In almost every age, there has been prejudice against the poor of our world. Even these Jewish believers apparently struggled with showing favoritism to those who were rich and came from wealthy backgrounds. It can be very tempting to sin in this way and to shun the poor person.

(Background Information, continued)

James tells us that true genuine faith is tested by how we respond to the issue of personal favoritism. In 2:1, he gives the biblical principle: "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism." The word "favoritism" literally means "receiving faces." The idea behind this word came from a Hebrew idiom that meant "to lift up one's face." This is to receive the face of an individual so as to show favoritism towards him. Therefore, the principle that James is teaching believers is that we are never to show favoritism towards anyone.

James illustrates what this truth is saying in verses 2-4. Suppose two visitors entered a church, a rich man and a poor man. The rich man is dressed in the finest, brightest clothing available in that day and also had several gold rings, which would be quite extravagant. The poor man enters with only his dirty, smelly clothes. When the members of that church see the rich man, they approach him and offer him the best seat in the church and show special attention to him, while they tell the poor man to stand in the back or to sit at their feet. Sitting at a person's feet is for the lowliest in society.

James gives this realistic illustration and then asks the rhetorical question in verse 4, "Have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" If a person in a similar situation shows discrimination towards the poor person based upon his outward appearance, James tells us that we have judged with evil thoughts and motives. And since this is never the manner in which God treats His own children, we should never treat anyone with favoritism.

James goes on to give us several more arguments against favoritism. First of all, God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith (v. 5). In a world where the poor are typically neglected, God showers those He has chosen with His grace and love (cf. Luke 4:18; 7:22). A poor person's lack of material wealth did not diminish God's favor towards him or her. At the same time, poverty is by no means a reason for God's favor either (cf. Rom. 9:11, 14-16). God chooses whom He wills, and that choice extends to all people regardless of their economic status.

Second, James argues in verses 6-7 that the wealthy are typically those who oppress people. Historically during this time, wealthy Jews were "dragging" poor Christians into the courts for the purpose of social and economic exploitation. James' argument is clear: if God has chosen the poor to be a part of His kingdom while the rich has shown animosity towards fellow believers, how could a Christian demonstrate favoritism based on a person's external appearance?

James reminds his readers that the laws of King Jesus are radically different from the laws of sinful men (vv. 8-9). If a person is truly saved, he will demonstrate love towards his neighbor regardless of that person's wealth, ethnic background, gender, or external appearance. This is the second greatest commandment that sums up the second half of the Ten Commandments.

Application: Do you show favoritism?

It can be very easy to show favoritism, right? How do you treat those who are different from you and your group of friends? When a new person comes into our Bible school class and isn't dressed as nicely as the rest of the children, do we show them our love, just as God shows us His love? How would you do with James' test on favoritism?

James wants us to know that when we play favorites, it's wrong and is a sin (v. 9) because it contradicts the very character of our heavenly Father. God does not show any favoritism, but loves all of His children equally and fairly. In fact, He has chosen both poor people and rich people, men and women, and people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9) to be a part of His kingdom. The more we become like God, the more willing we will be to love those who are different from ourselves.

Hook:

People of the World Mural: On a large sheet of paper, draw a rough outline of the world with the continents and different countries mapped out, and tape it to the wall. Have some pictures of people from other countries, in native costume, of different ages and in different situations for the children to look at. Have them tape the pictures to the map of the world where they think that person could be living. Emphasize that appearances don't always mean what they seem. It would be okay to place the different people anywhere on the world map because God sees men's hearts and not what clothes they wear.

Favorite Toy Center: Provide numerous and various trucks, cars, and other toys for the children to play with on the floor. As they play, discuss which ones are their favorites. Why? Ask if it is okay with God to have favorite toys. (It is okay to like some things better than others but not to show favoritism toward people.) Then explain that God loves everyone, all colors, shapes and sizes. Today's Bible Adventure will teach that God does not show favoritism toward people and we are to learn to do the same.

Dress Up Center: Bring fancy hats, gloves, shoes and jewelry to class for the children to dress up in. In today's Bible Adventure, James tells his readers that God looks at the hearts of men and not at the clothes that they wear.

Decorated Sharing Box: Let the children decorate two cardboard boxes with markers. If the box is patterned, they could glue construction or wrapping paper on it for decoration. Keep it simple. These boxes will hold the items they choose to share during the relay. (See the "Look" section.)

Envelope "Bags" for Sharing: (JAM02ECGF6 and JAM02ECGF7) This activity will be used with the "Arms to Share" idea in the "Took" section. Provide a small envelope (6 1/2" x 3 5/8") for each child. Let the children lick their envelopes closed. Assist them in cutting them in half. (You might want to draw a line across them before class.) Let the children decorate their bags with happy face stickers or markers. Designate one half of the envelope for food and the other half for clothing. Put their names on the backs of the envelopes. Bring magazines and food ads for children to find pictures of food items that they really like. You may add GF6 and GF7 pictures, too. Place these pictures in their food envelopes. Before class, cut simple pants and shirts out of fabric scraps from the GF6 patterns. Let the children feel them and choose the ones that they would really like to place in their clothing envelopes. Find pictures of shoes in a catalog if there is time.



Book:

Presentation Ideas -

Color and mount the **JAM02ECGF1**, **JAM02ECGF2**, and **JAM02ECGF3** pictures on construction paper. Show them as you tell the Bible Adventure. Save the pictures and use them for review as you continue through the book of James.

Wear your "Faith Works" tool belt and add the work glove to your belt for the second lesson in James. Remind the children that true faith in Jesus works out in an action. This week's work glove reminds us that God does not want us to show favoritism to people based upon how they look. God wants us to help people who need food and clothes.

Show some of your "favorite" things. Talk about choosing your favorite flavor of ice cream, your favorite color, or your favorite shirt. When something is your favorite, you choose it first. James will tell us in James chapter two that God does not want you show favoritism toward some people more than others based upon how they look.

Presentation Option: Have two leaders dress up, one in fancy clothes and jewelry and the other in torn and dirty clothes. When they enter the story circle, have the teacher treat the well-dressed person in an honorable way and the poor person in disgust. Continue the charade through the story and then for the Aim Questions, have the two actors ask the questions.

Bible Adventure for 2's & 3's-

(Have one of the children open your Bible at the bookmark you have placed in the book of James.)
Let's say the name of the new Bible book we are learning from. *(Have the children say "James," clap once as they say "James," and stomp their feet once as they say "James.")*

(Show the review JAM01ECGF1 picture of James.) James wrote a letter that is called James in the Bible.

You and I have favorite colors, and favorite flavors of ice cream, but James writes in his letter, “Don’t show favoritism toward people with fancy clothes.” Don’t be nicer to someone who looks nice than to someone who has old clothes or smells dirty.

(Show the JAM02ECGF1 picture.) James says, “Suppose there are two people who come to your church meeting, one wearing a gold ring and fancy clothes, and one wearing old, worn clothes. If you show special attention to the person wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You can stand in the back or sit on the floor,’ you have shown favoritism. That is wrong.” God doesn’t want us to show favoritism to someone who has fancy clothes.

(Show the JAM02ECGF2 picture.) God wants us to be friendly to everyone who comes to our church no matter what they are wearing. James says, “God wants the people in His church family to be kind to all different kinds of people, especially the poor people who need food and clothes.”

(Show the JAM02ECGF3 picture.) James says, “If your church brother or sister needs food or clothes, you must help them. Don’t just say, ‘I’m sorry for you. I hope you can get some food.’ No, God wants each of our families to help the person who needs food and clothes.”

James says, “Don’t show favoritism by only wanting to be with people who have lots of food, clothes, and toys. Keep on obeying God by helping people who need food and clothes.”

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for the book of James that tells me to help people who need food and clothes. Help me listen and remember to obey. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Bible Adventure for 4’s, 5’s & K-

(Have one of the children open your Bible at the bookmark you have placed in the book of James.) Who can tell me the name of the new Bible book we are learning from? (James.)

(Show the review JAM01ECGF1 picture of James. Have the children say “James,” clap once as they say “James,” and stomp their feet once as they say “James.”) Who was James? (James was Jesus’ half brother who wrote a letter in the Bible that is called “James.”)

(Show the JAM02ECGF1 picture.) James writes in his letter, “Don’t show favoritism toward rich people.” Do you know what it means to “show favoritism” or “have favorites?” Having favorites is when you want to do something nice for someone who looks nice, but you don’t want to do something nice for someone who has old clothes or smells dirty. James gives an example of favoritism.

James says, “Suppose there are two people who come to your church, one wearing a gold ring and fancy clothes, and one wearing old, worn clothes. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You can stand in the back or sit on the floor,’ you have shown favoritism. That is wrong. That is a sin.”

(Show the JAM02ECGF2 picture.) James says, “God cares more about what is in our hearts than what we look like or what we wear. God wants the people in His church family to be rich in faith and love, not rich with money. God’s people who are rich in faith will obey God when He says, ‘Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.’”

God loves all kinds of people. He doesn’t show favoritism to any one group or nationality. He loves people of every color from every country. He loves poor people, and He loves rich people. God does not have favorites. God wants us to be friendly with everyone who comes to our church, not just the people with nice clothes.

(Show the JAM02ECGF3 picture.) James says, “If someone in your church needs food or clothes, you must help them. Don’t just think someone else will help him, or say, ‘I’m sorry for you. I hope you get some food.’ No, if your family is rich in faith, and you have extra money, you will help the person who needs food and clothes.”

James says, “Don’t show favorites by only wanting to be with people who have lots of food, nice clothes, and fun toys. It is foolish to think that God wants you to hear His words in the Bible but not obey them. Any of us who comes to church, listens to Bible stories, and wants to love Jesus, must not only listen to God’s words, but must do what God says. Keep on obeying God by not showing favoritism to certain kinds of people. Keep on obeying God by helping people who need food and clothes.

Let’s sing our memory verse song to help us remember to be hearers and doers.”

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for the book of James that tells me to keep on obeying when I am tempted to show favoritism. Help me be kind and helpful to all kinds of different people. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Pray, Share, and Snack: Talk about people the children know that they can share something with. Talk about not playing favorites when they play or invite someone to their birthday party. Pray with the children asking God to help them not show favorites at any time. Provide each child with a sandwich bag with animal crackers in it. In a large bowl, place several pieces of different kinds of candy. Ask the children to choose their favorites and place one in their bags. Then ask the children to share their bags with the child across the table from them. Talk about sharing something that we would want rather than keeping it for ourselves. Each table could have an old piece of clothing and a new or old toy. Discuss with the children what would be the best choice to share with a friend that didn't have any.

Teacher Role Play: Using old and new toys, old and new clothes, and yummy-tasting food and yucky-tasting food, show the children what it means to show favorites or to share something with others. Pretend to give an old rusty toy to another teacher while keeping the shiny new one for yourself. Ask the children what was wrong with what you did.

“Don't Show Favoritism” Activity Page: (JAM02ECGF4 and JAM02ECGF5) Glue the GF5 shabby and rich children on either side of the girl on the GF4 page. Talk about how God loves everyone and wants us to do the same. We can show our love by being kind and not showing favorites. Color and glue on fabric scraps and pieces of yarn.

Action Song: As the children walk around in a circle and under a “bridge” formed by two teachers or children, they can sing the following words to the tune of “London Bridge.” Include the names of the children who are “caught” at the end.

God does not show favorites, favorites, favorites.

God does not show favorites. God loves ____, ____ and ____.

② **What Should I Share? (JAM02ECGF7 and JAM02ECGF8)** Give each child a GF8 girl sheet and a GF7 sheet of clothing. Let the children color the child and cut, tear out, and glue the clothing or food bag into the child's hands to share. Add fabric to the girl's clothing if desired. Talk about sharing good things that we have with others who need it.

④ **Preparing for a Visitor:** Discuss with the children what it is like to play favorites. It means always playing with the same friends. It means wanting to sit with your best friend and pushing someone else aside. It means not greeting a new child in the class. Would you like to be that kind of person? God loves everyone the same. He wants us to do that, too. You might have a favorite person but that doesn't mean you leave out someone else. Tell the children about a visitor that will be coming to your classroom (invite an older child from another classroom to come in at a specific time). Discuss how you should treat this visitor and not show favorites. Plan to have everyone greet him and make him feel welcome by including him in the activities going on in the classroom. Assign different children tasks to perform to make him feel welcome. Later, ask the visitor if he felt welcome or did he feel like the children were playing favorites.

④ **Arms for Sharing: (JAM02ECGF9 and JAM02ECGF10)** Give each child the GF9 sheet to color and add GF10 arms with brad paper fasteners. (Younger children could glue the arms on at the shoulder, leaving the hand free to bend!) Let them play with this, deciding who will share the food and clothing bags (envelopes) they made during “Hook” time. You could add a tootsie roll to the bag with food ads. Younger children could glue the envelope on the GF9 child. Talk about sharing with others things that we would like to have.

④ **Getting to Know You Match Game: (JAM02ECGF6 and JAM02ECGF7)** Getting to know each other helps us learn to like new children and enjoy playing with them. Place GF6 and GF7 matching food and clothing pictures (two of each picture) in a basket. Ask the children to take a piece of paper out of the basket. They are to find their match and discuss their favorite foods or colors. Let them share what they found out about each other. Return the pictures to the basket and repeat the game several times.

Songs:

James 1:22, Memory Verse Song (tune: “Jingle Bells”)
Do not just, hear (listen to) the Word, but do what it says.
James one twenty-two says if you do, you will be blessed.

(Repeat the first two lines.)

Temptation (tune: "Have Patience")
Temptation! Temptation! Temptation comes each da-ay.
Temptation! Temptation, leads you to disobe-ey.
Remember! Remember! If you will just obey,
Then God will make that old temptation quickly go away.

Obe-ey! Obe-ey! Obey your mom and dad
Obe-ey! Obe-ey, when tempted to do bad.
Remember! Remember! If you will just obey,
Then God will make that old temptation quickly go away.

We Will Not Forget God's Word
We will not forget God's Word.
That is where His voice is heard.
If we listen and obey,
We'll be happy every day.

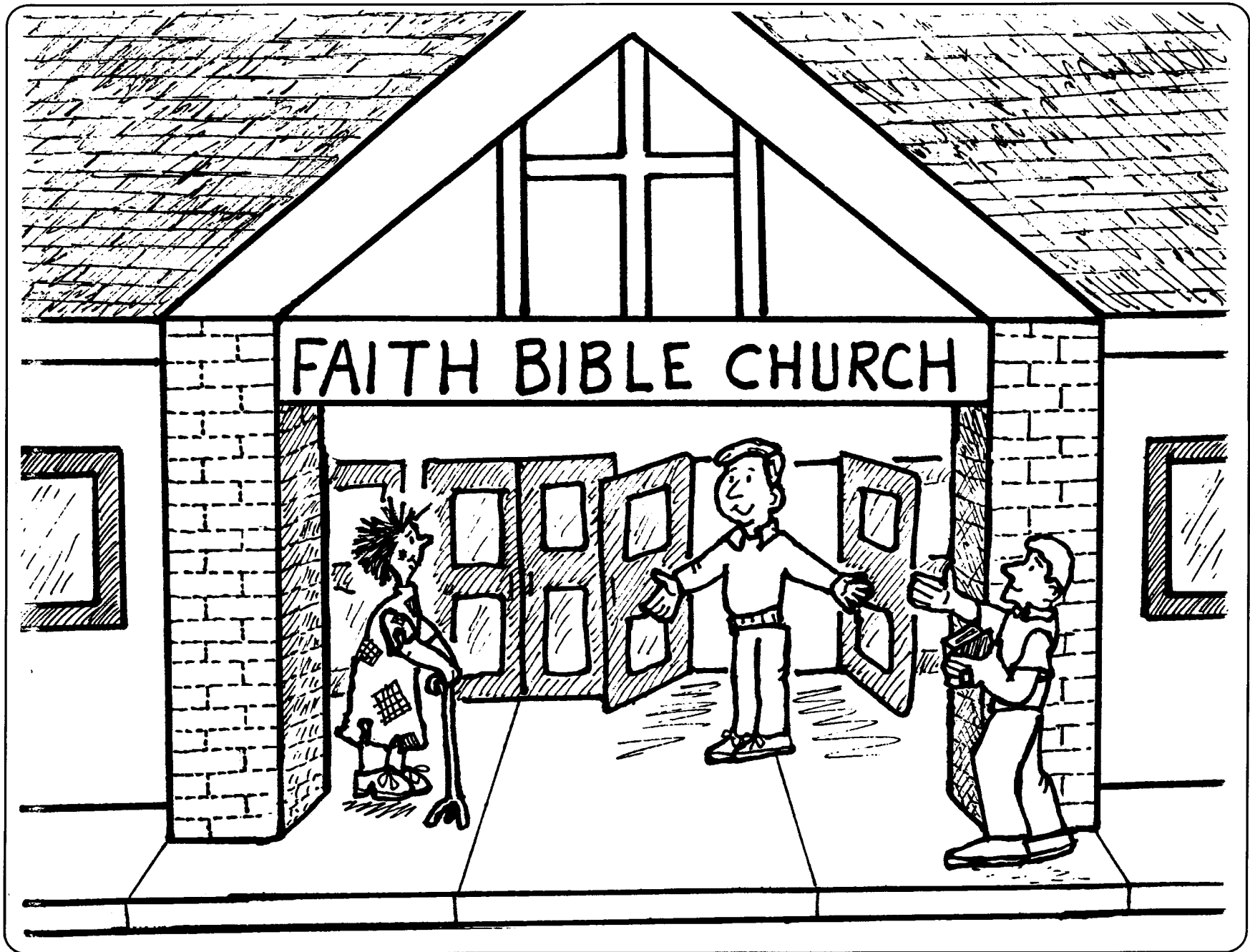


Took:

- Faith that Works Tool Belt: (Lesson #1 JAM01ECGF12)** Copy the work glove on cardstock. Cut out the glove and punch a hole in it. Glue on fabric if desired. Talk about this tool as a reminder to help everyone who needs help, not just your favorite friends. Send the work glove "tool" home with the children to be paper-clipped to the tool belts they took home last week. Be sure that you have extra "saws" from last week's tool belt activity so that children who missed Bible School last week will have a saw and a work glove on their rope or chord belts.
- Take-Home Bag for Sharing: (JAM02ECGF12)** Make a simple bag for each child from any size paper bags. Punch holes for the handles, and reinforce them with gummed reinforcements. Loop string or twine through the holes to make handles. Glue or stick the GF11 picture and verse on the bag. (To make stickers, copy the GF11 page on 3 1/3" x 4" laser labels. Give each child one sticker.) Sing the memory verse song as the children work on their bags.
- Preschool Page for Parents: (JAM02ECPPP)** Send a page home with each child, encouraging parents to reinforce the Bible truths at home. Spend a few minutes before the children go home creatively reviewing the song and memory verse.



James said, "Don't show partiality to the well-dressed people by giving them the best seats."



When new people come to our church, do we show favoritism to them based upon how they look?



James said, "Help the people in your church who need food and clothes."

This girl does not show favoritism, but is helpful to everyone.

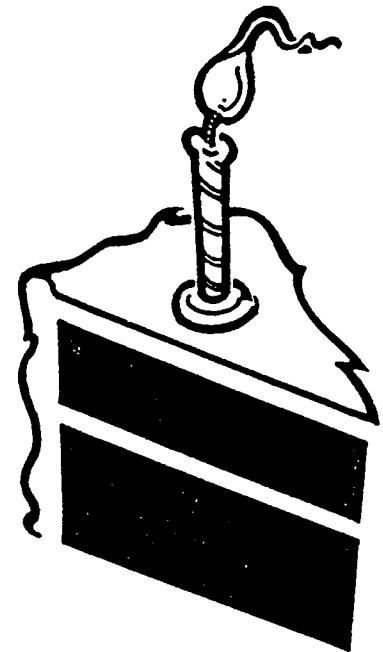
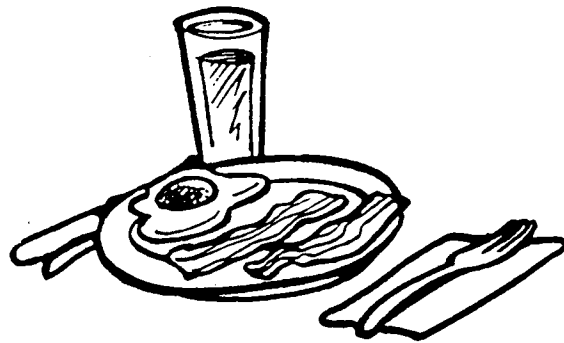
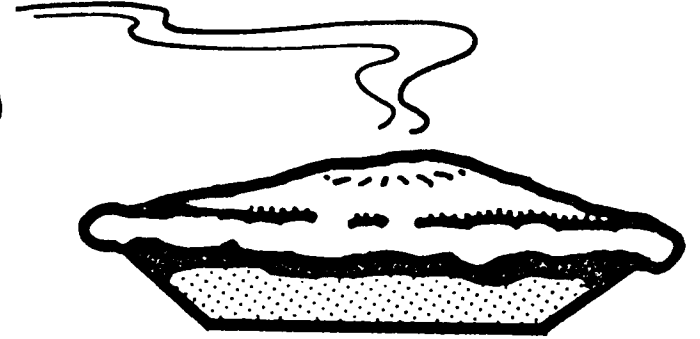
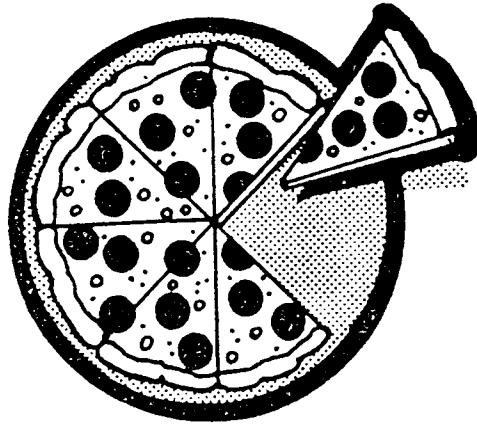
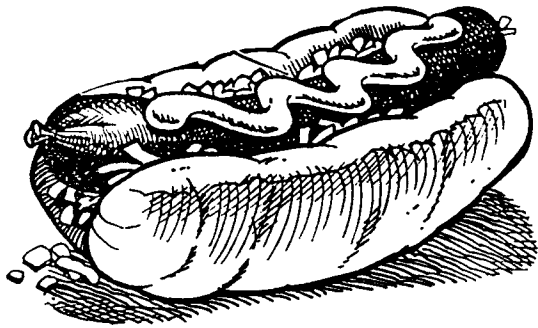


"Don't Show Favoritism" Activity Page

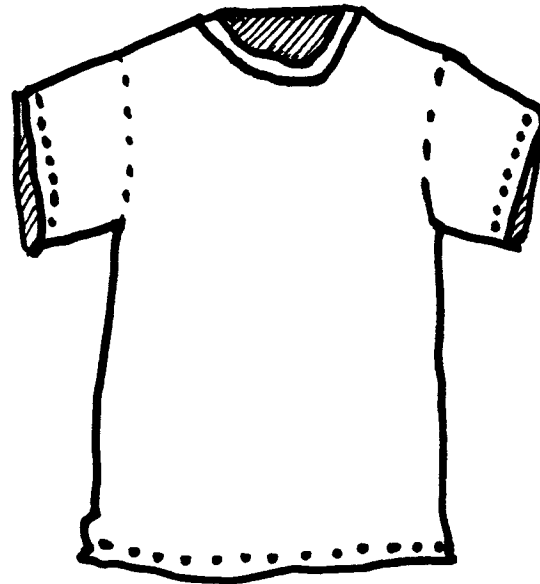
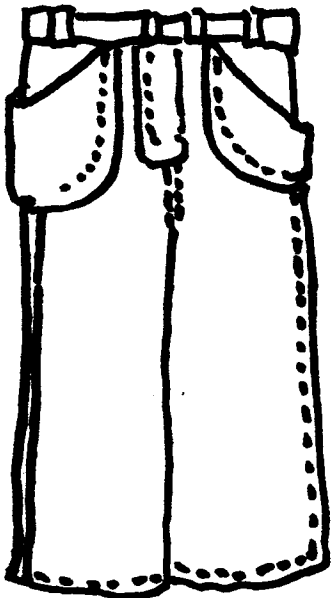
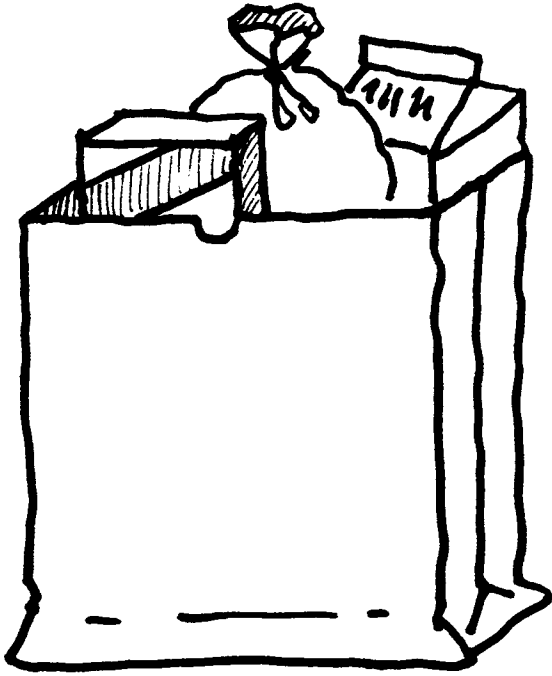
Cut these children apart and glue them on each side of the GF4 child.



Food Pictures

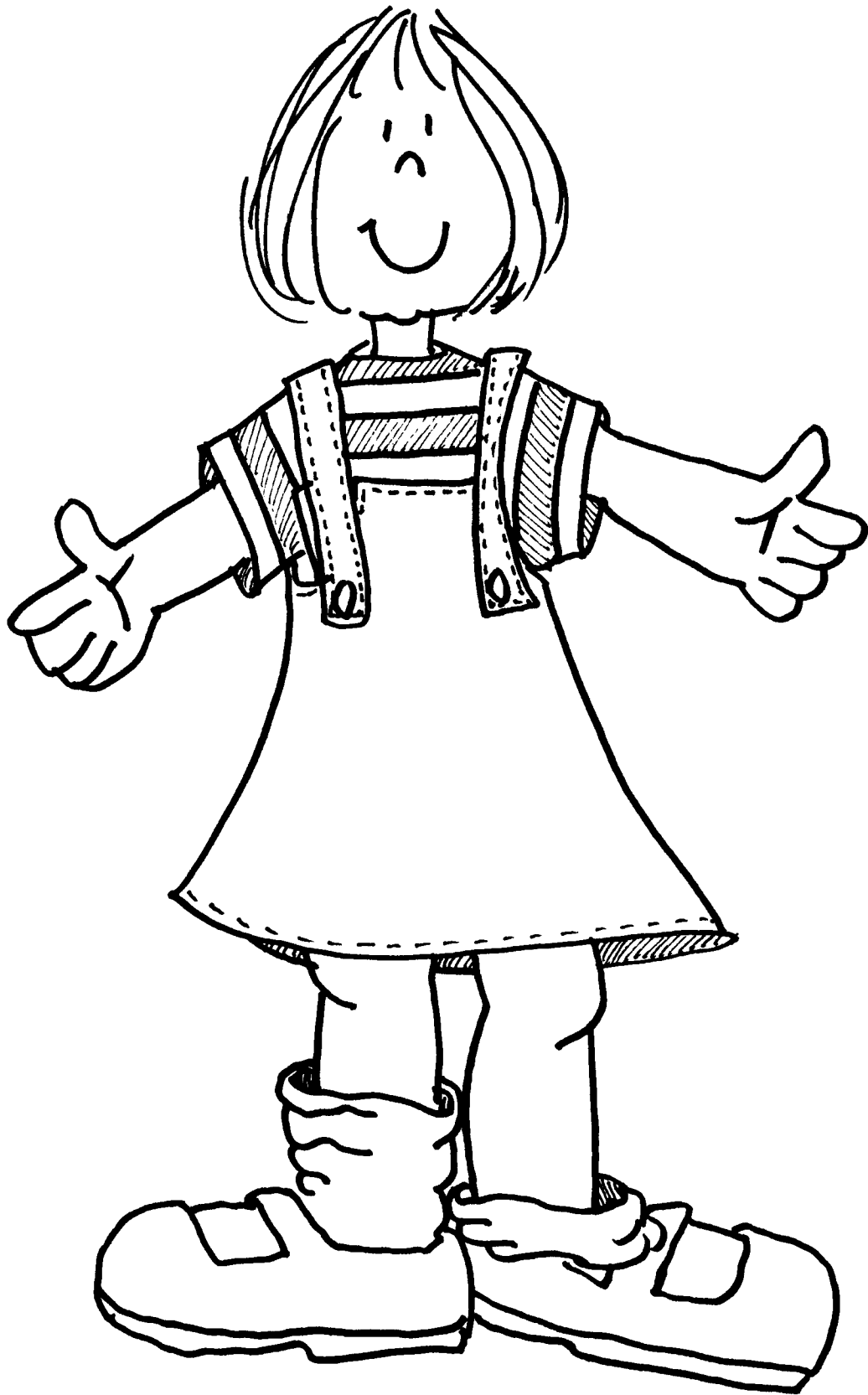


Clothes Pictures



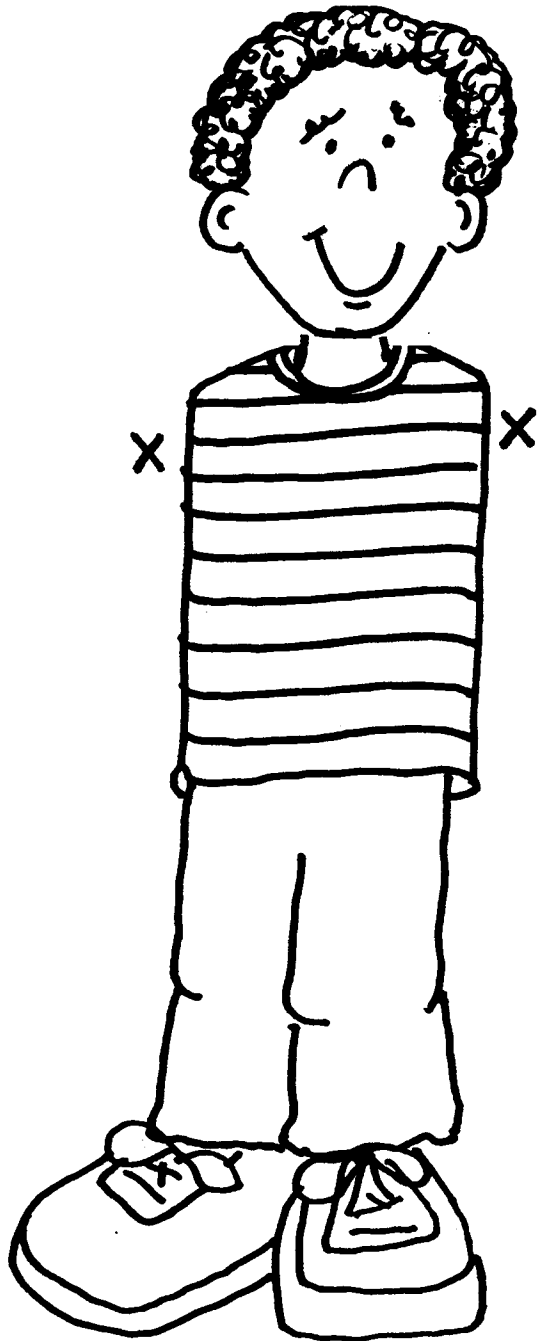
What can this girl share with someone who needs food or clothes?

Children can glue items from the GF6 page to this girl's hands.



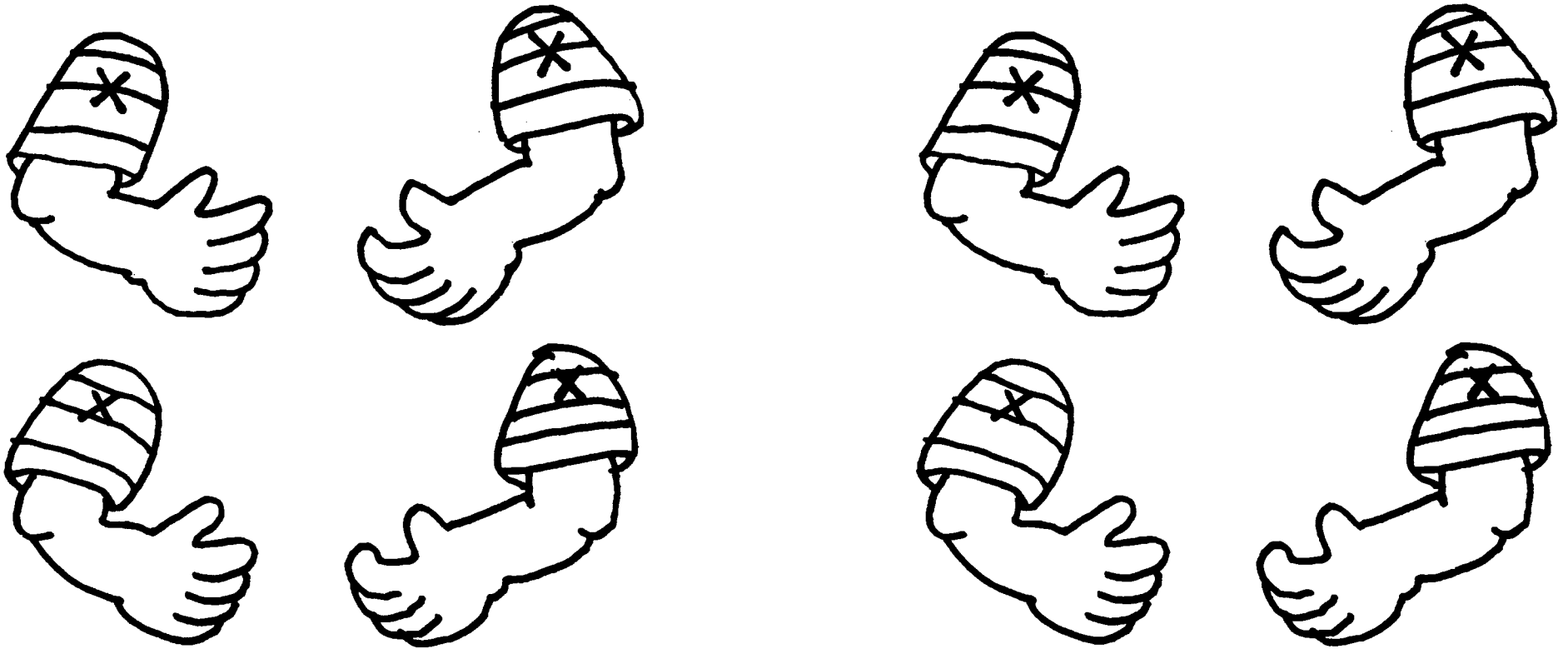
Do not merely listen to the Word... Do what it says. James 1:22

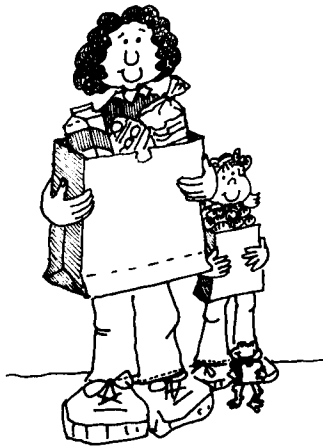
Share with people who need food and clothes.



Arms For Sharing

Cur the arms apart and fasten them to the GF9 children on each "X" with brad paper fasteners.

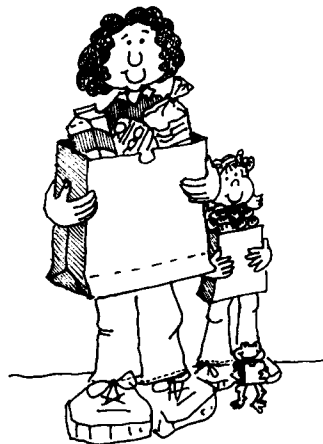




**Do not merely listen to the Word.
Do what it says. James 1:22**



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**Do not merely listen to the Word.
Do what it says. James 1:22**

Take-Home Bag for Sharing

Make a simple bag for each child from any size paper bags. Punch holes for the handles, and reinforce them with gummed reinforcements. Loop string or twine through the holes for the handles. Glue the GF11 picture and verse on the bag. Review the memory verse as the children work on their bags.





This is what I learned today!

Today we learned that James wrote in his letter not to show favoritism toward rich people. When we show them more attention, it is just to make ourselves feel good. God cares more about what is in our hearts than what we look like or what we wear. He wants us to be rich in faith, so we can be loving and help those who need food and clothes.

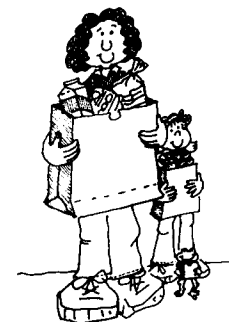
Today's Memory Verse:

**2's & 3's: Do not merely listen to the Word.
Do what it says. James 1:22**

**4's & 5's: Do not merely listen to the Word,
and so deceive yourselves.
Do what it says. James 1:22**

Don't show favoritism!

Help people who need
food and clothes.

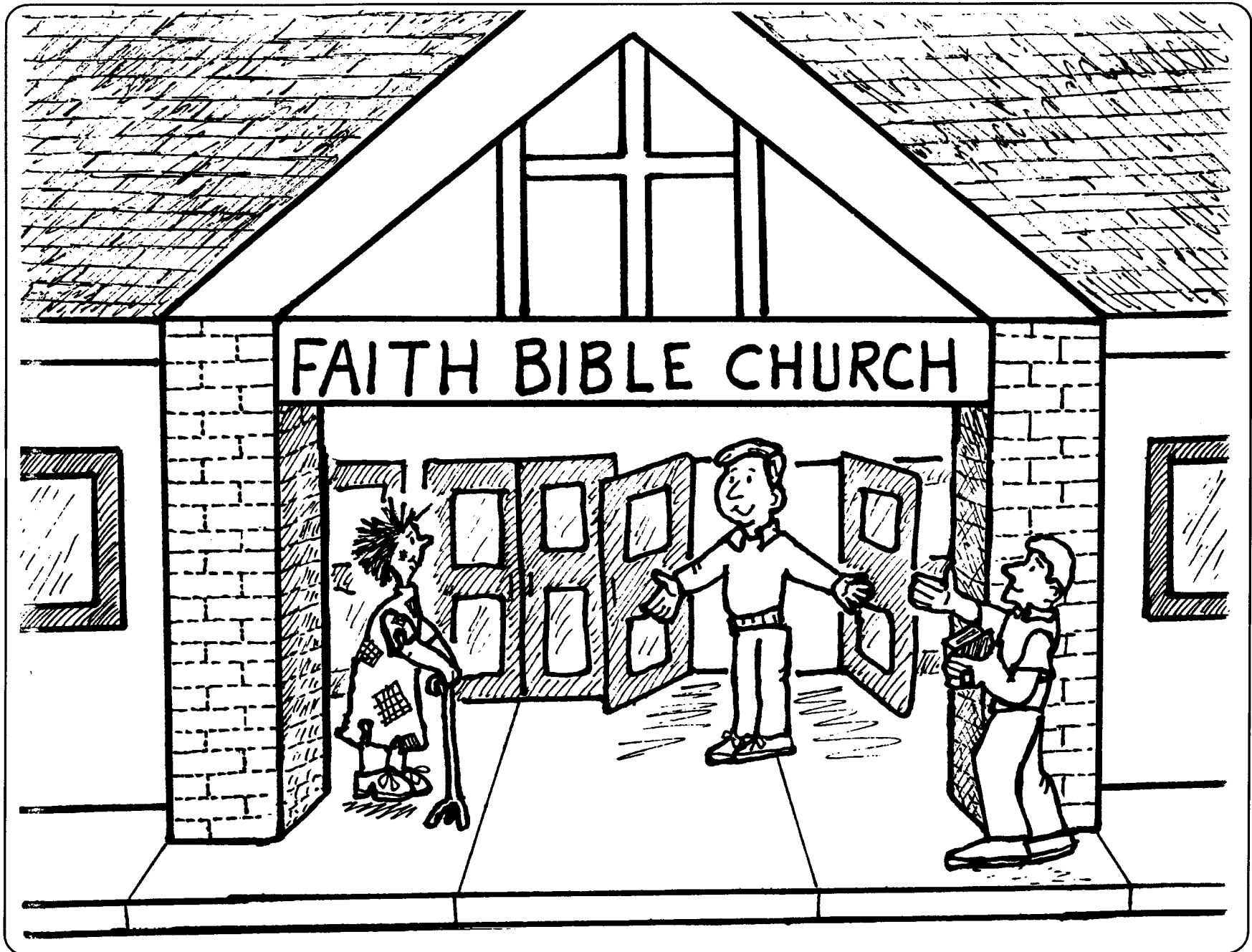


Think of someone in your church or neighborhood who needs help with food or clothes. Make a plan as a family to make a meal or in some way help a family in need. Make it a family project. Don't forget to pray first and ask God to show you the right family.

James warns us of showing favoritism to our friends or people who look good while ignoring the people who have practical needs in our church family.

James 1:22, Memory Verse Song
(tune: "Jingle Bells")

Do not just, hear the Word (or, "listen to the Word")
But do what it says.
James one twenty-two says if you do,
You will be blessed.
(Repeat)



When new people come to our church, do we show favoritism to them based upon how they look?