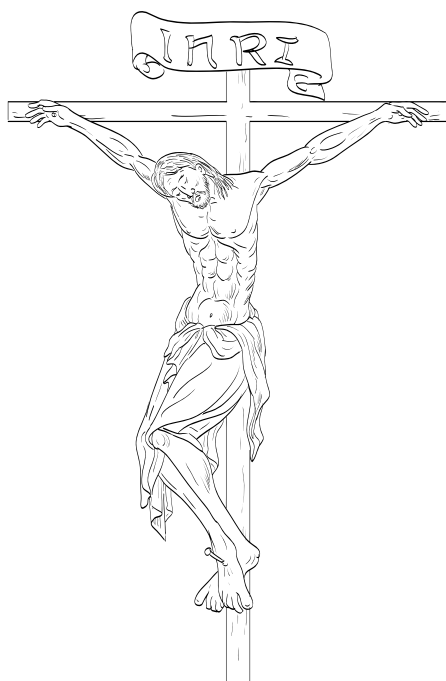


LENTEN PRAYER STUDY

INTO YOUR HANDS, FATHER



LITTLES RESOURCE GUIDE

2024

This Littles Resource Guide is designed for elementary children.

This guide is written by Sara Racicot and goes along with the Parish Lenten Study designed for adults based on the book *Into Your Hands, Father* by Fr. Wilfrid Stinissen.

Contact Sara Racicot at dandelioneyesstudio@gmail.com with questions or for speaking or teaching requests for this study.

Options in this Resource Guide

Lesson:

The lesson will be a different way to help Littles learn how to surrender, rely, or trust God this Lent. It will relate to the “bible verse to memorize”. Teach the lesson at an age appropriate level **at the beginning of the week.**

Bible Verse to Memorize:

Bible verses are helpful tools for Littles to memorize, as they grow they will be able to use Scripture during new moments, experiences, and feelings to direct their hearts back to the truth and to the Lord. Teach the bible verse each week with the lesson. Use chants, actions, simple tunes, or anything else that helps your Littles memorize the verse. Have your Littles illustrate it or **color the picture** related to it. **Repeat it often every day throughout the week.**

Take Care Prayer:

This prayer will help your Littles to practice surrender, reliance, and trust in God this Lent. It is based off of the *Litany of Trust*. **If you don't do anything else, do this with your Littles every day!**

Little Pirates Prayer:

This prayer is a good way to practice dialogue with God with your Littles. **This is something you can do at the end of the week, or practice daily.**

**In an effort to make this guide a good resource for many different ages of Littles, there will be material that feels younger or older than the Littles you are instructing, please feel free to adjust as needed. However, do not underestimate the power of simplicity and imagination, even for older children.*

Themes for the Study

Week	Theme	Bible Verse
1	God is trustworthy	"Trust in the Lord with all your heart!" Proverbs 3:5
2	God is always there	"I am with you always." Matthew 28:20
3	God is always good	"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8
4	God is powerful	"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you." Psalm 56:3
5	God is greater	"He must increase; I must decrease." John 3:30
6	God is strong	"Blessed be the Lord, my rock." Psalm 144:1
7	God is our Father	"Into your hands, Father, I commend my Spirit." Luke 23:46

Planning Notes:



Scan to download coloring pages
here to print and copy!

Littles' Prayer of Abandonment OR "Take Care Prayer"

Father,

I rest in your hands...

I do not need to worry or fear...

You are big and powerful...

You protect me...

You know what is best for me...

You make miracles...

You keep me safe...

You watch over me always...

You forgive me always...

You have big adventures for me...

You have good things to give me...

You love me so much...

Even when I'm sad...

Even when I'm scared...

Even when bad things happen...

Even when I'm confused...

Even when I make a mistake...

Even when I'm angry...

Even when I'm alone...

Even when I can't see you...

Even when I'm sleeping...

Father, I love you so much.

I believe you take care of everything.

Thank you for being my Father.

Hold hands out & open for the Father to hold

Take Care of Me!

Cross hands like hugging yourself or
fold hands straight pointing to Heaven

You Take Care of Me!

Amen.

Little Pirates Prayer Method: ARRR (Prayer Aid)

Use this method for Littles, simplifying it as you can to make it more age appropriate and adding to it as you need to for older kids.

Acknowledge:

- Did you know Jesus is looking at you and you make Him so happy? Close your eyes and imagine what Jesus looks like as He looks at you right now. What are His eyes like? What is His smile like? How does He feel?
- How do you feel right now? Can you name an emotion or describe what your body feels? Happy, excited, nervous, tired, angry, etc.?

Relate it to Jesus:

- Remember Jesus loves to listen to you.
- Tell Jesus, "Jesus, I am _____ right now."
 - (If they can't identify how they are doing at the moment, suggest this: Talk to Jesus about what is going on today. What fun things have you done? Who was someone you have seen today? What was a favorite moment you have had today?)

Receive from the Lord:

- Be very quiet and still. Remember Jesus is here with you.
- What do you hear Jesus saying to you? What can you imagine Him saying to you?

Respond back to Him in love:

- Say: "Thank you for looking at me. I know you love me."
- Thank Jesus for what He said to you or your favorite thing about Him.

Week 1: Ash Wednesday

Lesson: God is trustworthy.

This study is all about surrender. For Littles, that means learning what it means to trust God, our Father. Choose a way using the following to explain what trusting God means for the age level of Littles you have.:

Trusting God means...

- **We believe He loves us and will take care of us.**
- Even when we are afraid, we believe we are safe and will be okay because God is bigger, stronger, and more powerful than anything of which we are afraid.
- We believe God is good and in charge, even when we don't understand right now.
- We know we are always loved and never alone, no matter what.

Trusting God makes us happy and brave because we walk with confidence and knowledge that we are God's and He is ours.

You can use the image of handing your favorite thing to someone else to take care of it. Explain how when you trust someone you know they will take care of it even if it is so special. With God, we trust Him so much that we hand Him ourselves, our hearts, to take care of us and we know He will.

Continued on next page...

Bible Verse to Memorize: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart!"

Proverbs 3:5

Coloring Activity: Depending on age, encourage Littles to draw in the heart what is going on in their heart that they want to give to God in trust.

Take Care Prayer

Little Pirates Prayer

Trust in the Lord



with all your heart!

Proverbs 3:5

Week 2:

Lesson: God is always there.

God is always with us. He is God so He can be with us all the time and everywhere. This means that we never have to be afraid or alone. We can never hide from God or go too far that He can't find us.

Ask: Where is a very far place or a place that you might try to hide? Allow the Littles to answer things like-mountains, under your covers, another state, etc. Explain that even in those places God is with you!

In the Bible (Psalm 139) we hear that God is with us when we sit and when we stand, when we travel, when we sleep. He is behind us and before us. God's hand guides us, holds us, and rests upon us.

Pray: Close your eyes and imagine God. What is He like? Do you know He loves you? Now close your eyes and imagine yourself anywhere you want (your bedroom, a scary place, a fun place, school) and imagine His hand resting on your head or shoulder or holding your hand. How does it feel? God's hand is always upon you and always guiding you even when you are alone or scared. This means we can ALWAYS trust God because he will ALWAYS take care of us no matter where we are.

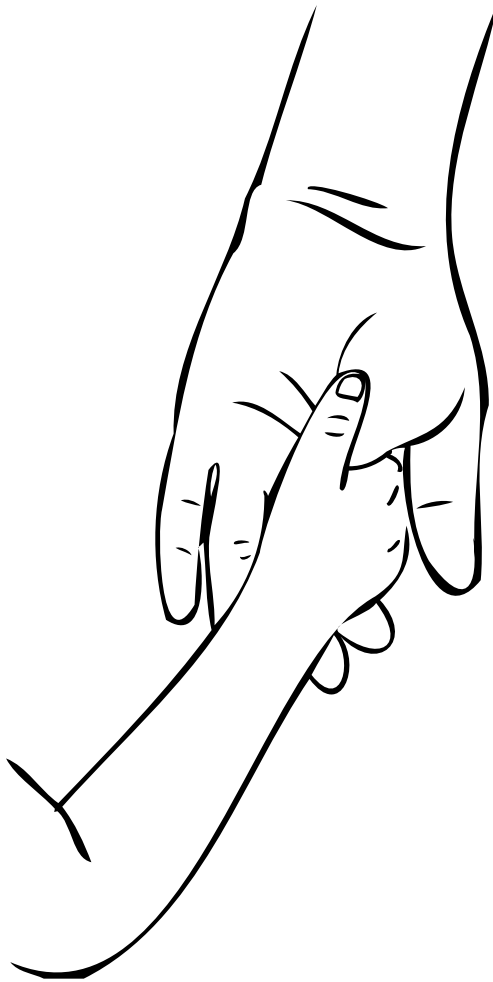
Bible Verse to Memorize: "I am with you always." Matthew 28:20

Coloring Activity: Color the following coloring pages and follow the instructions on the second activity.

Take Care Prayer

Little Pirates Prayer

I am with you



always.

Matthew 28:20

Draw God and you in a place that you are either alone, far away, having fun, etc. Think about how to draw what God is doing and what you are doing.

I am with you



always.

Matthew 28:20

Week 3:

Lesson: God is always good.

Do you ever have a bad moment? Maybe you're tired and forget to follow directions or you get frustrated and make a bad decision. We all make mistakes.

Even parents and adults can make mistakes! Sometimes parents and adults lose their patience, sometimes parents and adults forget important things and break promises.

You know who never does? God! God is always good! He never forgets His promises to us. This means we can always trust that God's ways are good and God's promises are good. This means we can ALWAYS talk to God and trust that He is always ready to love us. He never gets tired!

Listen to "Good, Good Father" by Chris Tomlin as you color and help your Littles to sing along to the refrain and bridge.

Bible Verse to Memorize: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8

Coloring Activity: Color the following coloring pages and follow the instructions on the second activity.

Take Care Prayer

Little Pirates Prayer

God is
ALWAYS
good.

Eternally

God, good Father

Yesterday

Today

Forever

Constant

He never tires

Unchanging

Jesus Christ is the same
yesterday



and today and
FOREVER.

Hebrews 13:8

Color the page and draw Jesus' face. Imagine what it looks like all the time when He sees you.

Week 4:

Lesson: God is powerful.

When we are afraid, it feels good to have someone strong to protect us. Think about when you are scared. Who do you go to? Some kids rush to their parents if they are afraid at night. We trust parents to be strong and powerful so we can be safe.

Do you know who is the most powerful? God! He is so big and powerful. He is bigger than the mountains. What is the biggest thing you can think of? God is bigger than that. God is so powerful. He is more powerful than all of the superheroes, or a race car, or a space ship.

Because God is so big and powerful, it means that anything that might scare you is very little to Him. Imagine what scares you as teeny tiny before God. He can protect you from anything! Nothing scares God. He is also so powerful that He can control things that we as humans cannot. He can calm a storm, He can walk on water, He can move mountains! This also means He can heal anything!

Tell the story of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:35-41. Talk about how scared everyone was and how Jesus showed them that even the wind and waves obey Him. He tells them they don't need to be afraid because a storm is nothing to His power. OR Choose a healing story to tell. Show how Jesus can use His power to heal the sick and the sinner.

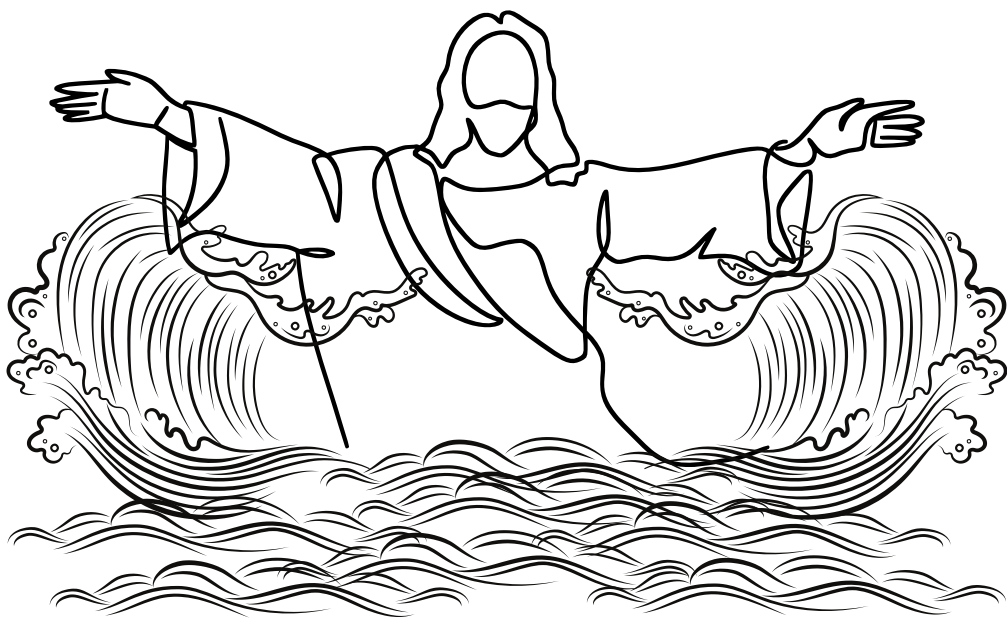
Bible Verse to Memorize: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you."
Psalm 56:3

Coloring Activity: Color the following coloring pages and follow the instructions on the second activity.

Take Care Prayer

Little Pirates Prayer

When I am afraid,



I put my trust in you.

Psalm 56:3



Tell Jesus what scares you. Write or draw them on His image so He can take them and have power over them.

Week 5:

Lesson: God is greater.

Demonstration:

1. You will need two clear containers (jar, cup, etc.), popcorn kernels, and one bag of popped popcorn. Do not show the Littles your bag of popped popcorn yet.
2. Show one container. Point out that it is empty. Say you are going to pour popcorn kernels into it. Explain along the way what it means to increase the amount. Increase it all the way to the top.
3. Then, explain that these are popcorn kernels. Popcorn kernels are great, but we can't eat them yet. They would hurt our teeth and tummies. If we can hand our popcorn kernels over to God and empty or decrease our container He can do something amazing.
4. Now, pour the popcorn kernels halfway out into the empty container. Explain you have decreased the amount. You've made more room in your container.
5. Bring the bag of popcorn out to show what God can do with the kernels. Explain that God takes what we give Him and does amazing things! He brings life to our gifts to Him.
6. Now say you are going to pour the popped popcorn into the original container. But ask if there is anything else you should do first. Try to get them to tell you to pour the rest out "to decrease it". Ask them why and help them come to the conclusion that the more you pour out, or decrease, the more God can fill it up with popcorn.
7. Explain that this is like in our own hearts. The more we can hand over to God the more He can fill us with good things and heal, calm, and bring us life. It can be scary to empty our hearts but God will always fill us with greater things.

Explanation: How do we let God increase and how do we decrease?

We think about ourselves most of the time. What do I like? What do I want? What is happening to me? We like getting our way, right? We like to be filled with what we want. But when we decide to think of others, and especially God and think about what God and others like, what they want, and what is happening to them, we decrease and we

Week 5:

let God increase. And when God increases, we find He can fill our hearts with things that are way greater than what we wanted.

We also can decrease by handing God what is in our hearts by telling Him or imagining handing them to Him. He takes anything we hand Him and takes it into His heart and places His hand on ours. We are left with a heart ready for God to fill with greater things! Tell or give Him your fears, your temptations, your memories that you think about, your wants, your worries, your complaints, anything!

Story: Read the story on the following page. It is an allegory of what happens when we decrease and how God responds with greater things!

Pray: Close your eyes and know that Jesus is looking at you and your heart. How does that feel? Now, imagine one of these: a fear, a temptation, a memory, a want, a worry, or a complaint. Think about that one thing and feel the feelings that come with it. Imagine where it is in your heart. Now imagine picking it out of your heart and holding it. Look at it and know that Jesus is looking at it too. How does it feel to show Jesus. What does He do? Imagine Jesus taking your thing from your heart and placing it in His heart, promising He will take care of it. How does your heart feel seeing and hearing this? Imagine Jesus now putting His hand on your heart. Stay with Jesus a little while. How do you feel? Thank Jesus for taking care of your heart.

Bible Verse to Memorize: "He must increase; I must decrease." John 3:30

Coloring Activity: Color the following coloring page and follow the instructions.

Take Care Prayer

Little Pirates Prayer

Week 5:

Story: The Pearls

A dad and his daughter were out shopping at a big box store. The dad is excited to tell his daughter that she can pick anything out in the store that she wants today. She is so excited!

They walk around the store and she looks at the toys, the dolls, the games, the action figures. She thinks about buying a new art set. They walk around the clothes and she sees shoes that light up, slippers with her favorite characters, and bright colorful socks. They go on to the food and she thinks about getting ice cream or candy or cookies or donuts!

Then, they go to the jewelry section. She sees all sorts of pretty things, but one thing catches her eye and her heart. She sees a plastic pearl necklace, just like the one she had seen on tv and on her favorite princess. She immediately knows, this is what she wants! She hands it to her father and asks, "can I have this?" He smiles and says, "of course!"

When they return home, the little girl shows off her necklace to anyone she can. She wears it everywhere and never takes it off. She wears her necklace to soccer games, swimming lessons, and in the bath tub. She even wears it when she sleeps. She loves her necklace.

The dad and daughter have a wonderful relationship. Every night, her dad comes into her room, reads her a story, prays with her, says "I love you," and kisses her good night. Every night.

One night, after months of wearing her necklace, after many chips had worn away the plastic, bright white beads, and after the color had begun to yellow, and the cord had begun to fray, her dad read her a story, prayed with her, and then kissed her good night. But this night, he asked, "my daughter, I love you, may I have your pearl necklace?"

The little girl was surprised, and responded, "what? No. I love my pearl necklace." Her dad smiled, and said, "I know. Ok. I love you. Good night."

The following night, the same thing happened. He read her a story, said prayers, and kissed her good night. Then asked again, "my daughter, I love you, may I have your pearl necklace?" Her response was the same, "I love my necklace! No." His was also the same, a smiling "I know. Ok. I love you. Good night."

Night after night, the same thing happened. He would ask and she would refuse. His response was always the same, with a smile, "I know. Ok. I love you. Good night."

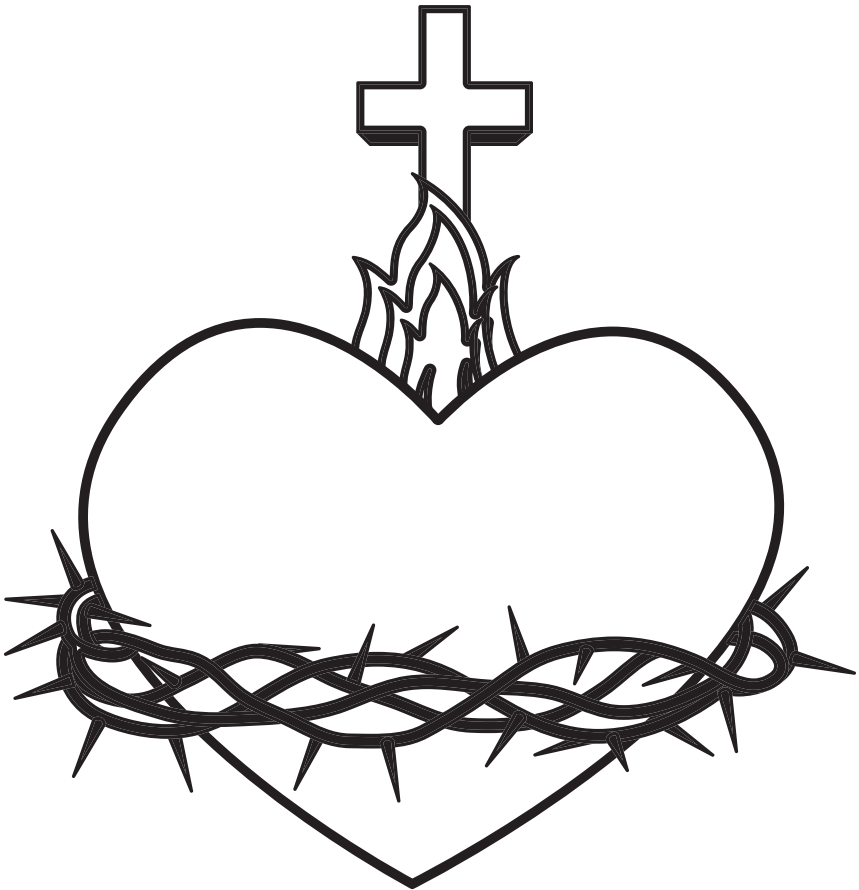
Finally one night, the little girl began to be angry and when her father, again, asked her for her pearl necklace, she responded, "Dad! Stop! I love my necklace! Don't ask me again!" Her father, responded, smiling, "I know. Ok. I love you. Good night."

That night, and the following day, the little girl thought and thought about how strange it was that her dad would want her necklace. "He loves me. He would never hurt me or take something from me. Why does he want my necklace? Is he just being silly. My dad is silly sometimes. I love my dad. Maybe he really wants it? Maybe he wants to fix it?"

The next night, before her father could ask for her necklace, she stopped him. With tears in her eyes, and squeezing courage in her fist, she held her other hand tightly clasped against her necklace, still hanging on her neck. In almost a whisper, she said to her father, "dad, you can have my necklace." and pulled it off and handed it to him. With a beaming smile on his face, her father, quickly reached into his pocket and opened a jewelry case to present to his sweet daughter. From out of the long, velvet box, shone the brightest, most beautiful real pearls she had ever seen. These had no chips. These had no frays!

He explained, with a tear in his eye, "My daughter, I love you. I would never take from you. But, until you had room on your neck, I couldn't give you these!" He laughed as he put the new pearls around her neck. They both hugged and she felt like the most beautiful, special, and loved person in the world.

I must decrease;



He must increase.

John 3:30

Color Jesus' heart and draw or write what you want to decrease from your Heart by giving Him.

Week 6:

Lesson: God is strong.

Sometimes we have hard moments in our life. Sometimes family members get sick. Sometimes we struggle with friendships. Everyone has hard moments.

Life has happy moments and sad moments. It has fun moments and boring moments. Life can have good moments and evil moments.

There is one thing that never changes. God can handle it all.

He is our rock. A rock is strong. A rock doesn't blow over in the wind or easily move if pushed. A rock can hold things up and strike things down. God is our rock when things feel shaky in our lives. God is our rock when we need Him to take care of difficult things. God is our rock when we can't handle difficult moments. Nothing is too strong or difficult for God.

Read and help explain Matthew 7:24-29 to your littles. Help them to imagine the storm and the houses and how the rock holds the house up. Explain that God holds us up at all times and no matter what happens we are always held up by our strong God.

Pray: Close your eyes and imagine God and you holding hands. He is there to take care of you. How does it feel? Now imagine that you are outside walking with God. Look all around you and see the sky. Suddenly a storm comes and the sky is dark, the winds blow and it begins to become dangerous. What does God do? Does He pick you up? Does He crouch down and cover you up with Himself forming a safe little shelter? Feel how strong God is. Feel how much He can protect you. Thank Him for doing this. As the winds die down give Him a hug.

Bible Verse to Memorize: "Blessed be the Lord my Rock..." (Psalm 144:1)

Week 6:

Coloring Activity: Color the following coloring pages. On the second coloring page, draw you and God walking amid a storm. Draw what your strong God is doing to take care of you and protect you.

Take Care Prayer

Little Pirates Prayer

Blessed be the Lord



My Rock!

Psalm 144



Week 7:

Lesson: God is Father.

This is a special week. This is a holy week. This week we follow along as Jesus gets closer to dying on the Cross for us. Something very special happens each day this week. As we go along each day we notice how much Jesus trusted that His Father would take care of Him even when bad things kept happening. (His friends hurt Him, He was so sad, He was whipped, beat, and had to carry a heavy cross.) Think about how much Jesus trusts His Father loves Him so much each day this week.

On Friday, we hear Jesus, while dying on the Cross, say, "Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit," and then He dies. When Jesus says this He is handing Himself to His Father. His Father is receiving Him and everything He has done and taking Him into a big hug.

God is our Father too. He loves us even more than our own dads do! Amazing, huh? He cares about us so much that we are His whole world! He wants to be close to us, to have fun with us, to take care of us, and to be with us! We can be like Jesus when we say, "Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit," and give the Father a big hug!

Pray: Close your eyes. Know that God is here and with you. Imagine: How does it look and feel when you hug your mom or dad? Do you squeeze really hard? Do their hugs make you feel better when something scary or painful has happened? Are their hugs warm? Do you feel how strong they are with their arms wrapped around you? Now imagine God giving you a big, wonderful hug! How does it feel? Does he squeeze you? Does His hug make you feel safe? Is He warm? Do you feel His strong arms? Stay in His hug for a few moments. Let Him squeeze you. Now say, "I am in your hands, Father." Thank Him.

Bible Verse to Memorize: "Into your hands, Father, I commend my Spirit." Luke 23:46

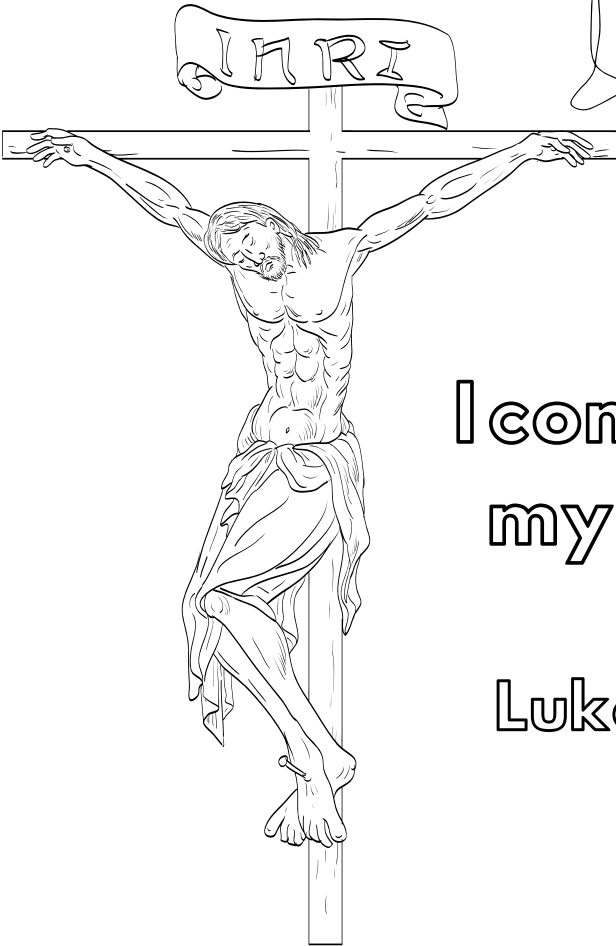
Week 7:

Coloring Activity: Color the following coloring pages and follow the instructions on the second activity.

Take Care Prayer

Little Pirates Prayer

Into your
hands, Father,



I commend
my spirit.

Luke 23:46

Into your hands, Father,
I commend MY spirit.



This is the same picture from week one when we gave Jesus our heart. This time, draw yourself in God's hands so He can take care of you and hug you.

