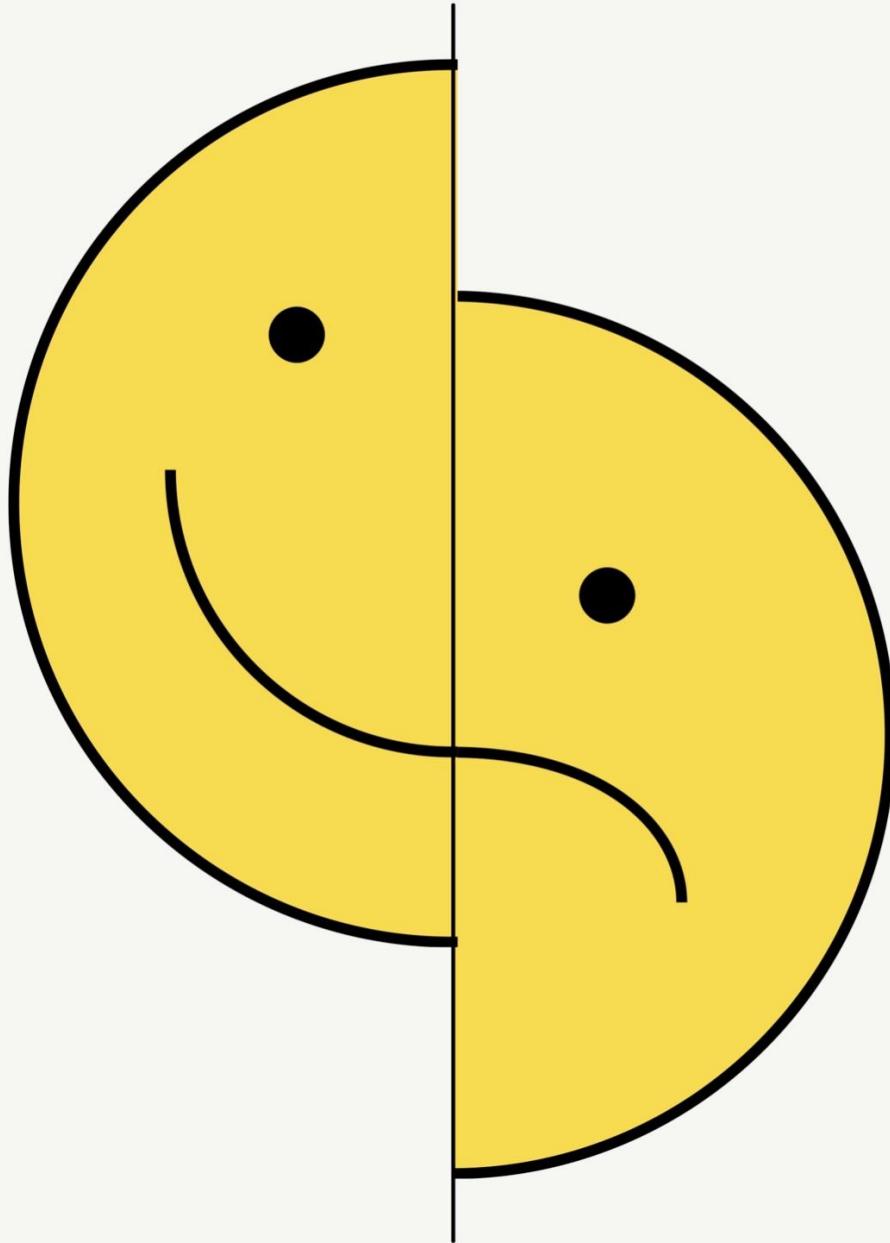


God, I'm feeling...



Vision

We are in the middle of one of the toughest times of our generation. Here in Sydney our kids are entering their 10th week of lockdown after about a year and a half of learning about this thing called COVID-19.

They are all experiencing grief and loss. Some more than others but they are all missing school, missing friends, missing sports, music, and other activities. Some children may have been affected by COVID personally and physically via family members or even themselves contracting the disease but they ALL are experiencing new anxiety as they hear people talking about COVID, see adults wearing masks everywhere and take on the worry they feel around them. They will all express this in varying ways. Very young children may fear literal giant enemy bugs coming to knock on their doors, older children may be worried about family becoming sick and older ones may feel as though their lives will never feel normal again.

They are feeling some feelings right now and we know that God is right there with them. He has known great sadness and great joy and meets them however they are feeling.

This two week series aims to help children identify how they are feeling in this season and to talk about it with their parents and more importantly with God.

It is important to note that we are not trying to tie their feelings in neat little bows. Feelings often don't like it when you do that! We are trying to name them and take them to God. While it is true that Jesus has put an end to sadness, we will see in the story that he embraces it fully. Also, while we see great goodness in being happy, it is not the only good and right emotion.

It is my prayer that as you teach our children this program that you too would be blessed and learn more about God. It's been a tough time for all of us.

Erin

How to Use the Program

Each week you will find some information/suggestions about ways you could structure and deliver each segment of the program. You are very welcome to copy these ideas entirely BUT you are also very welcome to use your own creativity. If you have a great idea then please run with that!

Week 1 : God, I'm Feeling Sad

This week we have an opportunity to lament. To lament is to cry out to God in sadness. To tell him about how you are feeling when things are not right and to ask him to hear you and act. There are many Psalms of lament and even a book about it! We are going to encourage children to name the things that might be making them sad and to ask them to take them to God in prayer. We are also going to hear the story about how Jesus was sad when his friend Lazarus died.

Big Idea : *I can take my sadness to God and he is powerful to listen, comfort and act.*

Intro/Activity

Welcome children as they come in and ask them about anything interesting they did that week. Wait till most children have arrived before going to the next section.

Leader - Good morning everyone. It's lovely to see you. Thankyou for coming. Today we are going to be learning about God and feelings.

Who can tell me a book where we can learn about God? (child to answer) The Bible! Yes!
Who can tell me a kind of feeling? (one child answers at a time)
What might it look like if you were feeling _____? (get children to demonstrate face or action)
What might you do if you were feeling _____?
(repeat for a few different emotions: happy, sad, angry, surprised, confused, frightened.)

Today we are going to be learning about feeling sad. Has anyone ever felt sad? Show me a sad emoji or sad face if you have ever felt sad. I'm going to give you a minute to share with someone sitting with you, a parent or a brother or sister about a time you felt sad.
(wait for a minute)

I hope you had someone you could share that sad story with just now, but did you know that we can share our sad feelings with God anytime? It's true! In the Bible lots of people share their sad feelings with God through words, prayers and even songs. Why don't you take another minute to tell that sad story again to God. You can whisper it to him where you are sitting, you can shout it out, sing it or write it down in a book. God will see it no matter how you tell it to him.
(wait for a minute)

We can take our sad feelings and sad stories to God because we know that he listens, he comforts us and he acts. This song that we're going to hear tells us exactly that. Lets listen together.

Song - Be Strong and Courageous (pre-recorded video)

Encourage children and their families to sing along.

Memory Verse/Action Rhyme

Introduce memory verse reminding the children that when we tell God about our sadness he listens, comforts and is strong to act. Today's memory verse reminds us that God is listening to us and he remembers what he tells us. Use actions to help as a memory aid.

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. Psalm 56:8

You keep track of all my sorrows. (Point in front of you like you are counting)

You have collected all my tears in your bottle. (Hold hands together like you are holding a bottle.)

You have recorded each one in your book. (Write in an imaginary book)

Psalm 56:8 (Hold up the appropriate numbered fingers)

Story: John 11 1-44

In our memory verse it says that God has collected all our tears in a bottle. Did you know that God feels sadness too? There is a story in the Bible where Jesus gets very sad when one of his very good friends gets sick and dies. You can find it in a big Bible in John Chapter 11 which you might like to read later with an adult but today I'm going to read the story from a kids bible. You might have this one at home so you can follow along with the pictures or watch them up here on the screen.

Read The Big picture story Bible: Part 19 A Dead Man Raised to Life.

After the story: Did you notice some people were sad in that story? Did you notice Jesus was so sad that he was crying? Even though he knew that Lazarus would be raised from the dead he was still so sad and he told his Father God all about it. We saw that God listened, he comforted Jesus and he acted to bring Lazarus back from the dead.

We're going to break up into our different groups for discussion time now.

Discussion Questions

The groups will separate now. Questions will be posted into the chat. Encourage parents to read and answer the questions with their children.

Juniors: Preschool-Year 3

1. Retell the story. Ask, can you tell me what happened in the story?
2. Why was Jesus sad? *Because he saw his friends were sad and Lazarus had died.*
3. What happened to Jesus when he was sad? *He cried and went to go see Lazarus. He prayed to God thanking him for hearing him and then asked him to act.*
4. Why was Jesus sad even though he knew what would happen to Lazarus? *He was responding to a sad thing. It was the most appropriate emotion. He came to save us from death because it is the saddest thing.*
5. What can we do when we are sad? *Lots of things, you might have to prompt "talk to God about it."*
6. What would you do if you saw your brother or sister crying because they were sad?

Seniors: Year 4-6

Encourage children to bring along their Bibles and read the story together from John 11.

1. Reread the story.
2. Why doesn't Jesus go to see Lazarus immediately?
3. What did both Mary and Martha say to Jesus? Why would they think that?
4. Why was sad even though he knew what would happen to Jesus?
5. We've been learning that when we talk to him God hears, he comforts and he acts. How do we see that in this story? Have you ever experienced that in your life?
6. Does God always act? Does he always give us what we ask for? Why or why not?
7. What can we do when we are feeling sad?
8. What can we do when we see someone else who is sad?

Prayer

When Jesus was sad he talked to God about it. Jesus knew and we know too that when we talk to God he hears us, he comforts us and he is strong to act. There might be some things that you are feeling sad about right now. You might be missing friends, or school or things you usually do. You might be missing grandparents or cousins or just going to the beach or the shops? Ask if anyone would like to share some things that they are missing or sad about right now.

I'm going to pray for those things right now and then we are going to spend some time praying with our families. You might like to go grab a parent if one isn't nearby.

Pray for sad feelings asking God to hear, comfort and act. Try not to jump to asking God to act. Just let him know that you're feeling sad. The prayer might go something like this:

Father God, we are feeling sad right now.

We are missing our friends and family. We are missing lots of things that we used to do.

We are feeling a little bit scared about the future and we don't know when things will feel like they used to.

It doesn't feel very nice to feel sad.

We don't like it. (pause)

But we know that you hear us, you comfort us and that you are strong and can act.

Please be with us when we feel sad.

Amen

Juniors:

Now it's time to pray at home. You might have printed off the prayer letter to God sheet. Spend some time writing or drawing a picture on the sheet and then you can pray together. Remember, God hears you whether you whisper, shout, write or draw a picture.

Seniors:

Can pray together as a group out loud or with a parent if one is nearby. They might like to write down prayer points in a journal or draw on paper before sharing.

Craft



Juniors : Sad Face

You will need:

- Paper plate
- Strips of coloured paper
- Textas, crayons or pencils
- Googly eyes or white paper circles
- "When I am sad" printout

Fill out the "when I am sad" printout. You might like to include things like hug my mum, have a cry, talk to God etc.

Colour your paper plate and stick paper/googly eyes to make a face.

Cut four long strips of coloured paper and concertina fold.

Glue arms and legs to paper plate.

Glue printout to the back of the plate.

Hang somewhere in your house to remind you of what you can do when you feel sad.

Seniors : Bottle of Tears



You will need:

- Glass or plastic bottle
- Small pieces of paper
- Pens
- Small piece of cardboard
- Piece of string
- Hole punch

Write today's memory verse on your piece of cardboard and punch a hole in the corner.

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. Psalm 56:8

Poke string through the hole and tie onto the bottle neck.

On small pieces of paper write the things that you prayed for. You may also like to write sad things that others have prayed for.

As you put the paper in the bottle you can pray for these things again.

Keep your bottle in a safe place and add to it whenever you feel sad. Be reminded that God knows the things that are making you sad and he is always listening.

You might also like to decorate your bottle with textas or paint.

Additional Craft: Psalm 23 Printout

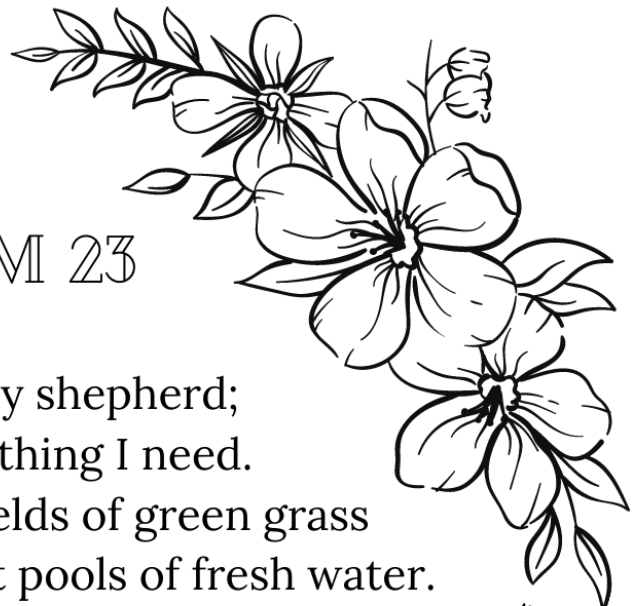
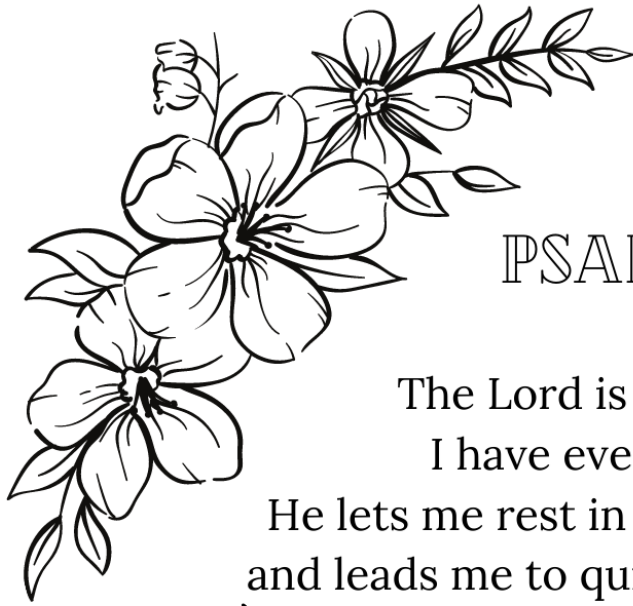
You will need:

- Printout
- Textas/Pencils/crayons/watercolours

Colour your little heart out.

When i am sad I can...

When i am sad I can...



PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.

He lets me rest in fields of green grass
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.

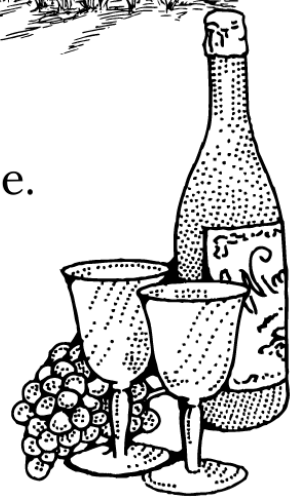


He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths,
as he has promised.
Even if I go through the
deepest darkness,
I will not be afraid, Lord,
for you are with me.

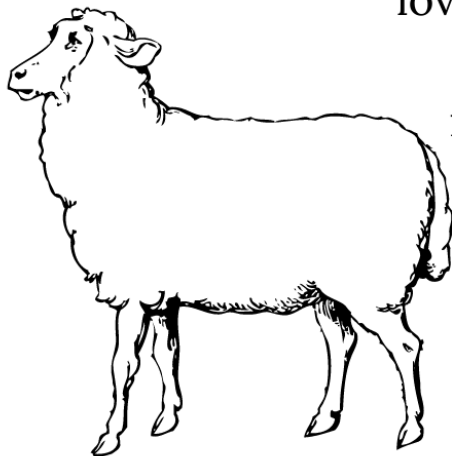


Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.

You prepare a banquet for me,
where all my enemies can see me;
you welcome me as
an honored guest
and fill my cup to the brim.



I know that your goodness and
love will be with me all my life;
and your house will be
my home as long as I live.



Week 2 : God, I'm Feeling Happy.

This week we are thinking about feeling happy and looking at the deeper emotion of joy which comes when we know that God is with us and He is never going away. No matter what happens we are safe in his care. We will look at the story of the Lost sheep and also think about gratitude. Thanking God for the lovely things in life that make us happy.

Big idea : *I am happy when I think of all the good things God has given me but I feel joy whether things are good or bad because I know that God is with me.*

Intro/Activity

Welcome children as they come in and ask them about anything interesting they did that week. Wait till most children have arrived before going to the next section. While you wait you can ask children to find a balloon but not to blow it up yet.

Leader - Good morning everyone. It's lovely to see you. Thankyou for coming.

Today we are going to be learning again about God and feelings. Who can tell me the feeling that we learned about last week? *Sadness*

Can you all show me a sad face?

Last week we learned that we feel sad sometimes for lots of different reasons and that even Jesus felt sad and cried. What can we do when we feel sad? *Talk to God.*

Today we are going to be learning about another very different feeling. I'm going to show you this feeling on my face and you can guess what it is. *Smile, laugh etc*

Yes! It's happiness. I feel happy. The Bible uses another word for happiness and that's joy. Joy is an interesting feeling because you can feel joy even when things are not going so well. Like we learned last week, sometimes things happen that are very sad but when we know that God hears us, comforts us and is strong to act we can have joy in our hearts knowing that he is always with us.

Have you got your balloon with you? Go ahead and blow it up or ask an adult to help. Once it's blown up, give it to an adult. If you haven't got a balloon, try using a soft toy or soft ball. Be careful of the things around you.

We're going to play a game called keepy uppy. The adult you gave the balloon to is going to throw it up in the air in a minute and it's your job to keep the balloon in the air without letting it touch the ground. Ready? 1, 2, 3 GO!

Let the children play for a few minutes.

Well, how did you go? Was it a tricky game?

It's very hard to keep a balloon in the air. There's lots of reasons why it might fall down. Feeling happy is a bit like keeping that balloon in the air. If you're having a good day you might feel like you're up in the air, you might have a birthday and up goes the balloon, you might be starting to

feel sad but have an icecream and up it goes again. But it doesn't stay up forever and soon enough something happens to make you sad again.

Feeling tired after that game? Yep, its hard work making sure you're happy all the time. It's impossible!

That's why, instead of happiness we need the joy that comes from knowing Jesus. We can be happy because God gives us good things but we can have joy because we know that God is with us all the time whether things are happy or sad and he has promised to never ever leave us.

We're going to sing a song now and you might like to get up out of your seat and have a sing and dance because this is a happy song.

Song - Lord, I Need You - Prerecorded Video

Memory Verse/Action Rhyme

Has anyone remembered the memory verse from last week? *Ask children to say the memory verse if they have remembered it. Otherwise go through it once.*

We have a new memory verse this week. It's a song. Philippians 4:4
Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

 [Rejoice in the Lord Always + more kids videos](#)

Don't play the video but use this link to learn the song. It gets pretty funky later on but just do the first part. You can either just sing it through a few times or try to do a round. The person leading will just keep singing and children and parents at home can do the round.

Story: Luke 15:1-7

Our story today is all about why we can have joy. We can have joy whether we are happy or sad because we know that God is always with us. This story shows us how far God will go to look after and rescue the people he loves using sheep. Who can make a sheep noise?

If you've ever met a sheep you will know that they are quite silly and get lost very easily. They have a very happy life, they have grass to eat and water to drink and a shepherd to look after them and keep foxes away so they don't get eaten. Let's see what happens to a sheep who gets lost.

Read The Lost Sheep from Stories Jesus Told.

After the story: The shepherd loves his sheep so he went to find the lost one and when he came back they had a big party. They rejoiced because the lost sheep was found. Jesus told this story to tell people what it's like when people turn away from sin and follow him. God is like the shepherd who goes out to find his lost sheep. God doesn't leave people alone or wait for them to find their way to him by themselves but he calls out to us and celebrates when we become part of his family. The Bible said there is rejoicing in heaven when sinful people decide to follow Jesus.

We're going to break up into our different groups for discussion time now.

Discussion Questions

The groups will separate now. Questions will be posted into the chat. Encourage parents to read and answer the questions with their children.

Juniors: Preschool-Year3

1. Retell the story. Ask, What happened in the story?
2. Who told the story in the Bible.
3. What do you think would happen to a sheep who didn't have a shepherd?
4. Why would the shepherd go and find his sheep?
5. Who are some people who are precious to you/think you are precious? What would you do if they/you needed help?
6. What are some good things that God has given you?

Seniors: Year 4-6

Encourage children to bring along their Bibles and read the story together from Luke 15.

9. Reread the story.
10. Who is telling the story?
11. Who is he telling the story to?
12. What does repentance mean?
13. There are two more stories about lost things in this chapter. Do they say the same thing?
14. How do you think God acts like the shepherd to come and find people in real life? What does it look like in your life?
15. What are some good things that God has given you? Can you think of any sad or hard things that God has used in your life to give you joy in knowing that God is with you? Are sad things always bad?

Prayer

You will need to prepare a bag with some things that you are thankful for inside. Make sure you have enough room in your screen to be able to put the things on a table or shelf next to you so that the children can see them. Try to get an assortment of things, maybe a photo or drawing of a person, objects that describe ideas i.e a Bible might represent being thankful for your Growth Group or an umbrella might represent being thankful for rain.

In your discussion groups you talked about some good things that God has given you. It is important to think about the good things that God has given us and to thank him for them. No matter how hard life might get there are always things that we can be thankful for. These things don't cancel out the hard things but they help us to remember that sad things don't last forever and God is always with us.

Today I have a bag of things that I can say thankyou to God for.

Pull each item out one by one and talk about them. Put them on the table/shelf and then pray, thanking God for each thing.

Now it's your turn. You can use a shopping bag or paper bag. Youve got two minutes to run around your house and put some things into your bag that you can say thankyou to God for. Your mum might be too big to fit in your bag but you can say thankyou to God for people too!

Wait two minutes - play music

Now that you've got your items, spend some time with your family sharing your items and saying thankyou to God for these things. You might like to set up a table or shelf in your house to keep a few things on to remind you of what you can thank God for.

Play music while families are praying.

Craft

Juniors : The Lost Sheep

You will need

Lost sheep template

Cotton wool balls

Glue

Textas, crayons, pencils

Colour in the background of the picture.

Glue on cotton wool balls. Done!

Seniors: Thankyou Card

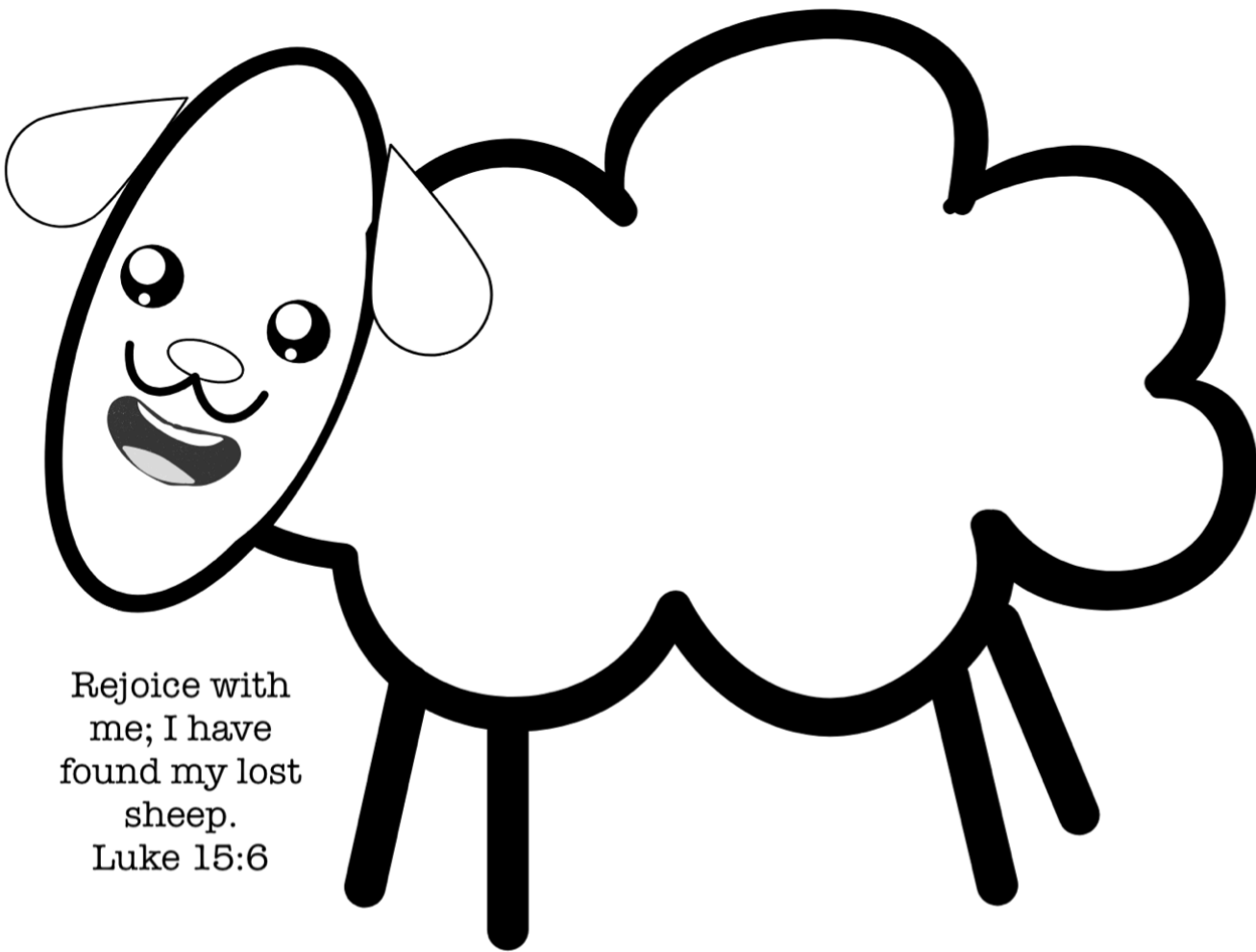
You will need:

- Card template OR plain paper
- Textas, crayons, pencils, watercolours
- Pen
- Optional - envelope, stamp.

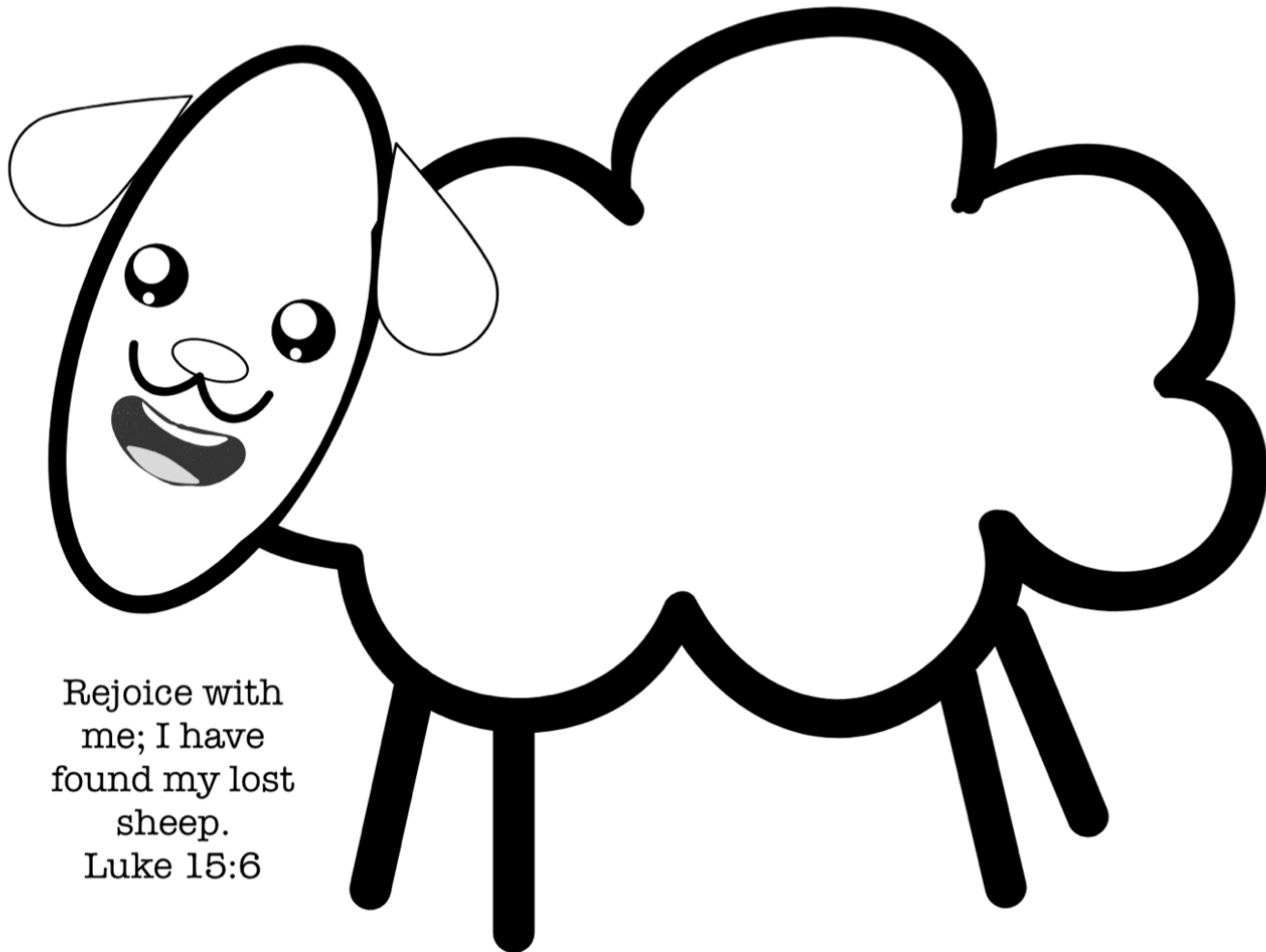
Colour in the card template or design your own card.

Write inside the card thanking someone for something they have done that you appreciate. Be specific and sincere. Fill up the whole card.

Deliver the card by hand or by mail. You might like to add something extra to the envelope.



Rejoice with
me; I have
found my lost
sheep.
Luke 15:6



Rejoice with
me; I have
found my lost
sheep.
Luke 15:6

