

Through Life's Maze



Theme: Jesus prays for his disciples (7th Sunday of Easter)

Object: A maze puzzle (One is provided with this lesson)

Scripture: I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name. John 17:11a (NIV)

Do you enjoy working puzzles? I do. One kind of puzzle I like is called a maze. You have probably worked a maze yourself. To solve the puzzle, you take your pencil and begin where it says, "start" and try to find an open path in the puzzle that will lead you all the way to the finish. Of course, you aren't allowed to cross through any lines. That would be too easy! A puzzle like this can be very difficult. Sometimes it can be very frustrating. Traveling through this maze, you will often have to change the direction you are going. You may find that the path you have chosen leads to a dead end. When this happens, you just have to back up and start again. When the puzzle gets too difficult, you may need someone to help you. Even though finding the right path that leads to the finish may be difficult, you will have a feeling of satisfaction when you finally reach the goal. Finding your way through life can be a lot like finding your way through a maze. Each day we have to make decisions and it is sometimes difficult to know which way to go. We may choose the wrong path and end up at a dead end. When that happens, we have to back up and start over again. Life isn't easy and it can sometimes be very frustrating when we don't know which way turn. Jesus knew that life in this world is difficult. That is why he prayed for his disciples when he knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. "I will remain in the world no longer," he prayed, "but they are still in the world. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe. No one was lost, but now I am coming to you and I ask you to protect them and keep them safe." How do we find our way in this world? We put our trust in God, our Heavenly Father, to show us the way. We have his Word, the Bible, to help us. Any time we don't know which way to turn, we can talk to him in prayer and ask him to guide and protect us. It may not be easy, but with God leading the way, we know that we will never get lost.

Father, as we search for the path that will lead us safely through this world, we place our trust in you and ask for your guidance and protection. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

SOCCKER MAZE: Set up a field of obstacles in a designated area and have children take turns kicking a ball around the obstacles. If the ball leaves the area, the child or leader can place the ball back at the same area where the ball left the maze and continue to kick to the end of the maze. Make sure all children get to play at least one time. Let children know that LIFE is a MAZE and to listen carefully to today's story.

POTATO (OR GRAPE) MAZE: Set up a field of obstacles as in the above game (or the same maze) for children to take turns pushing a potato or a small grape through the maze as quickly as possible. If 2 mazes can be set up, then the children can be divided into teams for the relay race. The potato or grape can be shoved along with a stick or a small wooden dowel.

MAZE RUN: A maze can be set up with chairs, tables, toys, blocks, books, etc for children to RUN thru the maze as quickly as possible - making all the turns and hurdles and to see who has the quickest "time". As children run through this "maze", they could also be told to pick up certain items along the way that would be objects or words for today's story time. IF children run the

wrong way and hit a "dead end", they must turn around and find a way "out" of the maze. Teachers -- use your imaginations and have fun with this "path" maze!!!

TREASURE HUNT: The teacher can have 10 places for the children to find "clues" at each stopping place in order to FIND THEIR WAY to trusting in GOD! The first "stop" that the teacher tells the children to go, will have a clue for the next place for them to find the 2nd clue and onto the 3rd clue and continue until they find their way to the final object which will be the BIBLE, to give them directions in life that will lead them safely through this world for guidance and protection!

FINGER PAINTED BIBLE: Give children supplies for finger painting a BIBLE in various colors if desired. With a paint brush or their finger or other objects --- encourage children to write B-I-B-L-E on their Bible painting. Other words can be written in the paint - words from today's lesson such as guidance, protection, trust, etc.

WOODEN SPOON TRUST: Provide each child a long handled wooden spoon for children to paint (with a very small brush) a face on the spoon section and a word from today's lesson. Tell children they can stick the spoon into a garden or a flower pot at home to be reminded of our lesson today.

TRUST BOOKMARK: Children can make a book marker for their Bibles, made out of card stock paper, markers, stickers and a hole punched in the top with yarn or a thin colored ribbon. Children can be encouraged to write TRUST, JESUS HELPS US THROUGH THE MAZE OF LIFE, etc. Children can draw squiggly lines on the book marker to represent a maze!!

KITE FLYING: Children can be given supplies to make their own kites with coloring the outer kite, adding thin dowel rods, etc (instructions can be found under google) and decorate kite from today's lesson ideas ... OR children can cut out a kite, decorate it with colored markers and stickers and add a very long curly ribbon to the bottom and hang the kites on the classroom wall. Each kite can have a different word from today's Bible lesson such as God's protection, God's guidance, Trust, Jesus, GOD's Word, etc.

PLAY DOUGH MAZE: Children can work together to make a maze with stop/dead end places. After a MAZE has been built, the children can take turns on the classroom table with very small cars, to go through the maze and see how many dead ends they come to.

In the World, but Not of the World



Theme:

We are called to be separate from the world - Seventh Sunday of Easter

Object:

A clear

bottle with a top, water, vegetable oil, food coloring. Fill the bottle about 1/3 full with water, and add enough brightly-colored food coloring to make it readily visible. Add vegetable oil until the bottle is about 2/3 full. The oil will float on the water, but when the jar is shaken vigorously, the oil and water will appear to become one. But, if left to stand for a brief period of time, (about 30 seconds) they will separate again.

Scripture:

They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. As you sent me into the

world, I
have sent
them into
the world.
John
17:16,18
(NIV)

There are two things in this bottle. Can you guess what they are? Colored water --- and oil. When we look at this bottle with oil and water in it, the first thing that we notice is that they remain separate from one another. Now, watch what happens when I shake the bottle. The water and oil appear to become one.

Have the oil and water really become one? Let's let the bottle stand for a little while and see what happens. Look! The water and oil have become separate again. That shows us that even when they were all mixed together, they were never really one.

This bottle is a pretty good picture of what Jesus wants us to be like in this world we live in.

Before Jesus was crucified, he prayed for his disciples. He prayed that as they lived in the world, they would not become part of the world. He wanted them to add the gifts he had given them to the world -- just as the water added some color to the oil -- but he did not want them to become stained by the world. He wanted them to remain the person God made them to be. He wanted them to know his love and to share that love with others.

This prayer is for us too. Jesus said that just as his Father sent him into the world, he has sent us into the world. We must live in this world, but Jesus has called us to be separate. Just as this colored water remains separate from the oil, Jesus wants us to be separate from the world.

Dear Jesus, help us, as we live in this world, to remain faithful to your call to be separate from the world.

Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams

Sermon Title: "In the World, but Not of the World"

Scripture Reading: John 17:6-19

WORLD WATCHES: Let the children look over a world globe. Tell the children that you will give them a place to find on the world globe. This can be done in teams or as individuals. Let children know that there are Christians ALL AROUND this world and how important it is to be IN this world but not OF this world. Have children put a small round sticker on each place that they find, as the teacher mentions different continents and countries, etc.

WATER BOTTLES: Give each child a small bottle to add the color to the water as well as the oil. Let children take the small bottles home to share the Bible story today and place on their dressers to remind them to not be OF this world. Children can each be given a small slip of construction paper to write today's Bible verse and tape around the outside of the bottle.

WORLD HUNT: The teacher can hide slips of paper with words from our lesson today that would make up a summary sentence about the lesson. Children can run and find the slips of paper and then work together to put the sentence in the right order and tape onto a poster board. This WORLD HUNT could be the prayer at the end of the lesson, if desired.

"IN THE WORLD" NAMES: Let the children each take turns or let a few children at a time go to the chalk board or to blank pieces of construction paper that have been taped around the room.

The children will draw a circle and add anything they wish to the "world circle" and write their name on the circle as ONE WHO IS IN THE WORLD BUT NOT "OF" THE WORLD.

POSTER WORLD AND CROSSES: Let the children (or the teacher before class time) draw a very LARGE WORLD on a full piece of poster board. Color the world as time allows and then give each child a paper cross to write their own name on and tape it somewhere on the world poster. Tell the children that there are children and grown ups ALL AROUND THE WORLD who are IN the World but not OF the World.

WORLD BIBLE BOOK MARKERS: Give the children supplies to cut out a book marker and add stickers or pictures of a world globe as well as drawing crosses and hearts, and let them write I WILL BE IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD. Give the children a ribbon to glue to the edges of the book marker, if desired.

WORLD MARCH: Let the children march around the "world" area that the teacher has marked off or the children could follow the teacher to the many parts of the world. The teacher will make signs representing various parts of the world to let children know that wherever they GO, they can be IN the world but not OF the world. At each "sign" in the world that the teacher has prepared before class time, the teacher can have the children sit down in a circle and share ways of being IN the world but not OF the world. Then continue the MARCH to another "part of the world" and do the same circle sharing.

EGG SHELL WORLD: Crushed up egg shells can be dyed for different colors and dried before class. Let the children draw a round world on a heavy piece of paper or poster board and add the colored shells for different parts of the world and title the paper... IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD.