

# Perseverance



Learning & Growing  
**STEPS**  
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## Contents:

Go to the Ant . . . . .	4
Young Louis . . . . .	6
Two Frogs . . . . .	8
If at First You Don't Succeed . . . . .	10
Prayer and Memory Fun . . . . .	13
Maze Fun . . . . .	14
Don't Give Up . . . . .	15
Get that Fish . . . . .	16
From Jesus—with Love . . . . .	19



If you fall, don't just lie there—get up and try again!  
Winners never quit, but quitters never win!

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# Go to the Ant

Tamerlane\* the Mongol ruler was in his yurt\* entertaining his generals at dinner. After the meal it was customary to tell stories, jokes, or sing songs. One of the generals asked him, "Which creature do you think is the greatest?"

"The ant," he answered.

"And why do you say that, great lord?"

"I once was forced to take shelter in a ruined building while escaping from our enemies who had forced us to retreat. There I sat alone many hours in total despair, wondering if I would live to see the dawning of another day," Tamerlane explained as he looked far into the distance as if reliving that dark moment of his life.

"Desiring to get my mind off of my hopeless situation, I fixed my eyes intently on an ant that was carrying a grain of corn much larger than itself up a high wall. I counted the times it tried again and again and again to accomplish this amazing feat." Tamerlane's face suddenly lit up as he got an inspiration. He announced in a loud voice, "Now hear me, my great generals. I will give a pound of gold to the man who can guess how many times it took the ant to carry that single grain up the wall."

All the men in the yurt guessed a number, but none of them came even close.

(Note: Students, can you guess how many times that ant tried to carry the grain up the wall?)

"Seventy times! The grain fell sixty-nine times to the ground; but the insect persevered, and the seventieth time it reached the top! This sight gave me courage at that crucial moment to not give up hope. The next day our armies rallied our forces and fought hard until the victory was won. I have never forgotten this lesson of perseverance. Imagine me—the great Tamerlane, conqueror of a mighty empire—taught by an ant, the most humble of God's creatures."



## Tamerlane

1336-1405

A Mongol chief who ruled a large area in Southern Asia from 1336-1405. (See Usborne World History book pg. 115 for a picture of him and a map of his empire.) He ruled his empire from the city of Samarkand. He invaded north India in 1398.



- How many times did the ant fall before he made it to the top of the wall?
- What lesson did that small ant teach this great Mongol warrior?
- There's a verse in the Bible that says, "Go to the ant... consider her ways and be wise" (Proverbs 6: 6). Have you ever seen an ant at work? Take some time to watch the ants when you're out. You'll see them do some amazing things, like carry things much larger than they are. They work very hard and don't give up.
- Talk about a time when you were like that ant and didn't give up trying to do a hard job.

\*yurt: a circular, domed, portable tent used by the nomadic Mongols of central Asia



# Young Louis

At the Paris National Institute for Blind Children, fifteen-year-old Louis and his friend Andre were lying on their cots in the dormitory after a day of learning basic practical life skills.

“Louis, what I admire about you is that you don’t waste time feeling sorry for yourself for being blind, like some of us here do.”

“Thanks, Andre, for the encouragement. There is one thing that I wish with all of my heart that I could do, though.”

“What’s that?”

“Read! There must be some method by which the blind can learn to read.”

“Have you tried any yet?”

“I have thought of and tried a hundred different methods, but none of them worked,” said Louis.

“Well, keep trying, maybe you’ll get it on the one hundred and first try.”

“Thanks for the encouragement. I will!” said Louis in a cheery voice.

“Good for you, friend. As the saying goes, it is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness. Oh, by the way, I think I know something you are going to be interested in. I heard that a man is coming to the Institute, who used to be a captain in the army. He is demonstrating a way that he used to send messages to his soldiers at night.”

Louis became very curious, “How does he do it?”

“I heard that he pierces a piece of cardboard from below so as to form bumpy letters on its surface that you can feel.”

“This could be the answer I’m looking for!” Louis said excitedly.

Louis went to the demonstration the next day and realized the potential of this method to help the blind to read.

It took him ten years to make this system practical. But he kept at it steadily, and at last he perfected it. And today the name of this blind boy is known throughout the world, and especially by the blind, for the system of reading that he created is called by his last name—Braille.



- Louis Braille tried many times to find a way for the blind to read. What would have happened if he had given up?
- How long did it take Louis to finish his creation of Braille? Would you have enough perseverance to continue working on a project for that long?
- Talk about something that took you a very long time to do. How did you feel when it was finally completed?



**Louis Braille**

1809-1852

French musician, educator, and inventor of a writing and printing system for the blind (1829). He lost his sight at the age of three.



# Two Frogs

Note: This poem is based on a story told by the famous Russian author, Leo Tolstoy.

Two frogs fell into a can of cream,  
Or so I heard it told.  
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,  
The cream was deep and cold.  
"Oh, what's the use?" croaked number one.  
"We're lost! No help's around!  
Goodbye, my friend, this is the end!"  
And sinking in, he drowned.

But number two, who wasn't through,  
Refused to compromise.  
He jutted\* out his creamy chin  
And dried his creamy eyes.  
"I'll keep on swimmin'! Where there's life  
There's always hope!" he said.  
"It really wouldn't help the world  
If one more frog were dead!"

For many hours he kicked and splashed,  
At last he stopped to sputter\*,  
"Why, look at that! I can hop right out!  
I've whipped the cream to butter!"  
So if sometimes your problems make you  
Feel you want to scream,  
Remember how the froggy churned\*  
The butter out of cream!

Don't give up when you're sinking  
And feeling down!  
Don't give up when you're sinking,  
You don't have to drown.



- What happened to the first frog?
- What would have happened to the second frog if he had given up?
- Imagine that you were one of the frogs in that can of cream. What would you have done?
- Tell us about a time you or someone else kept going and didn't give up even though it was difficult.

**Leo Tolstoy or Count Leo or Lev Nikolayevich**  
1828-1910  
Russian writer and philosopher whose great novels War and Peace (1864-1869) and Anna Karenina (1873-1876) offer extraordinary detail and profound psychological insights. His later theories of ethics and morality recommended nonparticipation in and passive resistance to evil.

\***jut**: to extend outward or upward

\***sputter**: to make a popping, spitting sound

\***churn**: to whip milk or cream in order to make butter





# If at First You Don't Succeed... Try Again!

My name is Marko. From the time I was three years old I had a dream, and this desire grew stronger as the years passed. It all started as I observed the activities of the older boys of our tribe, as well as my father and the other elders of our camp. I wanted to be a hunter, and though at first I was too young, as the years passed I anticipated the day when I too would learn how to throw the spear with speed and accuracy.

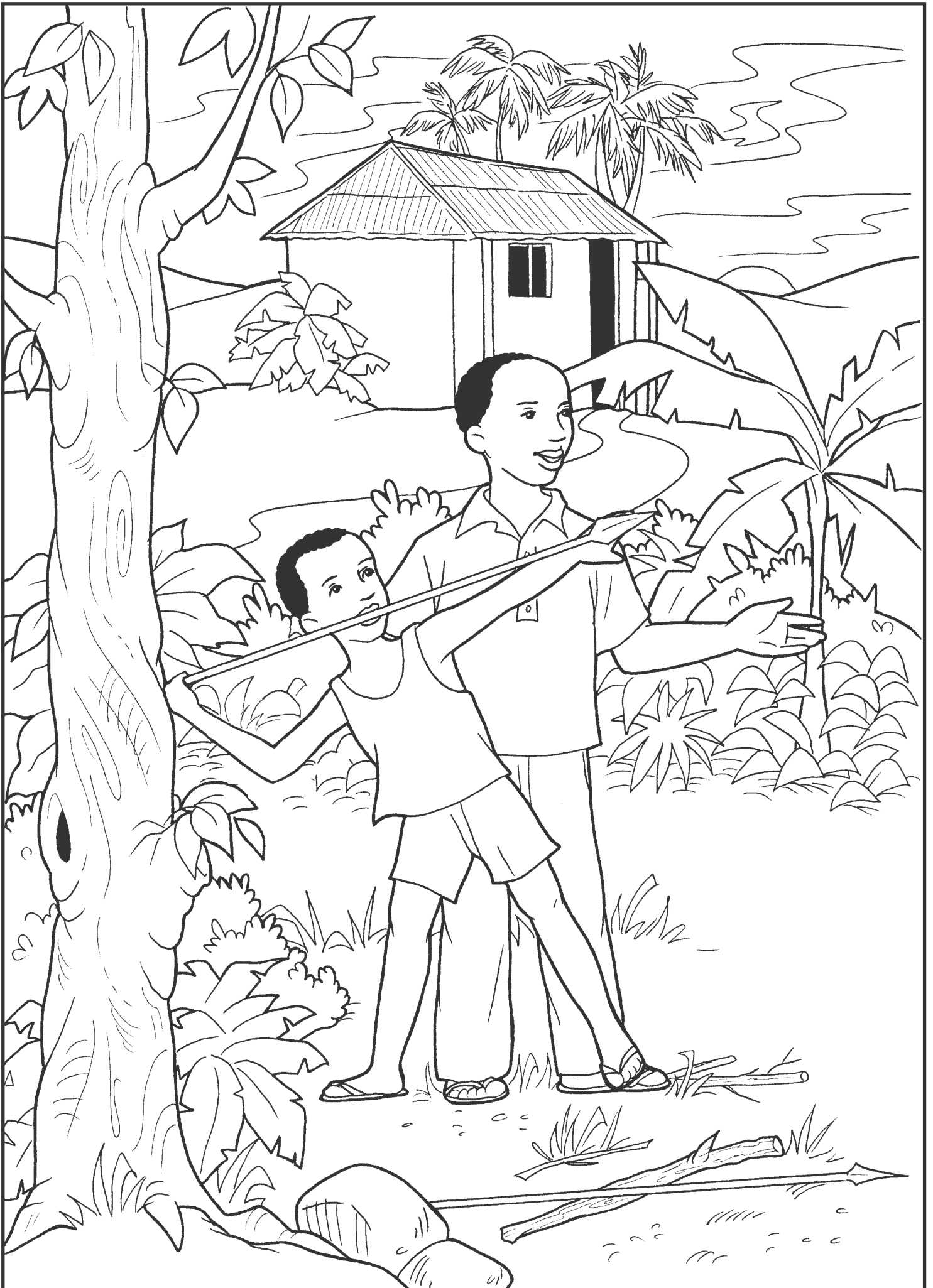
When I was ten years old it was time for some serious training to begin. I was the eldest in my family, and like most boys in my tribe I was expected to master the skills of hunting. I first needed to become accurate in my use of the spear. It was a special time for me and others my age. We were becoming men and celebrated with a feast of wild boar and the best berries and nuts. Sitting around a big fire, we played on drums and wooden instruments while some of the women and children danced.

Everyone in my tribe was hoping that I would become a great hunter like my father. This was my desire also. My father would not be young forever, and one day I would need to feed our big family. Being a good hunter would also give me a place of importance within our tribe, and broaden my marriage possibilities because I could be a good provider for my future family.

I was quite sure of myself at first, almost too sure. I thought that I would learn quickly, but learning how to hunt with great skill didn't come easily. My father had prepared a big slab of wood with different markings on it, which he had set against a nearby tree trunk. This was where I would begin practicing throwing a spear until I became competent\* enough to accompany my father and the older boys of our tribe on a serious hunting expedition.

"Stand straight and tall; steady yourself with your feet. Hold the spear securely—not too close to the head, but in the middle. Let your hand fall back behind your head, aim carefully, then thrust your arm forward with all of your might," were my father's instructions. I held myself high, pulled my hand back, tried my best to aim, then let the spear fly. My weapon missed the slab of wood.

"It's okay, Son. Acquiring skill takes practice," my father said to encourage me. "When I was a young boy like you I had to persevere as well, but don't worry, it will come. The older boys used to laugh at me because I was so clumsy. I was skinny too, and not very strong, and the weight of the spear was almost too much for me. Still I tried and tried again. I practiced as often as I could, and one day I succeeded. Soon after that I was skilled enough to join the men on a hunt. Now



many of the men from our tribe, and the surrounding villages, admire my hunting abilities, and I am able to teach others. Try again; I know you'll hit the target."

I tried again and missed the mark. I tried a third time without success. I tried a fourth time and missed once more. I tried five... six... seven times more, but the spear never stabbed the wooden slab that I was aiming for. I was so discouraged with myself and my inability to get it right. Throwing my spear down, I ran to the forest for some peace and quiet.

"Why can't I do anything right?" I thought to myself. "All of the other boys my age can throw the spear, why can't I? This has been my dream for so many years, ever since I was a little boy, and now that I have the chance to prove that I can do it, I'm finding out how much of a failure I really am. Will I ever be a good hunter?"

At that very moment I heard a voice in the wind, saying, "Anything is possible if you believe." I was startled, wondering if I was hearing things, but then I heard the voice again. "Remember what your father told you: you must try and try again until you succeed."

Then the words faded from my ears. I wasn't sure whether or not I was dreaming or just imagining things, but I pondered the source of those mysterious messages.

To this day I can't explain the voice that I heard in the forest. All I know is that I took the advice, persevered, and I wasn't disappointed. In a few more weeks my spear was hitting the center marks on the wooden slab almost every time, and then I too was allowed to accompany Father and the others on hunting trips.

It took quite some time, but eventually I did become a good hunter and a good provider for my family. My dream became a reality, because I didn't give up, but tried again. No matter how far away your destination looks, you will get there if you keep going, one small step at a time.



- What was the only way for Marko to become a truly good hunter?
- Why is perseverance important for us to develop? Name some Bible characters who demonstrated perseverance. Perseverance means to keep trying to do something in spite of difficulties, opposition or discouragement.
- Discuss some things that you can do to build perseverance in your lives. Everyone decide on one step they will take to be more persevering.
- What verses can you claim to help you when you feel like giving up?

# Prayer and Praise

Dear Jesus, some things are hard to do, but I don't want to be a person who gives up when things are difficult.—Because if I give up, I'll never make it! I know I need Your help and strength to persevere. Please help me, Jesus.

Amen.

# Memory Fun



All things are possible to him who believes.

Mark 9:23



# Pencil Page

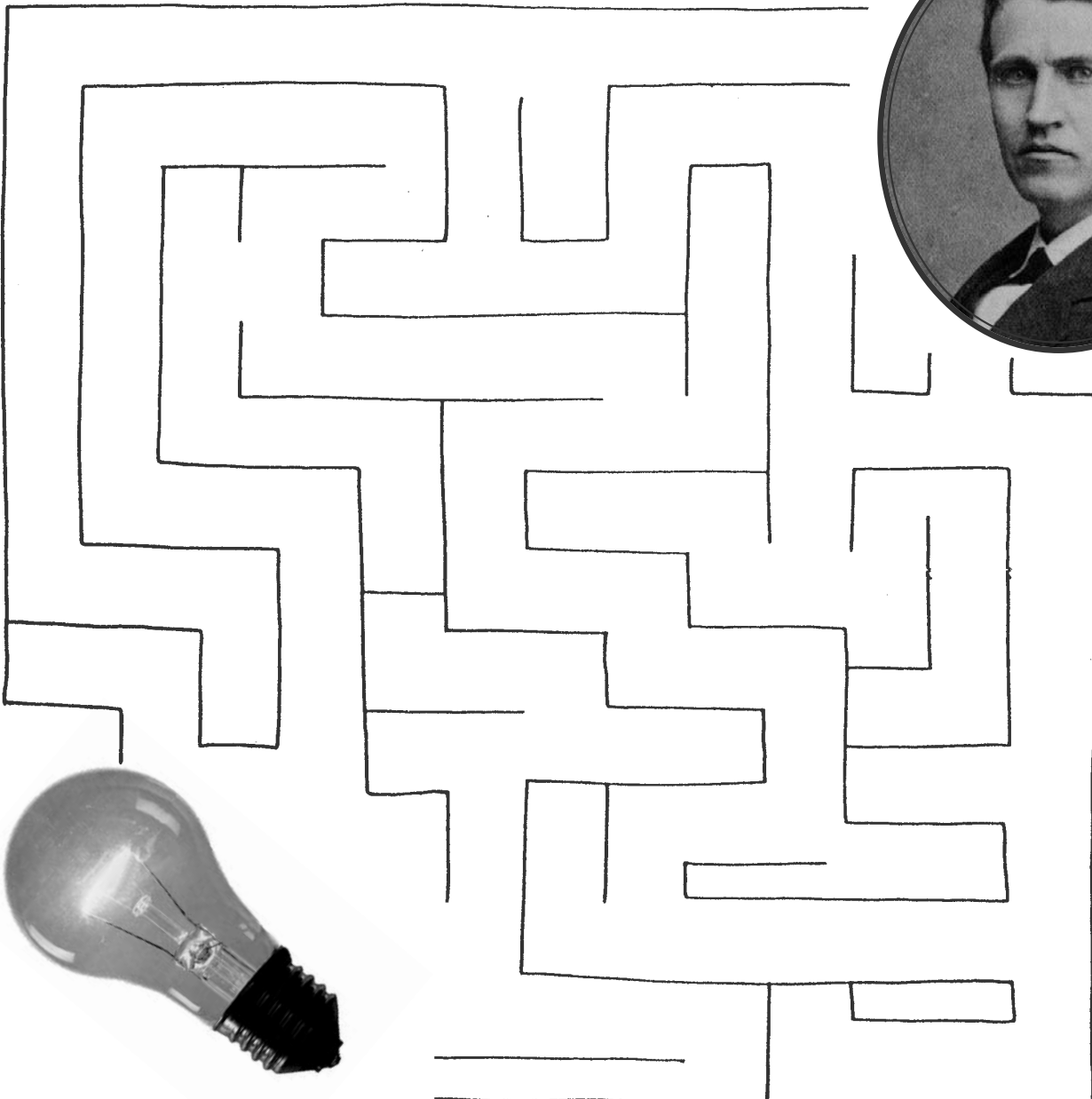
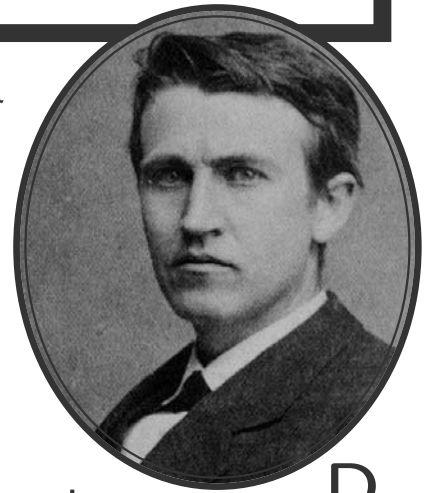
## Maze Fun



Read the story, then help Edison find his lightbulb.

Edison tried more than 200 different substances in attempting to find a filament for his incandescent bulb. Someone once said to him, "You have failed more than 200 times; why don't you give up?"

His answer was, "Not at all. I have discovered more than 200 things that will not work. I will soon find one that will." So he kept on going and kept on trying, till he was victorious.



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**Don't Give Up**



Read the text below each box and add your own illustrations to fit the story.

**1**

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that; at least no one ever has done it";

**2**

But he took off his coat and took off his hat, and the first thing we knew he'd begun it.

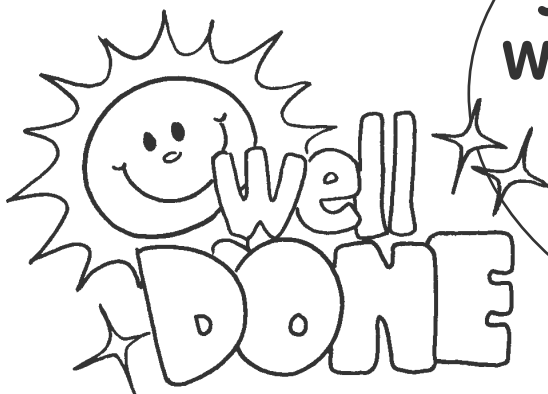
**3**

With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin, Without any thinking to quit it,

**4**

He started to sing as he tackled the thing that couldn't be done, and he did it!

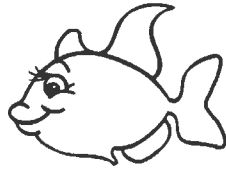
Find and circle words or phrases relating to perseverance that are in this Word Puzzle. There is one word on each line.



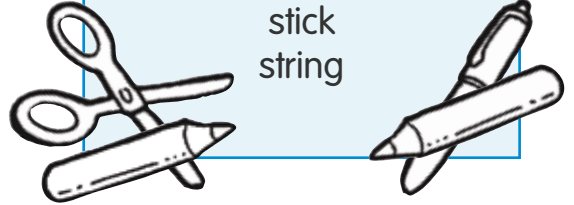
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# Make and Do

## Get that Fish



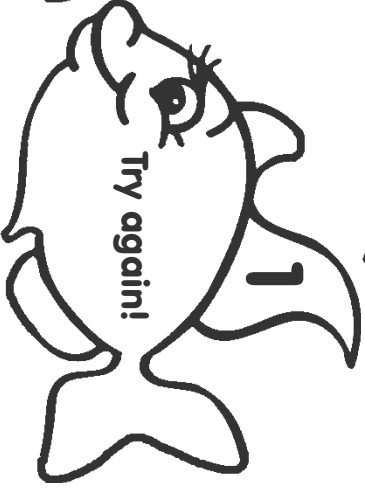
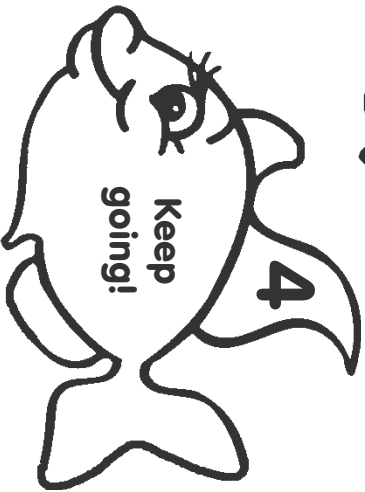
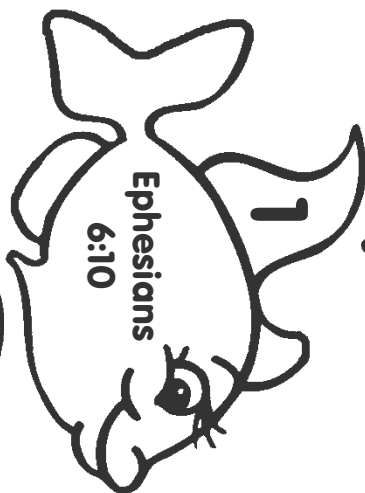
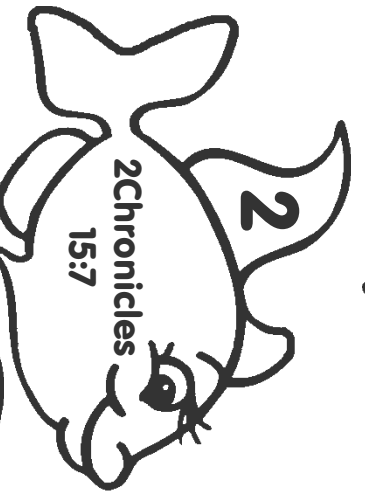
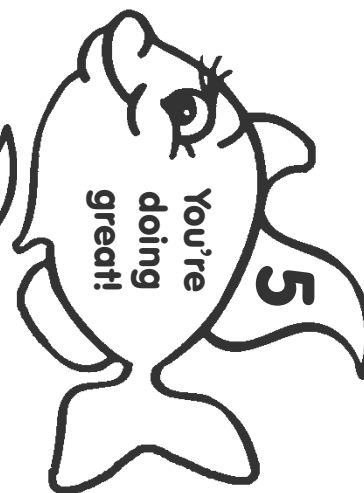
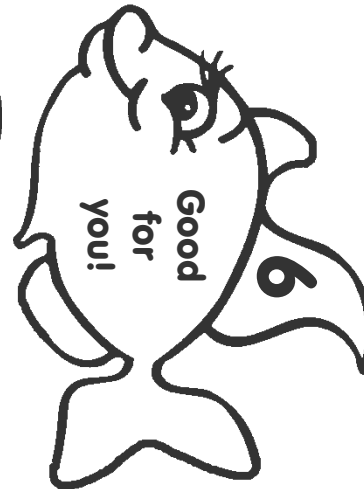
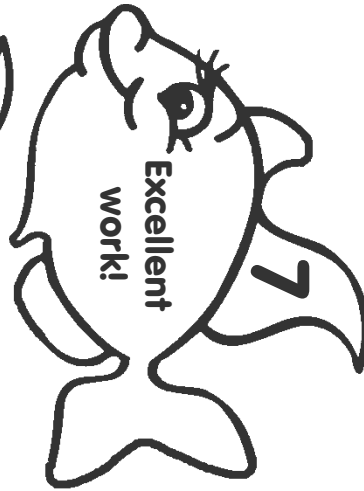
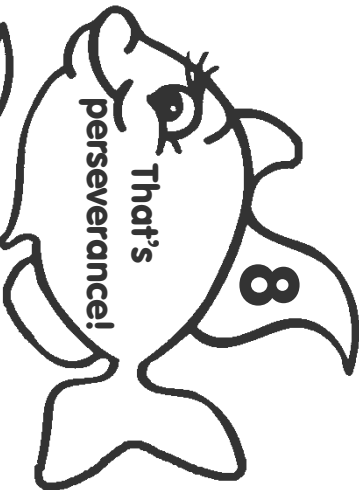
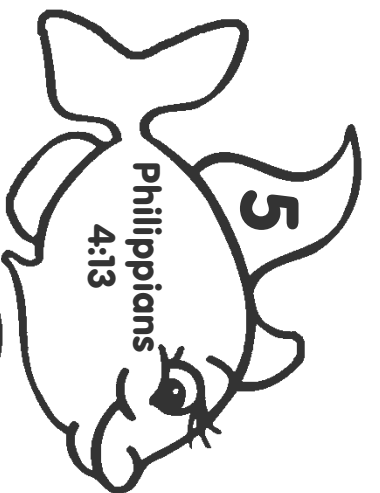
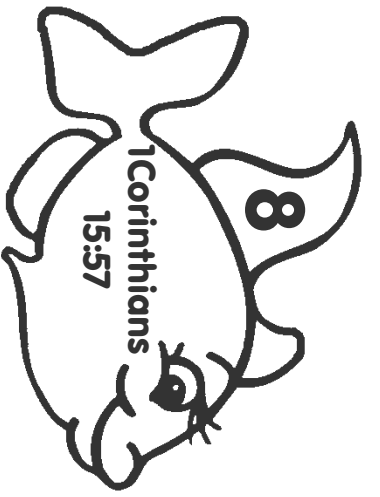
**You will need:**  
color pencils or crayons  
scissors  
glue  
magnet (if available)  
paper clips  
stick  
string



### How to:

- Color the fish on the next page.
- Cut out the fish and glue the matching ones back-to-back.
- Place a paper clip on the nose of each fish.
- Connect a string to a stick. Attach a magnet to the end of the string. (If you don't have a magnet, make a hook using a paper clip and tie it to the end of your string. Put the paper clips loosely on the nose of your fish so there will be a loop to hook into.)
- Place all your fish in a "fishing bowl."
- Now, go fishing! You'll need to really persevere with this game! First catch fish number 1. Read the encouraging message and look up the verse, then go fishing for number 2, then 3, 4, etc. When you get all 8 fish you win.
- Alternative way to play: Team up with a partner and put your sets of fish together. The first one to get all 8 fish out in order is the winner!





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# From Jesus—with Love



Are you learning something new and finding that it's not so easy? Maybe you're learning how to do math, or tie your shoes, or you're learning to ride a bicycle or tricycle. Keep trying! Please don't be sad if it's hard at first.

Sometimes you just have to keep on trying until you get it right. Did you know that when a baby horse is born, it is very hard for it to stand up and walk? The little foal has to try and try and try again. A foal who is learning to walk will try to get up, but then he'll fall back down because his legs aren't very strong. But he doesn't give up; he keeps trying and trying again. He falls down many times, but then he is finally able to stand on his little legs. He's a little wobbly at first, but in a few days he's able to walk and even run!

So if you make a mistake, or if you're trying to learn something new that isn't easy, just keep trying. If you try hard enough, you'll succeed in the end. Just like the little foal is finally able to stand and walk because he doesn't give up, you'll be able to get it right. Ask Me to help you, and keep trying until you make it.



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