

Positive Outlook



Learning & Growing
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Always remember to forget
The things that made you sad,
But never forget to remember
The things that made you glad.

By Amber Darley and Agnes Lemaire

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God is Good!

Two men set out on a rather long and dangerous journey to find a certain man they needed to see on some business. The two travelers were as different as night and day in character. The one's name was Trusting and the other's name was Doubting. They loaded their belongings onto a donkey, prayed for a safe journey and set out.

Trusting loved the Lord very much and believed that He was in control and knew what was best for them and would take care of them even when things seemed to be going wrong. Doubting, on the other hand, had a hard time believing in anything his eyes couldn't see. Trusting would often witness to his friend and try to encourage him to have more faith. "God is very good. I have been praying I and know that God is going to take care of us on this journey," he said.

On and on they went until at last the sun was about to set. Tired from their journey, the two men stopped in a small village where they looked for a place to sleep. Despite their many requests, not one person in the whole village would take them in.

"I thought you said that God was going to take care of us?" Doubting said to his friend. "Is making us sleep out in the forest taking care of us?"

"God must have some good reason that we don't understand yet," Trusting replied confidently. "God must know that the forest is the best place for us to sleep tonight."

The two men fixed their beds beneath a large tree just off the main road leading to the village. They tied the donkey up a little distance away and lay down for the night. They had no sooner drifted off to sleep under the peaceful stars when they heard a terrible roar. A wild lion was attacking the donkey. Fortunately they had not tied the animal very tightly and the donkey ran off braying and kicking into the forest with the wild beast chasing her. Afraid that the lion would return to get them if he couldn't catch the donkey, the two men quickly climbed up the big tree and lit their torch.

"Thank You, Lord, for being so good to us!" Trusting said at last.

"What?" snapped Doubting angrily. "How was that being good to us?"

"Well, God kept us safe and let the lion chase the donkey! Aren't you thankful for that?" Trusting replied.

Suddenly a very strong wind began to blow. Their torch blew out, leaving them in darkness, high in the tree. "I suppose you see something good in this, too. This is a terrible night!" Doubting grumbled bitterly.

Trusting didn't even try to answer him, but decided to try and get some rest, even though they couldn't really sleep well for fear of falling out of the tree.



Suddenly Trusting saw a picture of a hammock in his mind. "Thank You, Lord, for that good idea!" he said, and soon had tied pieces of rope to the end of his blanket and made a nice hammock between some big branches. Doubting thought it was a silly idea, but in the morning Trusting awoke well rested and cheerful as usual.

Doubting had not slept well at all and grumbled all the way to the village the next morning where they hoped to buy some food for breakfast. When they arrived, the whole village was in an uproar. During the night, a band of armed robbers had come to the village and robbed every house.

Trusting turned to his friend. "How good God has been to us. If we had been here last night we would have been robbed along with all the villagers! And if God had not caused the wind to blow out our torch just when He did, the bandits who must have been passing by on the road would have seen our light up in the tree and come over and robbed us. You see, my friend, God really is good to us even when we don't completely understand. How wondrous are His ways!"

Their conversation was interrupted at this point by a man who came up to them asking if they had lost a donkey in the night. It seemed that the frightened animal had come to his farm for safety. Soon they had their donkey again and were about to continue their journey. They thanked the farmer and told him that they were on their way to find Mr. Richman to discuss some business.

To their surprise, the farmer told them that they didn't need to travel any farther. "You're looking for Mr. Richman?" asked the farmer. "He's coming to my farm tomorrow! He owns most of the land in this area and he's coming to check on everything before beginning a very long voyage to a far country."

Trusting and Doubting realized that they surely would have missed ever seeing Mr. Richman, and would have made their whole journey for nothing, if their donkey had not been attacked and run away to this man's farm.

Doubting could only shake his head in amazed silence. Trusting saw he didn't need to remind his friend Who it was that had helped them again. He only smiled and his big happy eyes said it all—God is very good to us, isn't He?



- Who do you think had a better time in this story, Doubting or Trusting?
- Does looking positively at difficult situations help you feel better or worse?
- If you were on that journey with Doubting and Trusting, who would you want to be like?
- What do you think happened next in the story? Just for fun, make up a similar story to the one above about two classmates and the problems they face.
- Talk about the quote, "All through life my brother, if you'd be a happy soul, keep your eyes upon the donut and not upon the hole." What do you think that means? Which are you, an optimist or a pessimist?

The Magic Mask

A great and powerful lord once ruled over thousands of soldiers, and with them he conquered vast domains for his own. He was wise and brave, respected and feared by all, but no one loved him. Each year as he grew more angry, he grew more lonely, and his face reflected the bitterness in his soul, for there were deep, ugly lines about his cruel mouth which never showed a smile, and a deep frown permanently furrowed* his forehead.

It happened that in one of the cities over which he ruled there lived a beautiful girl whom he had watched for many months as she went about among the people, and he loved her and wanted to make her his wife. He decided to go and speak to her of this love. Dressing in his finest robes and placing a golden crown on his head, he looked into his mirror to see what kind of picture he would make for the beautiful girl. But he could see nothing but what would cause fear and dislike for himself—a cruel, hard face which looked even worse when he tried to smile.

Then a happy idea came to him, and he sent for a magician. “Make for me a mask of the thinnest wax so that it will follow every line of my features, but paint it with your magic paints so that it will look kind and pleasant. Fasten it upon my face so that I shall never have to take it off. Make it handsome—attractive. Use your greatest skill and I will pay any price you ask.”

“This I can do,” said the magician, “on one condition.”

“And what is that? Do you wish for much gold?”

“No, sire. You must keep your own face in the same lines which I paint or the mask will be ruined. One angry frown, and the mask will be ruined forever, nor can I replace it.”

“I will do anything you say,” said the lord eagerly, “anything to win the admiration and love of my lady. Tell me how to keep the mask from cracking.”

“You must think kind thoughts,” replied the magician, “and to do this you must do kind deeds. You must make your kingdom happy rather than powerful. You must replace anger with understanding and love. Build schools and hospitals for your subjects, and not just prisons and warships. Be gracious and courteous to all men.”

So the wonderful mask was made, and no one would have guessed that it was not the true face of the lord. Months passed, and though the mask was often in danger of ruin, the man fought hard with himself to keep



it. The beautiful lady became his bride, and his subjects wondered at the miraculous change in him. They attributed it to his lovely wife, who, they said, had made him like herself.

As gentleness and thoughtfulness entered the life of this man, honesty and goodness were his also, and soon he regretted having deceived his beautiful wife with the magic mask. At last he could bear it no longer and he summoned the magician.

“Remove this false face of mine!” he cried. “Take it away! This deceiving mask that is not my true self!”

“If I do,” said the magician, “I can never make another, and you must wear your own face as long as you live.”

“Better so,” said the lord, “than to deceive one whose love and trust I have won dishonorably. Better that I should be despised by her than to go on doing what is unworthy for her sake. Take it off, I say, take it off!”

The magician took off the mask and the lord in fear and anguish sought his reflection in the glass. His eyes brightened and his lips curved into a radiant smile, for the ugly lines were gone, the frown had disappeared—and lo, his face was the exact likeness of the mask he had worn so long! And when he returned to his beloved wife she saw only the familiar features of the man she loved.

Yes, it’s an old story this legend tells: that a man’s face soon betrays what he is inside his soul, what he thinks and feels, the thoughts of his heart. The wise and true Scriptures tell us, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7), and “Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).



- How did the mask help the lord to change his mean face?
- What did the lord have to do differently in order to keep the mask from cracking?
- What happened to the lord after he took the mask off?
- What caused the lord to change from a mean, ugly man to a kind, handsome man?
- Have you ever felt unhappy, yet tried to look happy for others and in the end you did feel happier? Try smiling one day no matter how you feel and see what happens. Does it help you to feel happier?

***frown:** a deep wrinkle in the skin, as on the forehead.

Is Less More?

One day a father of a rich family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose to show him how poor people can be. They spent a day and a night in the farm of a very poor family.

When they got back from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?"

"Very good, Dad!"

"Did you see how poor people can be?" the father asked.

"Yes!"

"And what did you learn?"

The son answered, "I saw that we have one dog at home, and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden, they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lamps in the garden, they have the stars. Our patio reaches to the front yard, they have a whole horizon."

When the little boy was finished, his father was speechless.

Isn't it true that it all depends on the way you look at things? If you have God, love, faith, and a positive attitude towards life, you've got everything!



- What did the boy's positive outlook do for him?
- What is more important than physical riches?
- Discuss some situations that could look completely different if you took on a positive instead of a negative outlook.



Two Pockets

A young girl was washing her father's pants and noticed that one of the pockets had a large hole in it. She forgot about them until the next day. She asked her father, "When I was washing your pants yesterday I noticed that one of your pockets has a hole in it. May I have them? I would like to mend the pocket for you."

The father answered, "That's very kind of you. But, you see that hole has helped me a lot."

That was not the answer the girl was expecting, and thought that she might have misheard him, "I'm sorry, I don't understand."

The father explained, "Well, child, you see I have two pockets. One has a hole in it and I make sure that the other one never gets a hole in it."

Still not sure what he meant, she asked, "Yes? And..."

He continued, "Every time I hear someone say something bad about someone else—if it is an insult, cutting remark, gossip, a mean idea, or anything like that—I write it down on a piece of paper and stick it into the pocket with the hole."

She still looked puzzled, "But, won't it get lost then?"

The father was having fun watching his daughter try to figure out why he would want to keep a hole in his pocket and so stretched it out longer than necessary, "That is exactly the idea."

"And the other good pocket?" the daughter asked curiously.

The father explained with a smile, "That is my favorite pocket. Everything that I hear someone say about others that is kind, true, and helpful, I write on a piece of paper and put it in the pocket without the hole.

"At night I take all of the papers that are in the pocket without the hole, and read them. In that way I can thoroughly enjoy all the good words that I have heard that day."

His daughter was still a bit puzzled, "And what do you do with the other pocket?"

"Well, then I stick my hand into the pocket with the hole and find nothing there, so I laugh and am thankful that there isn't anything evil to think about from that day," he said, still smiling.

They both laughed together at this funny idea. The daughter said as she hugged her father, "What a good idea. I think I will try that."

Always remember to forget
The things that made you sad,
But never forget to remember
The things that made you glad.



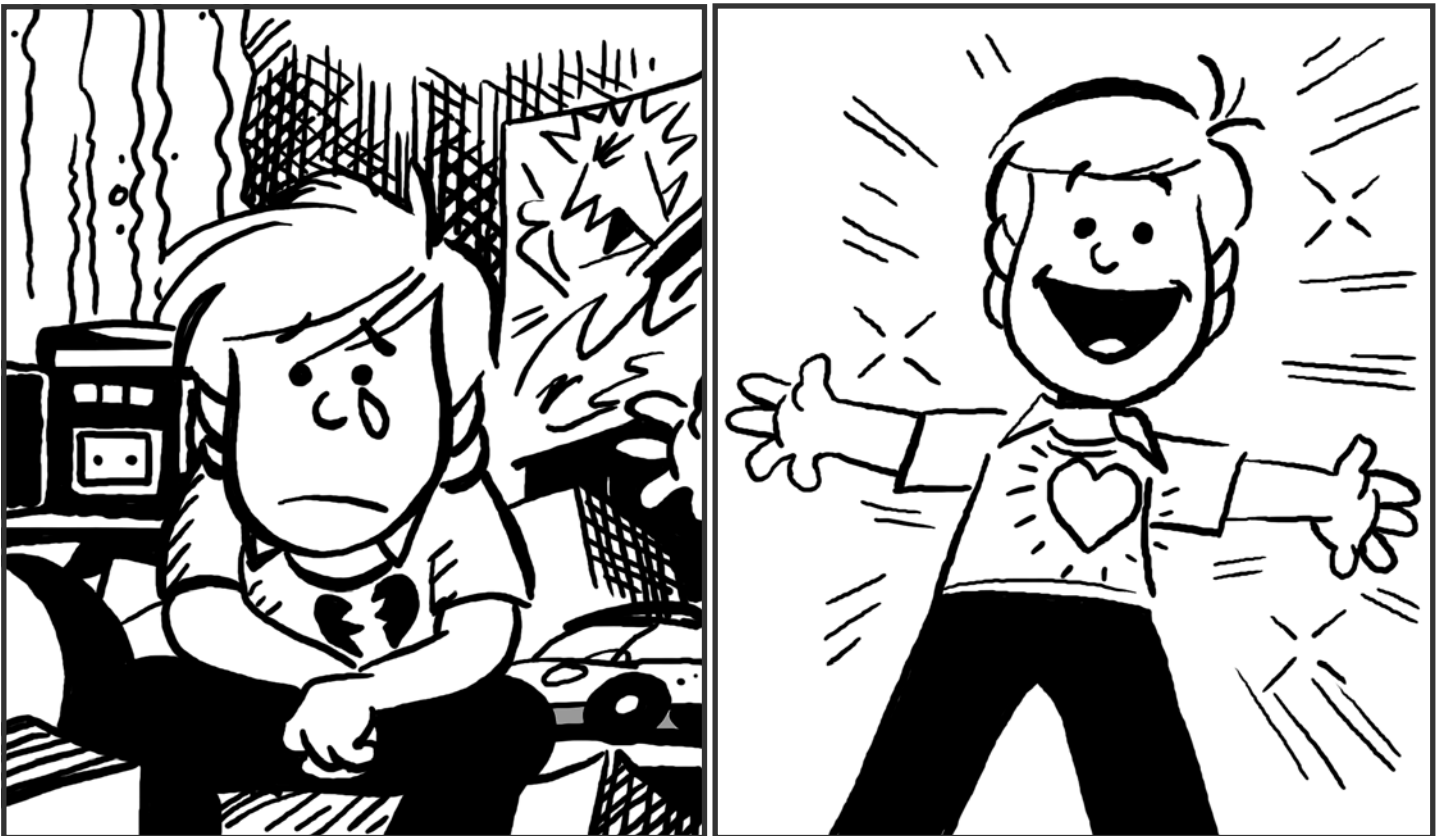
- How did the hole in the one pocket help the father to have a positive outlook on his day?
- Does thinking about the bad things make us feel happy or sad?
- What are some things you can do to help you look at things more positively?
- There is a short poem that says, "Two men looked out of their prison bars, one saw the mud and one the stars." What does that mean?



Prayer and Praise

Dear Jesus, I want to learn to have a positive outlook on life. Please show me ways I can think good thoughts instead of bad thoughts and see the bright side in every situation. Amen.

Memory Fun

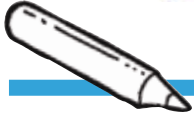


Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, meditate on these things.

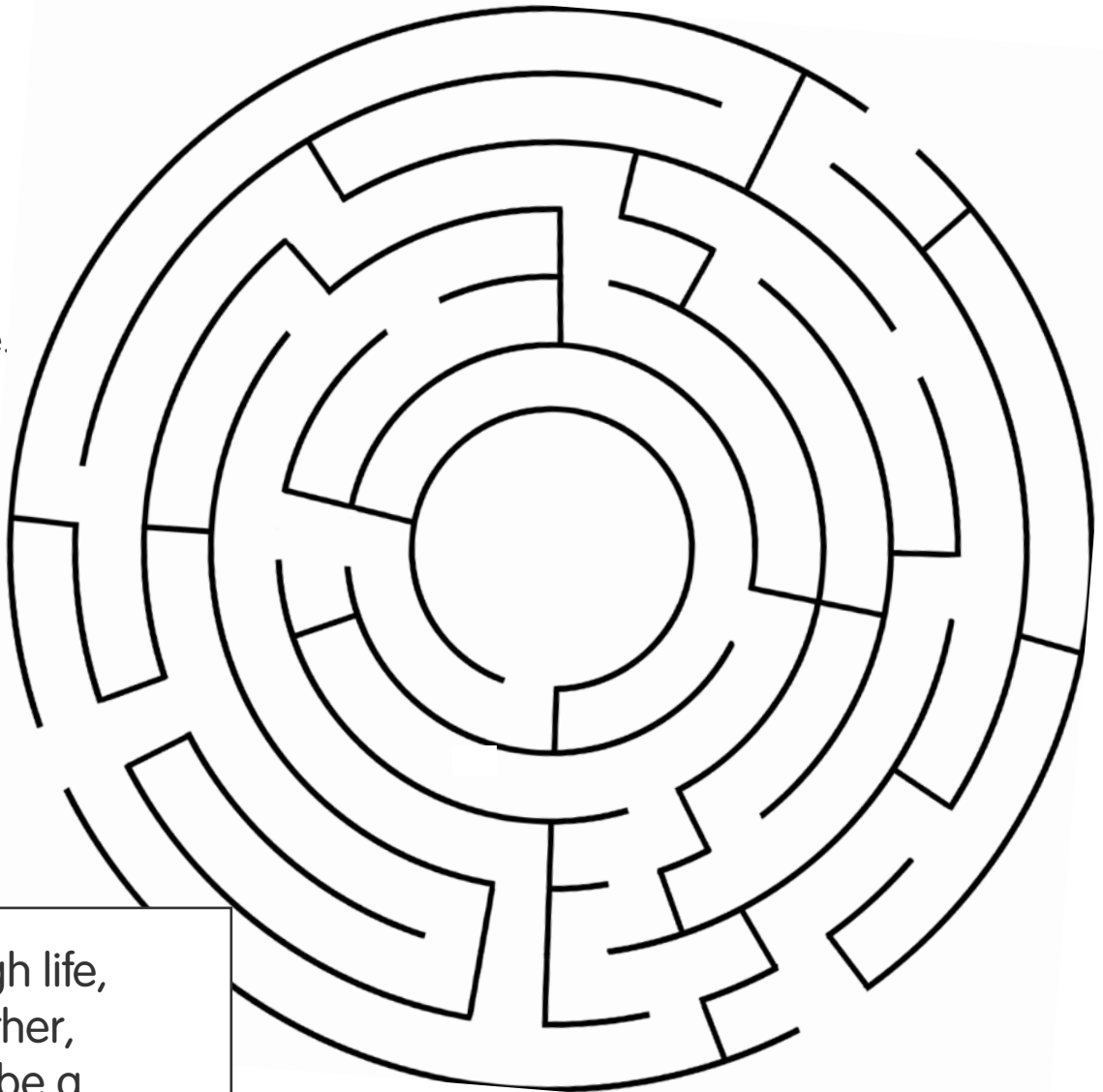
Philippians 4:8

Pencil Page

Out of the Hole



Help the sad boy out of the hole and through the maze. Thank the Lord for the things you do have, instead of being sad about the things you don't have. Name three of your blessings!



All through life,
my brother,
If you'd be a
happy soul,
Keep your eyes
upon the donut
And not upon the hole.

Color the picture.



Things
you don't
have.

Pencil Page

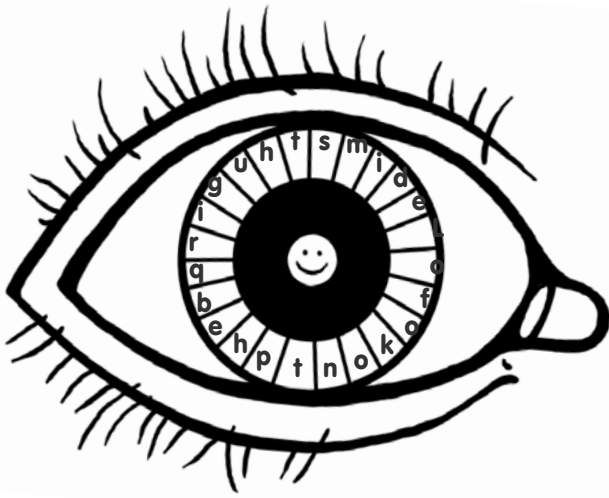
Look and Find



In the eye below, cross out all these letters:

fpqum

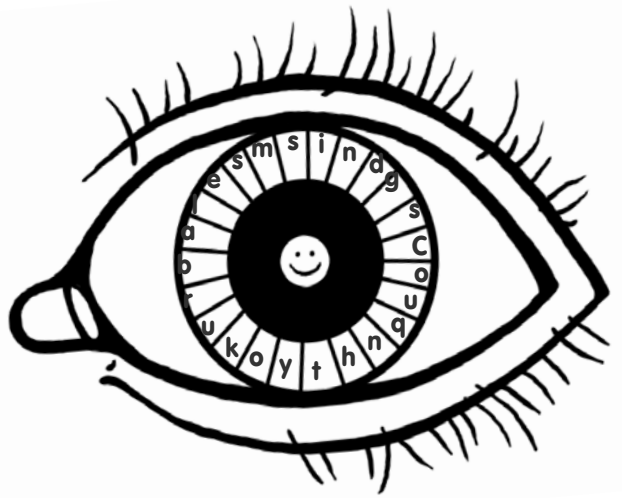
Now start with the capital letter, and go around clockwise. Write the leftover letters in the lines below to find the hidden message.



In the eye below, cross out all these letters:

qhkamd

Now start with the capital letter, and go around clockwise. Write the leftover letters in the lines below to find the hidden message.





Color the picture. Fill in the blanks with the clues from the picture.



We can complain because rosebushes have _____
or rejoice because thorn bushes have _____.

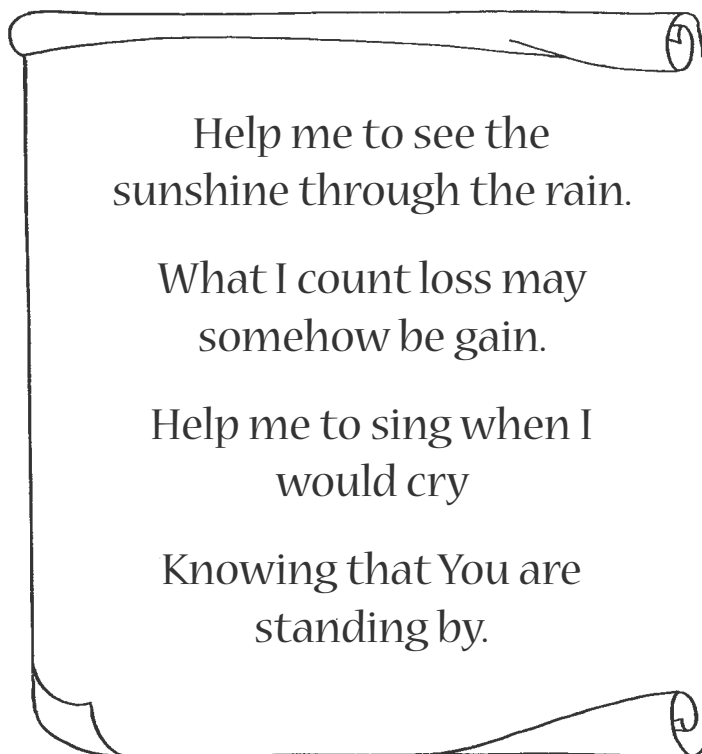
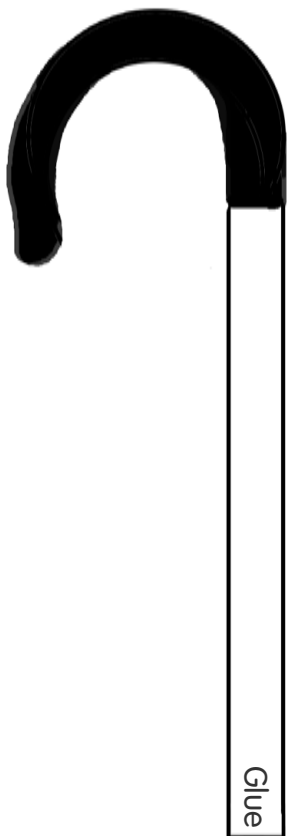
Make and Do

Positive Outlook Glasses

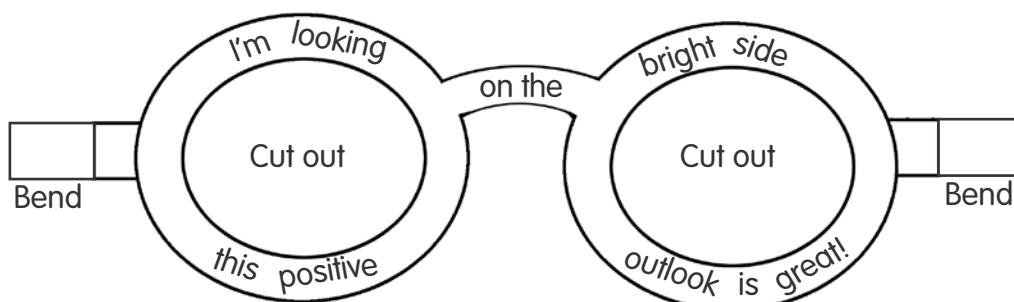
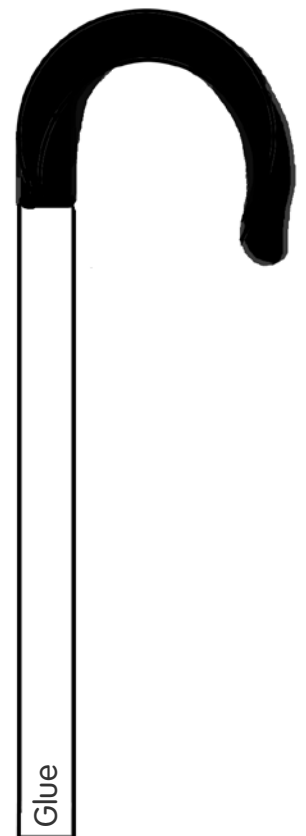
How to:

- Color in your "Positive Outlook Glasses." Be creative and colorful! You can use crayons or markers, paints or glitter.
- Mount your glasses on a piece of cardboard paper.
- Optional: Cover your glasses with contact paper for extra protection.
- Cut out your glasses and glue the arms on.
- When you feel like looking at things negatively, put on your "Positive Outlook Glasses" and see the positive side!

You will need:
cardboard
color pencils, or crayons,
markers, paint or glitter
scissors
glue



Cut out and keep this scroll. You can stick it by your bed or use it as a bookmark.



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From Jesus—with Love



Come, My little children, gather around, and I will tell you about the art of being positive. Did you know that positive people have more fun than negative people? For example, if you complain about the rain, you don't get a chance to enjoy it. There are lots of fun things you can do when it rains, and you need the rain just as much as you need the sun, because the rain helps the plants to grow and it washes everything. Why don't you play the glad game? Try turning every bad or negative thought into a happy, glad thought, and see how much better you feel. Thinking happy thoughts puts a smile on your face and helps your day to go so much better and be a lot more fun. So, let's be positive!



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