

Giving



Learning & Growing
STEPS
Learning & Growing



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The more you give, the more you get.

By Amber Darley and Agnes Lemaire

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Gain by Giving

"Willie, take this to the poor widow who lives on the edge of town," Mr. Schultz, the old German shoemaker, told his young apprentice as he handed him a basket of fresh carrots, lettuce, celery, potatoes, and beans.

"But sir, I have been giving away a basket of vegetables for you every day. How can you afford to give so much away? Your garden patch is small, yet you always seem to be giving away what little you have," Willie said.

"I give nothing away," the shoemaker said. "I lend it to the Lord, and He repays me many times. I am ashamed that people think I am generous when I am repaid so much."

"When did you start giving food away?" Willie asked him.

"A long time ago, when I was very poor, I saw someone even poorer than I. I wanted to give something to him, but I could not see how I could afford to. I decided to give anyway, and look at what the Lord has done for me!"

"Yes, Mr. Schultz! And thank the Lord, you have enough customers to give me work as well."

"There is always some needy soul who needs a new sole."

When the shoemaker and his assistant were finished laughing, Herr Schultz continued, "My garden grows well. Since then I have never stopped to think twice when I have heard of someone in need. No, even if I gave away all I have, the Lord would not let me starve. It is like money in the bank, only this time the bank—the Bank of Heaven—never fails, and best of all I am paid a bonus every day when I see people happy and grateful that I was able to help them. The interest comes back every day."

"Now I know why you have that plaque on the wall of your shop," Willie said.

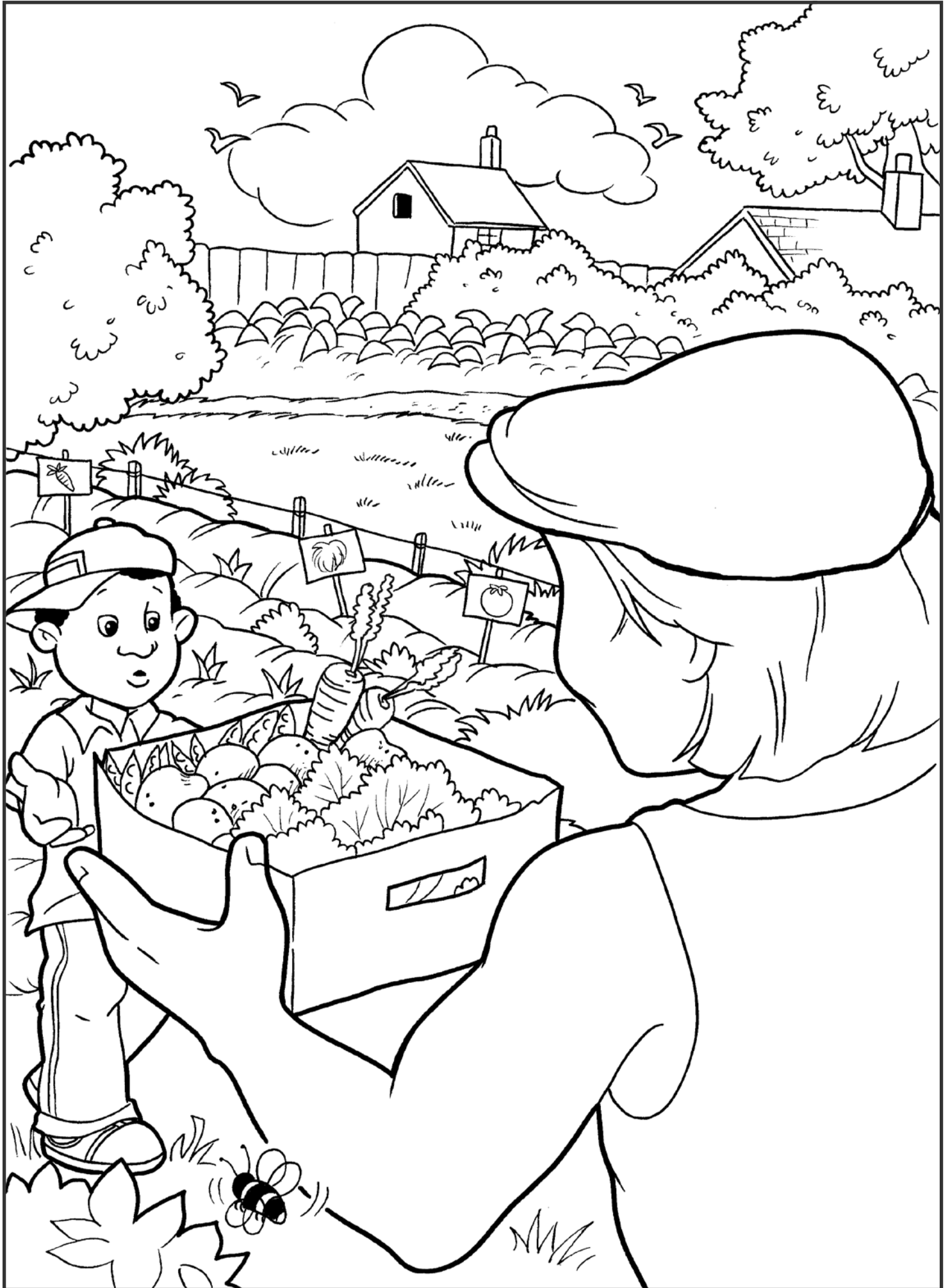
Mr. Schultz recounted what the plaque said, with a smile, "Honor the Lord with your possessions, with the first fruits of all your crops. Then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9,10).

"Where did you get it?" Willie asked.

"The poor man that I helped carved the plaque and gave it to me as a thank you gift. He is now a wealthy man. It helps me to never lose the joy of giving."



- Explain the expression: "You never lose by giving." What do you think this means?
- What could you give to someone else to help them in some way?
- What can you give besides material things?
- Have you ever given something to someone? Explain how did you felt afterwards.



What Do I Give?

What do we give when we feel we have nothing? Here's a story about a little boy who had that question:

"When I was a boy, I was very poor, but we were rich in faith and love. I had a dear friend and I wanted to do something special for him to show him that I cared. But what could I do? I couldn't buy him a shiny new toy car, or even give him one of my own, because I had nothing. I thought and I thought, but I had no personal possessions to give. I felt it was hopeless, and wished I was rich so that I could give and make others happy.

"But then I was reminded of the story of the shepherd boy. The Wisemen gave Jesus special gifts, but the shepherd boy had nothing to give, for he was poor, but he gave Jesus his heart and his love. I thought to myself, Yes, that's what I can do. I can give gifts to my friend every day through my kind deeds.

"And so I did. And I learned that I was rich, for Jesus filled my heart with love that never ran out, and I always had a heart full of love that I could pour out on others. I learned that a friend is not something money can buy. The special times we had playing together and caring for one another were much more special than all the toys in the world—toys that I thought I needed to make him happy and to show him that I cared and that he was my special friend."

* * *

You can show your love for others by giving of yourself like this little boy did. Show your love by lending a helping hand. Tell your friends that you care about them and that they are special to you. Comfort others when they're sad or hurt. Spend time with someone who needs a friend. Show your parents you love them by helping to clean the house, by being obedient, or showing them appreciation and praying for them.

As someone once said, "One of the greatest gifts you can give is a bit of yourself." And that's what these next nine gifts are—gifts of you. They cost nothing, but are some of the most precious presents you can give to your friends and family. Their effects can last a lifetime.

The Gift of Love: Tell others that you love them and care about them.

The Gift of Time. Take time to be with your friends and family.

The Gift of Good Example. Others can learn from your good example, and can be encouraged to do the right thing if they see you do it first.

The Gift of Acceptance. Make those around you feel accepted and appreciated for who they are.

The Gift of Seeing the Best in People. Let others know what you like about them!

The Gift of Giving Up a Bad Habit. All of us have habits that annoy those we love. What a great gift it would be if you could give up an unpleasant or unhealthy habit.

The Gift of Teaching. Helping someone you love learn something new is an important investment in their future happiness. Sharing our talents with others is a good way to show our love.

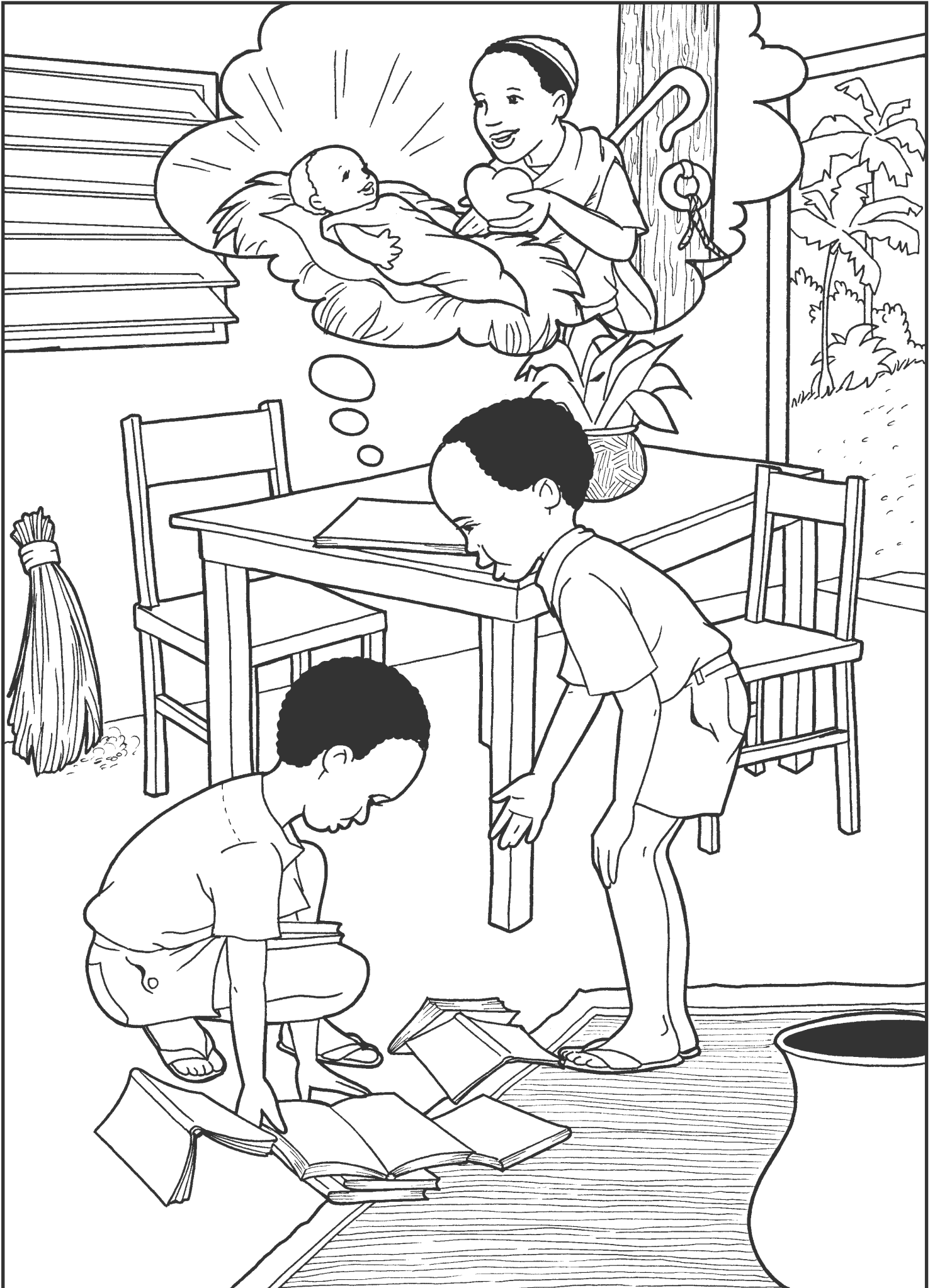
The Gift of Listening. Few of us know how to listen effectively. Too often we interrupt or act disinterested when someone else is talking.

The Gift of Letting Others Give. When we let others give to us, and when we accept their gifts in a gracious manner, we may be giving them one of the most important gifts of all.



- Take a week and see how many of these gifts you can give to others. Then in the next class, talk specifically about what you did and how people reacted.

Note: Maybe you could write the names of all these gifts on pieces of paper and put them in a hat. Each student could pick one and try to work on giving that one gift to others. You can also pick a student's name and try to give that student that gift for that week. At the next class, share what happened.



A Cup of Cold Water

Many people take water for granted. You turn on the tap and out it comes. But my wife Robbie and I remember the days when water was not so easy to come by. Robbie and I and our two young daughters lived in a two-room house close to Robbie's father's farm in Daysville, Tennessee. I worked doing construction on a new road, and I was glad to have the job—even if it meant walking five miles each way.

We had a big wood stove to cook on and keep us warm. But we didn't have electricity or running water. We washed with water from a nearby creek. But we had to carry drinking water all the way from a spring in the pasture. That meant walking some 300 yards up a hill and through a gate, filling a couple of two-and-a-half-gallon buckets, and trudging back to the house again. It tired us out, especially Robbie, who usually had the girls with him. Still, we were thankful to God for what we had, and somehow sensed that He knew what we were going through and was in it with us.

One warm Saturday, Robbie took the girls to visit her parents, and I stayed home working in the vegetable garden. I was hoeing away, trying to get over feeling tired and discouraged, when something made me stop and look up. A man was standing in the front yard. He was tall and wore black trousers and the whitest shirt I had ever seen. Our house was isolated, and I always knew if anyone was coming, so I was surprised. "Good morning," the man said in a deep, pleasant voice. "I'm very thirsty. Could you give me a drink of water?"

Any drinking water taken from the buckets in our house meant we would soon have to climb up to the spring again, and even the thought seemed exhausting. But then it occurred to me that this stranger might be pretty exhausted himself.

"Sure can," I said, shoving aside my own weariness. "Want something to eat too?"

"Just water," he said.

By now our water supply had been sitting for a while, and I suddenly thought of how much a tired and thirsty man would like a drink of fresh, cool water right from the spring. "You sit down and rest," I said, taking a bucket. "I'm going to get some fresh water for you."

I climbed the hill, came back, and poured the stranger a tall, sparkling glass. He drank it right down. "Wonderful water," he said. "Too bad you have to go so far to get it."

"It would be nice if the spring were closer," I said, "but we have many other blessings."

The stranger smiled, said thanks, and walked off down the road into Daysville. I stood staring after him, feeling good—and a little peculiar. Where had the man come from? Where was he going? I had felt so peaceful in his presence I hadn't even asked.

But I couldn't get him out of my mind. I decided to go into town. Daysville was so small that a stranger would be noticed by everyone, and I would be able to learn more about him. But my friends on the porch at the general store said I was the only one who had come down the road. "We couldn't have missed him," they said.

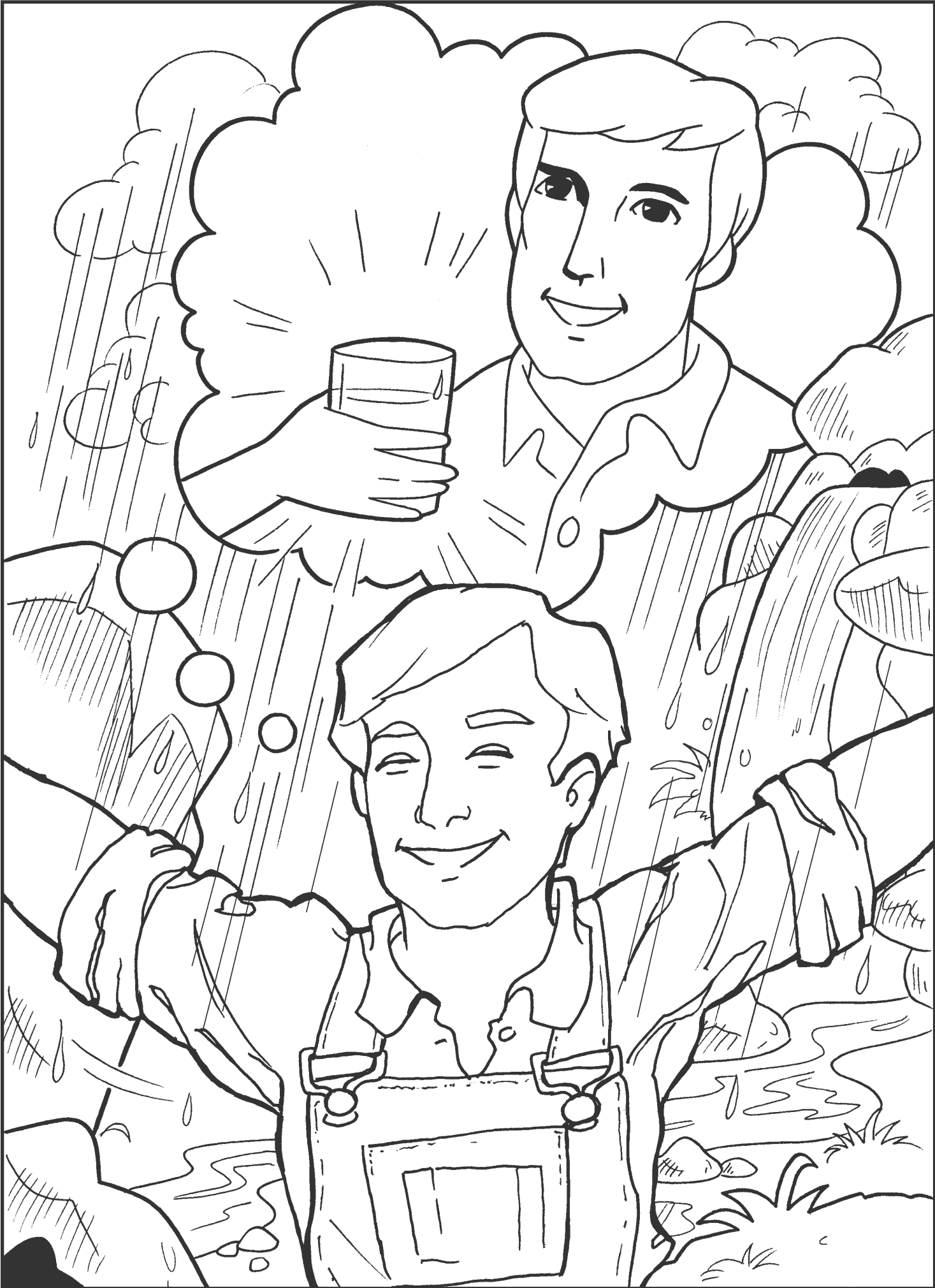
A few days later there was a downpour. About 30 feet from the house water began seeping out of the ground. When the rain was over and the earth dried, the trickle was still there. I took my shovel and dug in. Water bubbled out, fresh and fit to drink. It was a new spring—right at the spot where I had first seen the mysterious stranger.

We never had to make that climb up to the pasture again. Our new spring didn't go dry for the next two years we lived there. After we finally moved, there was another downpour, and the spring vanished.

Years have passed since then. Yet I'll never forget that long-ago source of refreshment and peace. The Bible says, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40).



- Do you think that the stranger could have been an angel? Hebrews 13:2 says "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."
- Do you think the new well would have sprung up if he hadn't given the stranger any water?
- Have you ever been blessed in some way by giving to someone? Talk about what happened. Talk about the verse, "You reap what you sow." Explain what it means and how you have seen the results of giving to others or not giving to others.



Give and It Will Be Given

Mr. Nkangi, the dean of the Kyambogo University, had just died. Under his wise direction, the school had grown and prospered over the years and was now the most prestigious school in the country. The school facilities had improved greatly due to the generous donations from students who had graduated and had gone on to be successful in their profession.

At Mr. Nkangi's funeral, many people spoke of his generosity and kindness. Some of them told how he had given them food, free tuition, books, or a place of shelter. Everyone was very sorry that he was no longer with them.

Mr. Jamahuri was chosen to take his place. He turned out to be mean and stingy—the exact opposite of the former dean. At a school assembly, Mr. Jamahuri gave an introductory speech, "Students, I hope you welcome me as your new dean. My predecessor, Mr. Nkangi, was known for never having turned away any one who had a need. I must say that our school cannot afford his extravagance. I will run a tight school. Don't expect any favors from me."

After his hour long speech was finished, the students filed sadly out of the meeting hall. They talked to each other about how bad things would now be under their new overseer.

Over the years, Mr. Jamahuri kept true to his word. No one was given any favors. No one even bothered to ask him for any help, because they knew what the answer would be—"No!" The quality of the school deteriorated. Donations stopped and upkeep of the buildings was not maintained.

One day an elderly man wearing poor clothes and a scraggly beard arrived at the school. "I stayed at your guest house many years ago, and I was wondering if you could help me. I need a place to stay again just for a few nights until I find a job."

"I have to tell you that the guest house has been torn down due to lack of funds and now it is a parking lot. Our university cannot provide for strangers, like it used to when we were wealthy. No one seems to make gifts towards our school nowadays. Goodbye!" the dean said as he was about to slam the door on his visitor. The unwelcome old man stuck his foot in the door to hold the door open so that he could continue talking.

"Ah, well," said the stranger, "I think that is because you fired two teachers from your university."

"I don't think we ever did that," said the puzzled dean.

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "They were twins. One was called 'Give,' and the other, 'It shall be given unto you.' You fired 'Give,' so his brother decided to go as well."

"That's a very nice story, but I'm sorry I can not help you. Goodbye!"

The visitor still kept his foot in the door. "Before I go, I want to give you a letter from my boss to you."

"Your boss? I thought you said that you were looking for a new job."

"Yes, a new job, but not a new boss. Here is the letter."

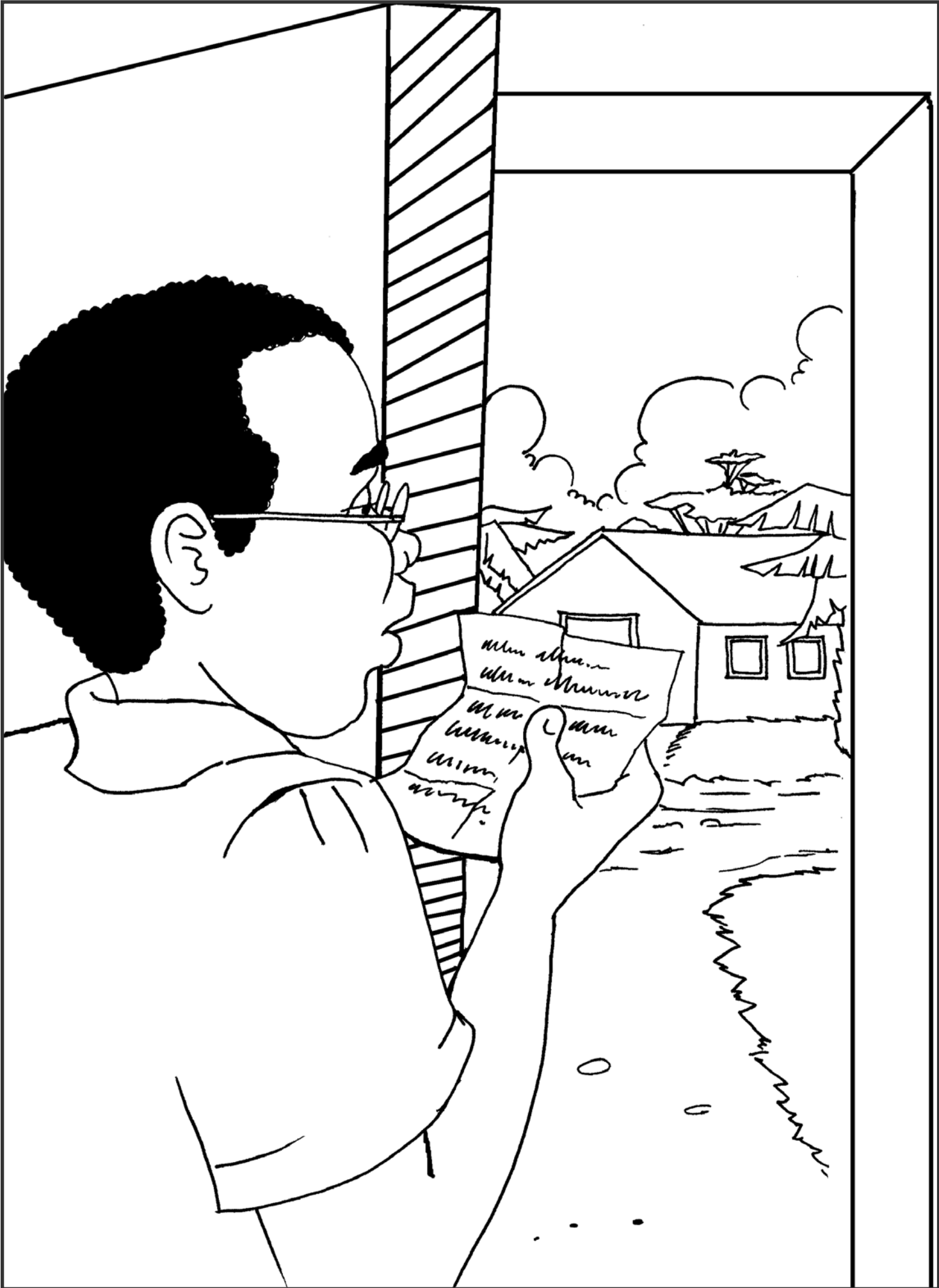
The dean took the letter and carefully opened it. As he looked up, he noticed that the old man had mysteriously disappeared without making a sound. He read the letter:

Dear Mr. Jamahuri: I love to outgive you, and I'll never let you outgive Me. I always give you much, much more than you ever give! The more you give, the more I'll give you back.

I may not always reward you in mere dollars and cents; it may be in protection from accidents, misfortunes or serious illnesses that would have cost you a hundred times more than anything you have given! But in whatever way it comes, I will reward you! Try it—you just might like it! Signed: The Giver of Life



- Talk about the expression, "Give and it will be given to you" (Luke 6:38). What do you think that means?
- The new principal thought he would be saving money by being stingier, but what happened instead? Did he save or lose money? Why? What should he have done?
- What would you have done in his place?
- Do you think that God could use an angel to deliver a letter to someone?



Butter and Honey

Long shadows were falling across the street of Nazareth. From the carpenter's shop there still came the sound of hammer and plane. In the little room next to the shop, three people were busily using the last rays of sunlight that came through the narrow window as they finished their work. The mother was mending. Little Brother was studiously forming letters with a bit of charcoal on a tile. Little Sister was scurrying about, tidying the room.

"I can cook," Little Sister told her brother. "Today I made a cake! Not just an ordinary cake, but one with butter and honey in it."

"Butter and honey?" he echoed.

"With butter and honey," she repeated. She put her hand over her lips as the hammering stopped in the next room. Glancing at the door, she continued, whispering until the sound began again. "It's a very special cake, for Big Brother, because tomorrow is His birthday." Mother smiled and said, "Your cake was made well, and it will please Big Brother very much."

Down the village street, through the lengthening shadows, a figure came stumbling along. As he moved he cried aloud:

"I am hungry, give me food! I am thirsty, give me drink!"

Little Brother looked up from the work in his lap. "A beggar man is coming," he said.

Little Sister climbed to the window. "Mother," she reported, "he's lame, or sick, and his clothes are all torn."

"I am hungry, give me food!" came the cry of the beggar man. "I was in prison, please help me."

"Oh, Mother!" the small girl exclaimed in a tone of pity. "Can't we give him something?"

The mother looked anxiously toward the cupboard. "I think we can give him something," she replied, "but we haven't much."

"Wait!" said the child. "I'll go ask Big Brother what He thinks. Listen! He's stopped hammering; maybe He hears the beggar man, too."

Little Brother looked soberly after her as she disappeared through the door of the shop. "Big Brother will say yes," he said. "He'd rather be hungry Himself than not give to somebody else. Why is that, Mother?"

She answered thoughtfully, "Because it hurts Him when other people are hungry, or hurt, or sad, or wicked. It hurts Him more than being hungry or tired Himself." She rose and lit the small earthenware lamp and set it on its bracket.

Little Sister came hurrying back. "Big Brother says," she announced, "Share our food, in the Name of God!" She hunted through the cupboard, then ran into the street. They heard her clear, high voice, and the hoarse tones of the beggar man. Then slowly she came back, closing the door behind her.

Mother moved quietly about the room, preparing supper. Little Brother put away his tile and charcoal. But Little Sister only sat in the corner of the room, not speaking a word. The others watched her, puzzled. "What is your trouble, Little Sister?" Mother asked at length.

The girl ran to her, hid her face, and broke into tears. "I wish I hadn't done it!" she sobbed. "I gave the butter-and-honey cake to the beggar man."

"You gave away the butter-and-honey cake!" cried Little Brother in distress. "But what will Big Brother have for His birthday?"

"I thought He'd be so pleased if I gave it away," she answered, still sobbing. "But now I can't give it to Him."

Mother stroked her hair comfortingly. "Go tell Big Brother you had made it for Him," she said. "He'll still be pleased."

Little Sister passed through the door of the shop, and for a long time the hammer was silent. Then it began again, and she came dancing back into the room, her eyes shining through the last few teardrops.

"I did give it to Him, Mother!" she exclaimed. "I did after all! Do you know how? Well, if I do something for somebody who needs it, because I love Big Brother, why, that's just like doing it to Big Brother Himself. He said so!"



- Who do you think Big Brother was in this story?
- Talk about a time that you helped someone.
- Have you ever received something from someone, or has anyone helped you in some way? How did you feel?



Prayer and Praise

Thank You, Jesus, for everything that You give me. Please help me to have a kind and giving heart that loves to help those in need. Amen.

Memory Fun



Give, and
it will be
given to
you.
Luke 6:38

Pencil Page

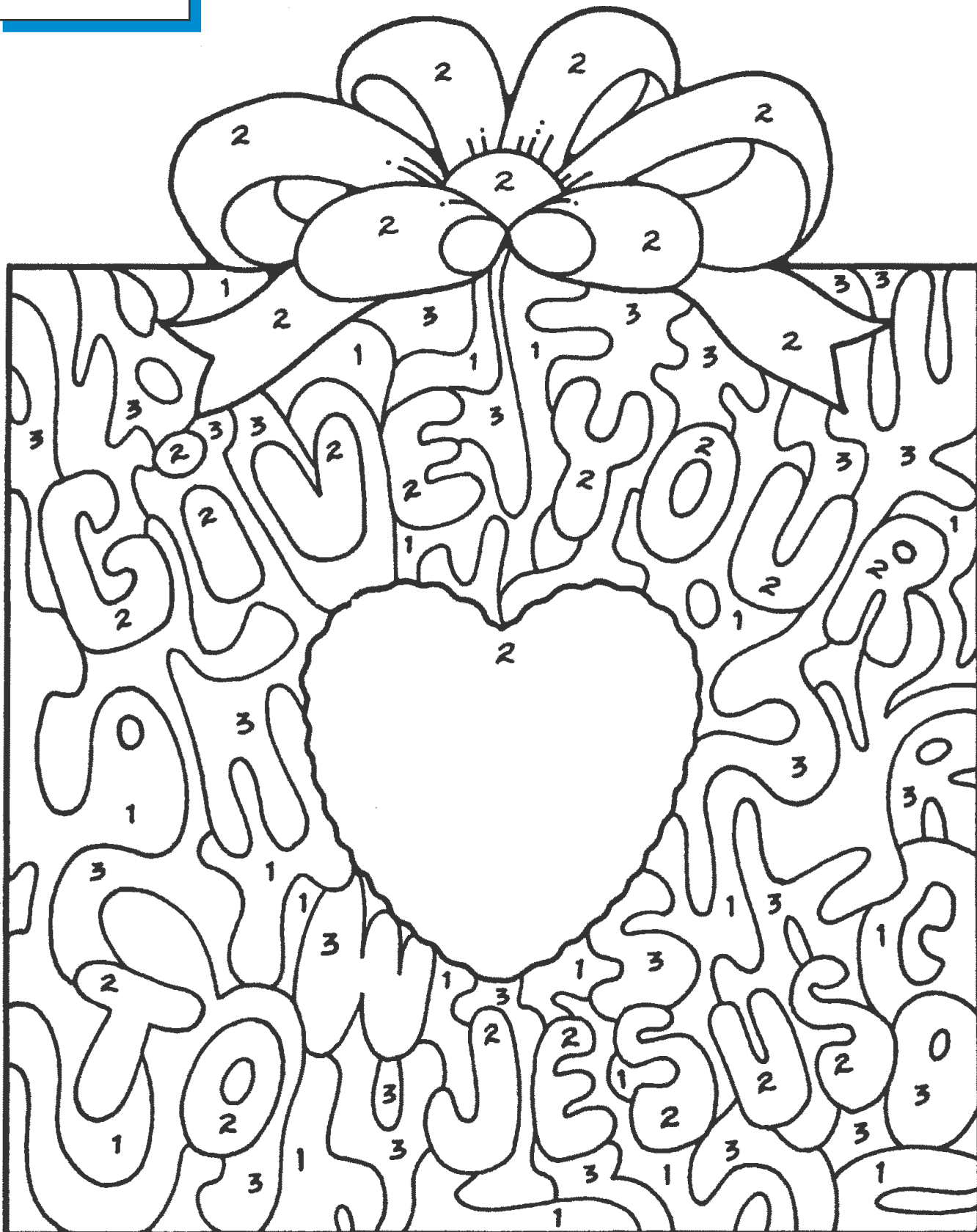
Coloring Surprise

Yellow = 1

Red = 2

Blue = 3

Color or paint by number, following the color codes from the box on the left, to find the secret message in this picture.





Pencil Page

Find the Hidden Message



Fill in the blanks by finding the letters with the matching numbers.

9 6 25 15 21 16 15 21 18 15 21 20 1 2 12 5 19 19 9 14 7

7 9 22 5 15 6 25 15 21 18 12 9 6 5 9 14 1 12 12 25 15 21 4 15

8 5 1 22 5 14 23 9 12 12 19 13 9 12 5

1 14 4 16 15 21 18 20 8 5 2 12 5 19 19 9 14 7 19 15 14 25 15 21

A 1	E 5	N 14	W 23
B 2	F 6	O 15	X 24
C 3	G 7	P 16	Y 25
D 4	H 8	Q 17	Z 26
	I 9	R 18	
	J 10	S 19	
	K 11	T 20	
	L 12	U 21	
	M 13	V 22	

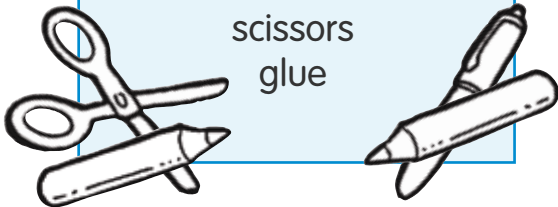


Answer:
 If you pour out a blessing,
 Give of your life in all you do,
 Heaven will smile
 And pour the blessings on you.

Make and Do

You will need:

paper
pencils
colors
scissors
glue



You can make a Thaumatrope (thaw-ma-trope) to share with a friend. (Notice that the picture is of two friends sharing a ball.)

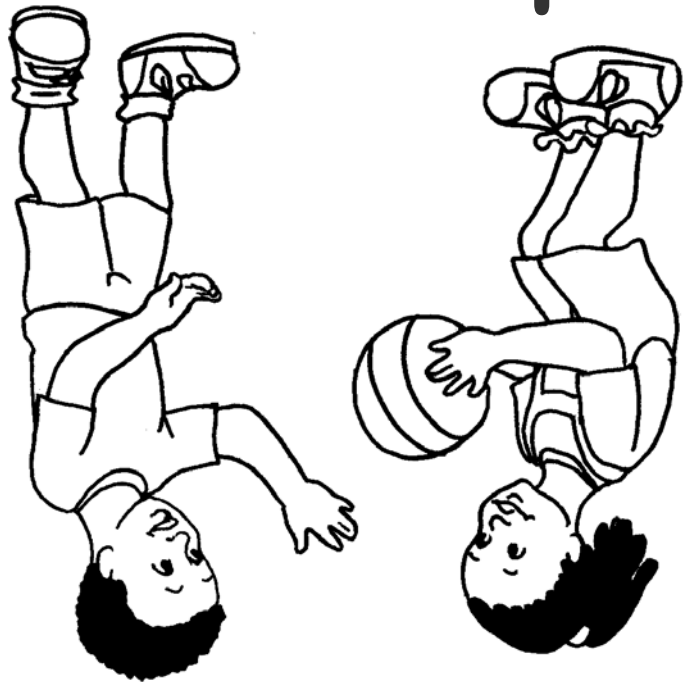
How to:

- Color the two pictures exactly the same.
- Cut out along the solid lines and fold in half.
- Carefully poke a pencil or stick through the dot on the fold line.
- Tape the bottom of the pictures to the pencil or stick, as shown below.
- Twirl! Watch the two friends throw the ball back and forth. You can show it to your friends!



Make a Thaumatrope

love your



Fold ● here



neighbor

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From Jesus—with Love



Did you know that it makes you happy when you give to others? And another secret is that whenever you give to others, I give back to you in return. That's My law of giving, that when you give you will receive.

I love to see you sharing your toys with others or even sharing your food or clothing. It makes others so happy and if you try it, you'll find that it makes you happy too! I love cheerful givers and I bless them!



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