

Jesus is always with me

Meet Emily. She is going on a picnic today. Her whole family will be there. A special person named John will be there. John is Emily's cousin. John is a soldier. He has returned home. Everyone wants to welcome John. Everyone is thankful to God that John is home safe.



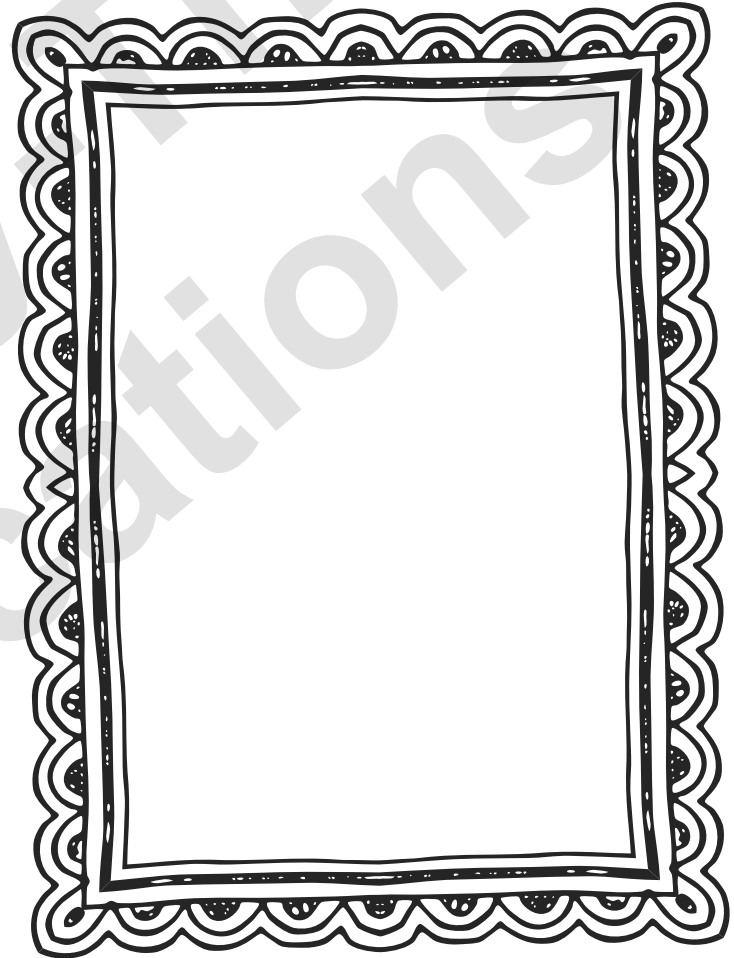
Someone else will be at the picnic today. Can you guess who it is? Here's a hint: It's someone who loves YOU very much! It's Jesus!

Whenever we gather in love and prayer, Jesus is with us. Jesus is with us when we go to Mass. Jesus loves us so much. He is happy to share everything with us.

**SOMETHING
TO DO
TODAY!**

Pray for families all over the world.

Draw a picture of your family having a special meal or celebration together. Don't forget to put Jesus in the picture! He is always with you!



Jesus always loves me



Emily is glad John is home safe. Her family prayed for John while he was away. We can't always be with the people we love. But even when they are far away, we don't stop loving them.

It's the same with God. When you were baptized, you became part of God's great big family. No matter where you go or what you do, God always loves you.

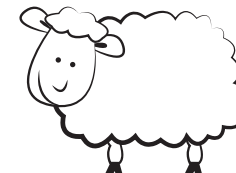
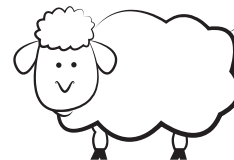
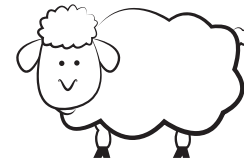
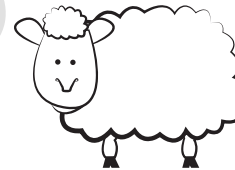
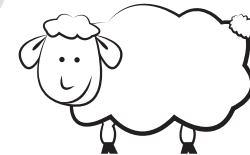
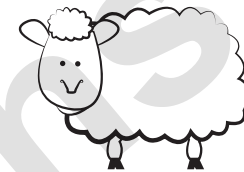
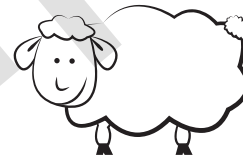
Jesus once told a story to show how much he cares for his great big family, even when they are far away.

Jesus said, *"What if you had 100 sheep, but one of them became lost? Wouldn't you leave the 99 in the wilderness and look for the lost one until you found it? And when you found the lost sheep, you would set it on your shoulders with great joy. When you got home, you would call together your friends and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'"* (Luke 15:4-7)

Jesus is like a loving shepherd who takes good care of his flock. He knows and loves each one of us. He always takes care of us.

How well do you know your sheep?

All the sheep in this family look alike. Some of them are twins! Draw lines to match each sheep with his or her twin brother or sister. Watch out! Some sheep might look alike, but they're not exactly the same!



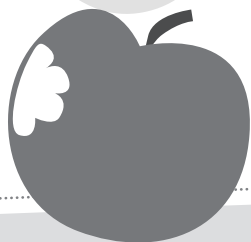
I thank Jesus for my baptism



Emily is having a lot of fun at the picnic. "This is a perfect day," she says.

Do you remember the story of Adam and Eve? God had created a perfect world for them. But they chose to turn away from God's love. They chose to sin. They were a little like the sheep who wandered away in Jesus' story.

When Adam and Even chose to say "no" to God, things changed. Sadness, suffering, and death came into the good world God had created. We call this "original sin."



SOMETHING TO DO TODAY!

Look at a crucifix or picture of Jesus and say, "Thank you, Jesus, for saving me!"

But remember, God always loves us, no matter what. God never gave up on his people. God sent Jesus to save us from sin.

Through our baptism, we are washed clean of original sin. We can thank Jesus for that! Because of Jesus, we can live in God's goodness and love forever.

Does this sound familiar?

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

We say these words at Mass to show our belief in Jesus' saving power. They are the mystery of our faith.

Here's another way we say this mystery:

"When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again."

In the space below, write your own mystery of faith. It can be as simple as "Jesus, you died for me. I love you."

God gives us grace



A few days before the picnic, Emily had an idea. "Let's make a sign to welcome John home," she said. Her mom thought that was a great idea. "You decide what the sign will say," Mom said. "Then we'll all paint it together on Saturday."

When Jesus died on the cross, he gave up his life for us. When he rose from the tomb on Easter Sunday, he brought us into new life with God.

When you were baptized, you received a special sign of God's love. It was like a "WELCOME HOME" sign. Baptism marks you forever as God's own child. Baptism wipes away original sin. That means you have a new life with God.

We call this new life grace. Grace is very good because it is God's life and love alive in you.

"By grace you have been saved."

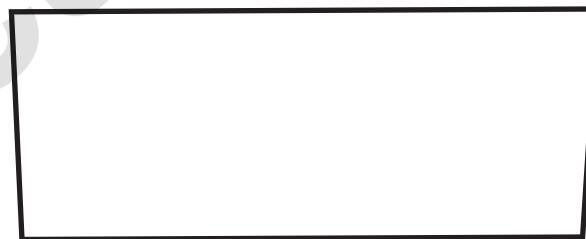
EPHESIANS 2:5

Here's one way to understand grace

Think of something you'd like to draw. Maybe it's something in the room you're in. Maybe it's your best friend. Ready? Okay, now close your eyes and draw the picture in the box below. Keep your eyes closed until you're finished. No peeking!



Once you've opened your eyes, look at your picture. Now draw the same picture below, but this time with your eyes open.



Big difference, huh?

Grace is a gift from God that helps us see the way to live in faith, hope, and love. Grace gives us strength to be signs of Jesus' love for the whole world.