

Heart Family Activities

Bible Verse: Joel 2: 12, 13

HEART BULLETIN BOARD:

Let children draw and cut out a large BLACK heart and a large WHITE heart. Write SIN in white letters on the BLACK heart. Decorate the large white heart with shiny materials (mirrors, foil, white sequins or white glitter, etc) and write CLEAN HEART.

KIDS WITH HEARTS:

Give children large/long pieces of paper and divide the family into groups of two. Provide supplies and let teammates draw each other. Have everyone give their teammate the picture that they drew of them. Then each family member will draw and decorate a red heart on the heart side of their drawing. Write their name on the shirt of the drawing as well and title it GOD KNOWS MY HEART!

STETHOSCOPE HEART HUNT:

Have a stethoscope available for children to hunt for each other's beating heart. Children can also have fun finding someone else's pulse on their wrist.

BEAN BAG HEART:

A parent can cut two matching pieces of material and stitch around the edges and leave just a small opening for children to add navy beans (or other choices) to the bag and stitch the heart bean bag closed.

OVERLAPPING HEARTS:

Children can cut out several hearts of various sizes and glue together, side by side. Write today's Bible verse on the hearts and tape on a window.

HEART BOOK:

Make a sticker book with many different heart stickers and our Bible verse written out, as well as other phrases/ideas from today's lesson, such as GOD KNOWS YOUR HEART, GOD FIXES HEART PROBLEMS, GOD LOOKS ON THE INSIDE, etc.

HEART CAKE:

Bake a HEART shaped cake. Have the cake frosted and write CLEAN HEART FOR JESUS. Let each child use a frosting gel tube and write their names on the cake. Recite our Bible verse and enjoy a piece of the heart cake!

Turning our hearts toward God

Supplies: Print and display a poster with the following words in large print: WARNING – CHOICE – PROMISE. Optional: To experience the ripping (rending) of the sackcloth, children can make and wear sackcloth garments and rub ashes (charcoal pencil) on their faces.

When God gave the prophets a message for His people, it usually came as a warning, a choice, or a promise. Point to WARNING, CHOICE, and PROMISE on the poster as you discuss each one below.

God's WARNING that Joel gave the people of Judah was that just as the army of locusts had come to take over their land, the Lord and His mighty army would come one day to judge the nations. On that day, all will be judged for their sins. In Bible times, when God's people were sorry for their sins, they made an outward sign to God by wearing ripped, torn sackcloth and rubbing ashes on their faces. But, some people were just pretending to be sorry. They were ripping their clothes as if they were sorry, but they were not sorry in their hearts. They kept sinning. So, Joel showed the people they had a choice to make. The CHOICE was whether to rend their hearts, which means to be truly sorry for their sins, and return to doing things God's way.

Here is a piece of torn sackcloth. Give each child a strip of cloth. **See how hard it is to rend (tear) it? Feel how rough it is against your skin. Just as God's people wore sackcloth to show God they were sorry, wear this as a wristband as one way you can show God you are sorry for your sins.**

We all sin by getting into habits or ways of thinking that are wrong in God's eyes. Let's take seven seconds of silence to ask God to remind you now of one habit of sin in your life. Ask God to help you return to Him and to do things His way starting today! Allow seven seconds of silence for this prayer.

Joel gave four PROMISES from God for those who turned to Him. What did God promise?

1. To restore what the locusts and the armies had taken.
2. To pour out His Spirit on His people.
3. To save everyone who called on the name of the Lord.
4. To judge the nations for their sins.

SNACK: LOCUST FOOD

Purpose: Children eat a green snack while personally connecting to the story.

Snack Suggestion: Any green snack (e.g., celery sticks, jello, green candy)

What came like an army and ate the crops in Judea? (Locusts.) This green snack reminds me of the green crops the locusts ate. Joel used the locusts as an example to give the people a warning, a choice, and a promise from God. He told them to show they were sorry by turning their hearts back to God instead of pretending to be sorry by ripping their clothes.

Directions:

1. Serve the snack and drink.
2. Family prays to thank God for the snack.
3. Ask the Snack Discussion Question: **"What is a good choice you have made?"**

GAME: SACKCLOTH RELAY

Purpose: Children practice turning from wrong and making godly choices instead.

Supplies: Two large cloth sacks (extra large pillow cases); cones, chairs, or floor tape

Prepare: Use the cones, chairs, or floor tape to mark a circular course around the room.

Optional: Children may hop around the course without sacks.

God sent a message through the prophet Joel to give the people of Judah the choice to repent, to be truly sorry for their sin and return to Him. It is turning away from wrongdoing and choosing to do things God's way. The people wore sackcloth as an outward sign to show God that they were sorry. Let's have a sackcloth relay race. As you race, listen to the actions I call out. If the action is pleasing to God, continue hopping in the same direction. If the action is not pleasing to God, "repent," turn around, and hop in the opposite direction.

Directions:

1. Form two teams. Give the first person on each team a sack. That person stands at the starting line with both feet in the sack and both hands holding up the edges of the sack.
2. On your signal, the family members in the sacks hop around the course.
3. As they hop, call out one of the actions below. Add to the list with additional actions you'd like.
Praise God. Help a parent. Cheat on a test. Help a neighbor.
Tattle. Steal a candy bar. Give a gift. Make fun of others.
4. When a family member hops over the starting point (no matter which direction they were traveling and they may not have completed the course), they hand their sack to the next person on the team.
5. The first team to have everyone race the course, wins.

GAME: LOCUST WARS

Purpose: Children will discover that God sent a message to His people through His prophet Joel.

Supplies: Green paper, scissors or paper shredder, floor tape or chalk, two baskets, optional: picture of a locust

Prepare: Cut or shred an equal number of green paper sheets into strips to be "grass" for each team. With floor tape or chalk, mark a line on the floor to divide the play area in half. Place a basket in the center of each half of the play area.

Option: To lengthen the game or to use less grass, only allow children to pick up one piece of grass at a time, depositing it in the basket before retrieving another one.

Have you ever seen a locust? (Children respond.) **A locust is like a grasshopper that eats all of the green plants it can find. In some places in the world, millions of locusts will come together every several years and eat every plant around them. People sometimes think the locusts look like an invading army. Let's form two armies of locusts and see which locust army can eat all of their grass first.**

Directions:

1. Divide your family into two teams (locust armies).
2. Spread equal amounts of grass on each side of the line.
3. Assign one side of the play area to each army.
4. On your signal, family members hop like locusts (bouncing on hands and feet like a frog) to pick up the grass on their side of the play area and deposit it into the team basket.
5. The first locust army to gather all their grass, wins.

The prophet Joel lived in Judah when a swarm of locusts destroyed all the crops. The locust swarm looked like a giant army taking over the land. God sent a message through Joel to the people. He used the locusts to help the people understand his warning that the Day of the Lord was coming.

CRAFT: PROPHETS' TRAFFIC LIGHT

Purpose: Children will make traffic lights to help them remember that many of God's prophets delivered their messages from God in the form of warnings, choices, and promises.

Supplies: Sturdy paper (white, red, green, and yellow), yarn, pencils, crayons or markers, tape or glue, hole punch, scissors, "WARNING – CHOICE – PROMISE" poster from the activity above, optional: cups

Prepare: Cut a standard-size sheet of sturdy white paper in half vertically; makes two crafts. Create several 3-inch circle templates or children may draw circles using the rim of a cup. Display the "WARNING – CHOICE – PROMISE" poster. Cut a 12-inch length of yarn for each child.

Parent Tips: Arrange the traffic light circle colors to reflect actual traffic lights in your area. For younger children, you may choose to precut the circles and write "**WARNING**" on the red circle, "**CHOICE**" on the yellow circle and "**PROMISE**" on the green circle.

Today, we heard the prophet Joel's message from God to the people in Judah. What three things did Joel's message have? (A warning, a choice, and a promise.) **What was Joel's warning?** (The Day of the Lord is coming. An army will take over the land just as the locusts did. The Lord will come to judge the nations.) **What was the choice?** (Turn your hearts back to God.) **What were God's promises?** (To restore what the locusts and the armies had taken. To pour out His Spirit on His people. To save everyone who called on His name. To judge the nations for their sins.)

Directions:

1. Using the template or a cup, trace 3 circles on sturdy paper—one each from red, yellow, and green paper. Cut out each circle.
2. Write "**WARNING**" on the red circle, "**CHOICE**" on the yellow circle, and "**PROMISE**" on the green circle.
3. Turn the white paper vertically. Arrange the circles on the page from top to bottom: red, yellow, and green. Tape or glue the circles into place. Trim the white paper to create the appearance of a stoplight, as needed.
4. Punch two holes at the top of the white paper. Tie one end of the yarn through each hole to create a hanger.

A Psalm of David

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Psalm 51:10 (NIV)



The puzzle is based on Psalm 51:1-13

G S A E F B U F X L N B M U U
 L J D P Z H I P E A O I A E N
 W I Z U G P Y T W U U B H I F
 H C V R A U A M T N P N C A A
 F A C E E E W E W A T O A E I
 F Y S W R I C O V Q Y O T H L
 K M M C D H D W H I T E R G I
 O E D G B S M C W U L J W S N
 Y R C C F T X B K J Z O S R G
 Y C D L O A U V Q R N T P X N
 Z Y X E X E F G U S M H F Y A
 M O N A H E A R T M G R E A T
 K T Y N E O X F S P I R I T D
 M S S S H F W A S H C P D B P
 F W Z E L O V E X E C E F K S

UNFAILING
 WASH
 LOVE

WHITER
 CREATE
 CLEANSE

HIDE
 EVIL
 PURE

SNOW
 SPIRIT
 HEART

MERCY
 FACE
 GREAT



SWAH
 4 6

AGRET
 9 3 8 10

CEFA
 1

OVLE
 2 7

WSNO
 5

"Create in me a _____ ,
 O God." Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10

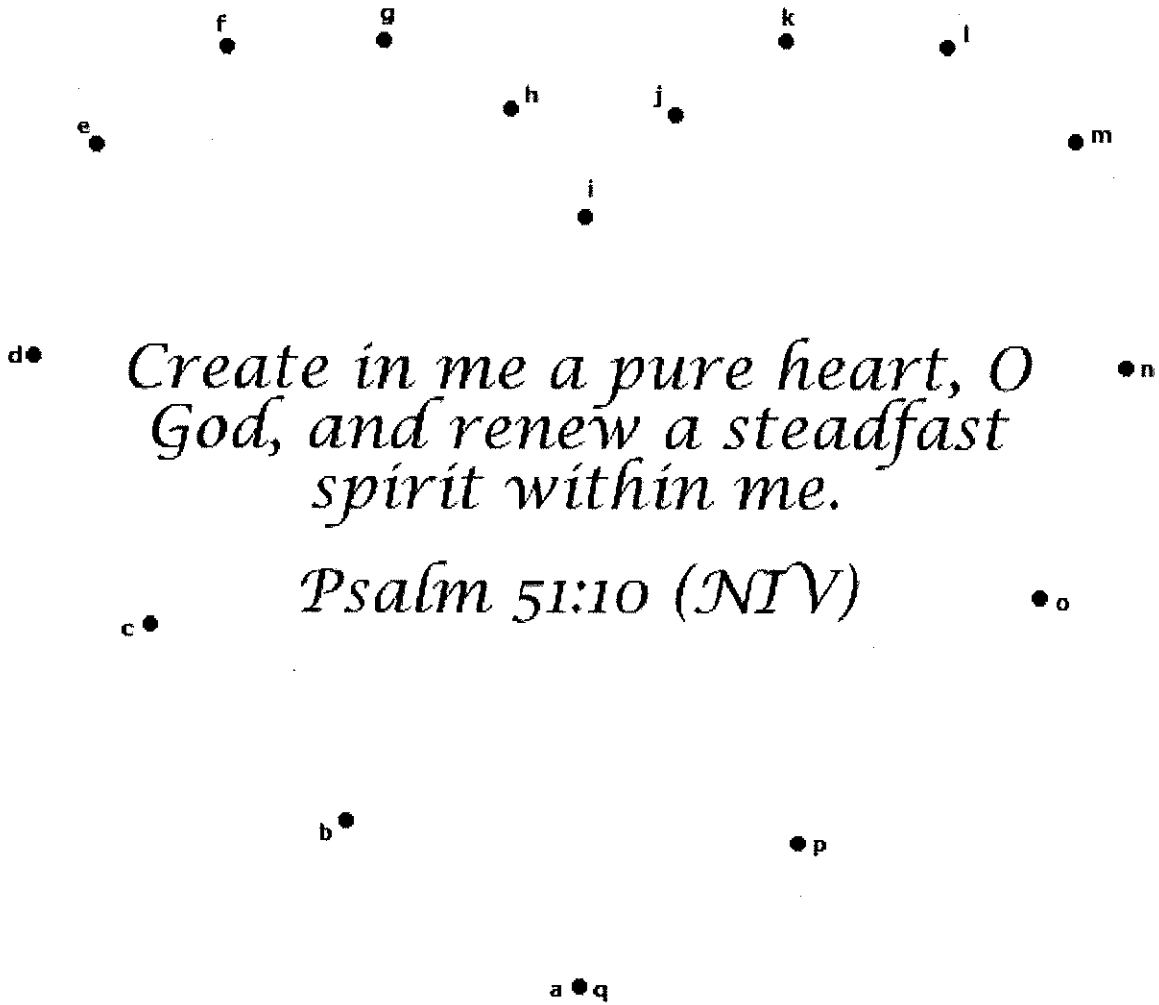
Bible Memory Verse

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

ANSWERS

- wash
- great
- face
- snow
- clean heart



*Create in me a pure heart, O
God, and renew a steadfast
spirit within me.*

Psalm 51:10 (NIV)