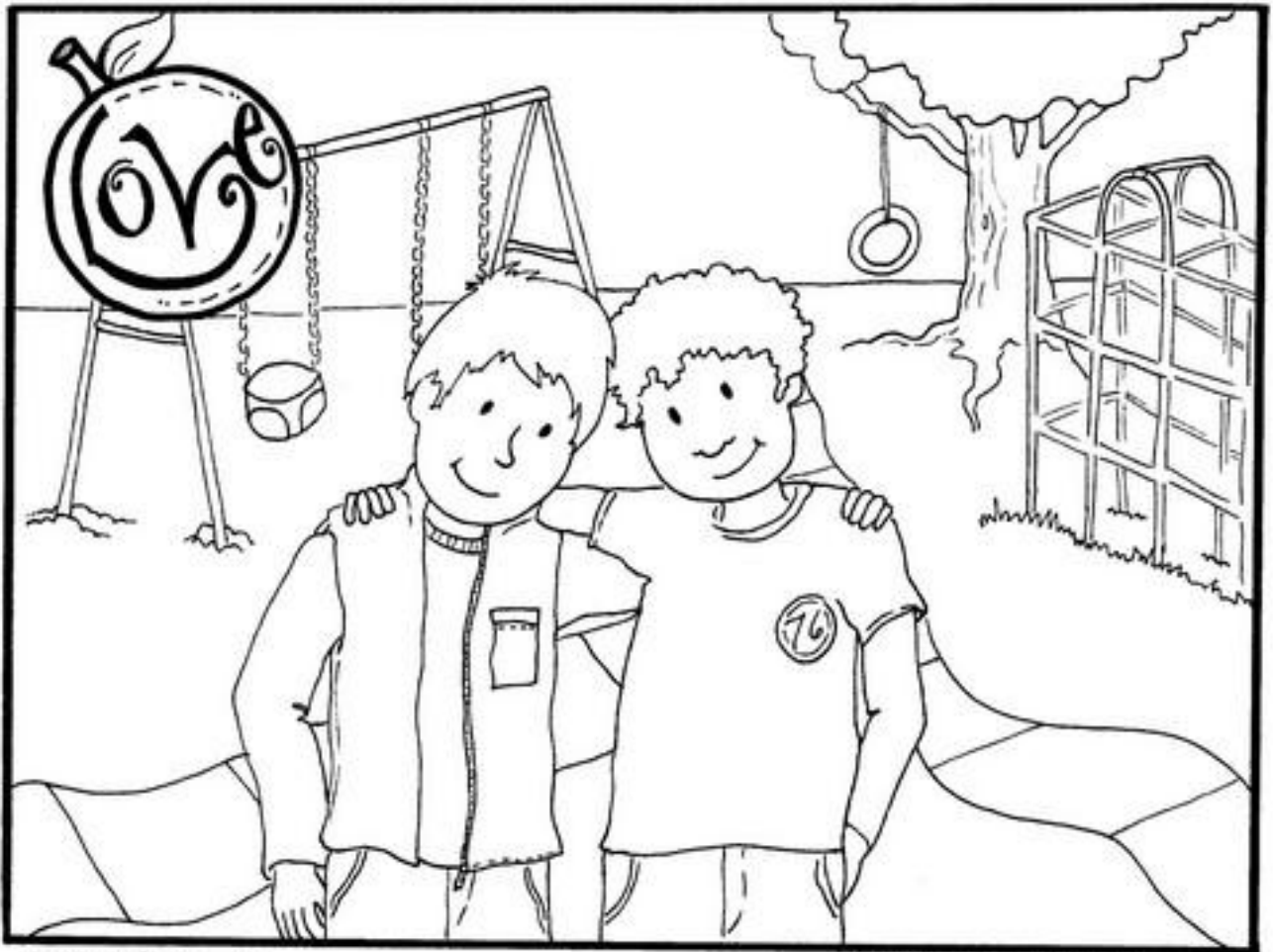


SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES 24 JULY 2016

JUNIORS: The Fruit of the Spirit (1) LOVE



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“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action”.

Colour this in to remind yourself of this every time you look at the picture.

Seniors: Putting down roots: Col 2:7, Matt 13;1-23

Why do plants have roots? If you have ever done any gardening, you will know that unless roots begin to develop plants die. Why?

There are probably two main reasons for this. First, the roots keep the plant steady and prevent it from falling down flat on the ground. Secondly, unless they have roots, plants cannot suck up the water which provides them with their food.

This is a picture of how we have to live as Christians: we must be “rooted and built up in” Jesus.

Jesus knew that some of the things he was trying to tell people were quite difficult to understand so he used lots of word pictures to help us understand. These stories weren’t about unreal things like dragons and fairies, but were stories about everyday life. Jesus would see something near where he was and would use that picture to help people understand.

One day there were so many people trying to hear what he was saying that Jesus climbed into a fishing boat and sat there while he spoke to the people on the beach. That way everyone could hear him properly. He told the people to think about a man planting seeds. Perhaps someone was doing that in the field nearby so that his listeners could watch the sower as they listened to Jesus.

In those days farmers collected the seeds from their crops and put them in a sack. Then, when it was time to plant again, they took the bag and scattered handfuls of the seeds around. They didn’t dig separate holes for each seedling.

“Look what is happening”, Jesus probably said. Some of the seeds were falling onto the path and immediately the birds were swooping down and pecking up the seed. The people could see that that seed was never going to grow at all.

“Look again”, perhaps Jesus said. Other seeds were falling on the rocky ground where there wasn’t much soil. The people knew that seed dropped there would grow but, as soon as the sun got hot or the wind blew strongly, the plants would wither up and die. They couldn’t develop strong enough roots among the stones.

And the other seeds? Some fell on the ground where it was thorny. Everyone knew that eventually the weeds and thorns would choke the good seed and those plants would die.

So, in the end, only some of the seeds would grow - and some of those wouldn’t produce much grain. Perhaps the people sighed as they heard that. Farming their little patches of ground was a difficult business.

Later Jesus explained what this story meant.

God is like the farmer who sows the seeds. The seeds are his messages to us.

Lots of people hear about God – at church, at Sunday School, at school or even at home. But some of them don’t listen properly at all. And so God’s seed doesn’t even get a chance to grow. These people never become Christians at all!

Other people are like the rocky soil. They hear the good news, like it and remember to think about God for a bit. But, as soon as life gets tough because others tease them and say that it isn't cool to be a Christian, they forget about God's messages.

Then there is the seed which lands among the thorns. Those are the people who accept Jesus and start to grow up really well. But, sadly, they don't put God first in their lives. Instead they begin to want money or fame or friends or peace and quiet more than God's love and their faith is eventually choked by these things. They hadn't put down roots well enough.

In the end only some of the seed begins to form roots and can grow properly. These are the people who listen and decide to give their lives to God. Not all of them produce much evidence that they are God's children, which is sad considering that God took all that trouble to share his love with them. However there are some plants which are very fruitful, helping others to see God's work.

What kind of soil are you? What kind of root system are you developing?

Think about that as you do this word search.

A	E	S	D	R	I	B	R	F	S	LAKESIDE	CROWDS	SOWER
E	S	D	E	E	S	O	E	E	E	SEEDS	BIRDS	SOIL
A	R	C	K	E	O	L	W	L	E	EARTH	SCORCHED	ROOTS
S	A	S	O	S	L	I	O	A	S	WITHERED	THORNS	CROP
R	E	D	H	R	T	I	S	K	E			
P	S	W	C	H	C	H	O	E	D			
R	O	O	E	S	T	H	K	S	S			
S	N	R	O	H	T	R	E	I	I			
E	E	C	C	T	R	E	A	D	B			
D	S	T	O	O	R	T	A	E	R			

