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# “Putting God First: The Rich Man & Lazarus”

Sunday School Lesson on Luke 16:19-31

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First Things First... Kids Bible Lesson on Making God Number One in our Lives.

When teaching children, there are often passages that come along which are more challenging to work with than others. The rich man and Lazarus can be one of those stories that is confusing to interpret, much less communicate to kids. In this lesson, the tale of two men is combined with some words from Paul to Timothy, and used to emphasize the importance of putting God first in our lives above all other things.

**Lesson focus:** God should be the most important part of our lives. When we let other things get in the way or distract us, we often wind up confused and disappointed. We should continue to pray and re-focus our hearts on the Lord.

**Passage:** Luke 16:19-31; Matthew 6:31-34, 1 Timothy 6:6-21

**Target Audience:** Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade (See notes for specific age modifications)

**Materials Needed:** Construction paper; paper plates; glue; brad fasteners; oil; water; glitter; small jars or empty water bottles; tape; scissors; decorative supplies; Bibles

## Bonus Ideas:

- See all our [Sunday School Lessons for Kids](#)
- Compare are [Children’s Sermon on Lazarus and the Rich Man](#)
- See the [craft video example](#) for the [Bible crafts](#) in this lesson
- Add some fun with any of our [Bible Games for Sunday School](#)
- Print our [“Love God with all your heart” coloring page](#)



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# Activity / Game to Introduce the Lesson

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Start off with some games to emphasize ordering and arranging things...the goal is to open the conversation to discuss proper order in lives, and how critical it is to follow God's directions:

- (Younger students) How should it go? Provide several pictures depicting a well-known story, or showing how something should be done. Have students put the pictures in order to show which way things should be done correctly. Discuss why things should be done in a certain order.
- (Older students) Play a little out of order game...do an activity with kids, such as making a sandwich or putting something together. However, while doing it, scramble the order of how you are doing things, and make it more random/less orderly.

Explain to students that today's lesson has to do with putting God first in our lives and responsibly spreading His good news to others.



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# The Rich Man & Lazarus

## Sunday School Lesson Plan

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It may be necessary to summarize this story for younger audiences, or at least to be on hand for questions and clarifications. Older students are probably capable of capturing the main gist of this tale, but solid discussion is still a good idea. This story has to do with trusting in the wrong thing. Obviously, there are tones of heaven and hell involved, and implications of consequences for actions and reversals of earthly status. Within those elements, though, be on the look-out for the message that riches don't buy happiness or salvation:

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*"There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side.<sup>[1]</sup> The rich man also died and was buried, <sup>23</sup> and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. <sup>24</sup> And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' <sup>27</sup> And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' <sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' <sup>30</sup> And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' <sup>31</sup> He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'" -Luke 16:19-31*

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Of course, we do not know exactly what will happen to us after life. So what are we to take from this story? We know that things in this life are not what will be forever. If we have difficulty now, it won't last forever. And if we think this life is easy and we don't need to do anything for God's kingdom, that can change quickly too!

So we cannot place all of our energy and effort on things that don't last. We want to remember that things like money and glory do not remain forever, and we should not chase after them constantly.

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*As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. <sup>18</sup> They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup> thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. -1 Timothy 6:17-19*

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This is a theme that we visit a lot in the Bible...earthly treasures don't last! So how can we hope to put our treasures in more Heavenly matters? Well, we certainly pray for guidance on such things. We can remember to take time for relationships and peoples' lives, which do last and have significance.

We can be generous with what we have and enjoy it, and we can put effort in our character. It is hard sometimes to know what it means that we care more about what's inside. But consider what "inner qualities" are lauded in the Bible:

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*But godliness with contentment is great gain, <sup>7</sup> for we brought nothing into the world, and<sup>[c]</sup> we cannot take anything out of the world. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. <sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root*

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*of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.<sup>11</sup> But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.<sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. -1 Timothy 6:6-12*

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“Godliness with contentment...” what does this mean? We recognize again that God’s hand is present in all that we do. Craving money is not for the people of God. Pursuing positive things (righteousness, faith, love, etc.) is like embodying the fruits of the spirit: with genuine understanding and pursuit, in time these blessings will come. If we allow our lives to get out of order, we are in danger of losing the peace and purpose that accompany putting God first in our lives.

Never forget Christ’s words in Matthew:

*Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. -Matthew 6:31-34*

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**Close** with prayer and thank God for giving us amazing blessings. Ask Him to help us put Him first in all things, and to understand how to live that way.



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# Craft Activities “Putting God First”

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Paper plate “Time for God clock” (See detailed instructions and picture representations for specifics)

Help students make a decorative reminder to keep their hearts focused on God above all other things:

- Decorate a paper plate with descriptions of activities and things that take up time and attention in our lives. At the top, write “GOD.”
- Glue a long arrow in the center of the plate, pointing up to the word “God”.
- Attach a smaller arrow, using a brad fastener, so that it can swing between the lesser important events in life.
- Attach a Bible verse and, if desired, string for hanging.

“Lava jar” to remember that things will settle in the end (good and evil, sin and blessing...)

- Decorate the outside of a small jar or bottle, using stickers and markers.
- Carefully pour in water.
- Add oil, and if desired food coloring and/or glitter.
- Tape the lid shut.
- Shake it up and enjoy!

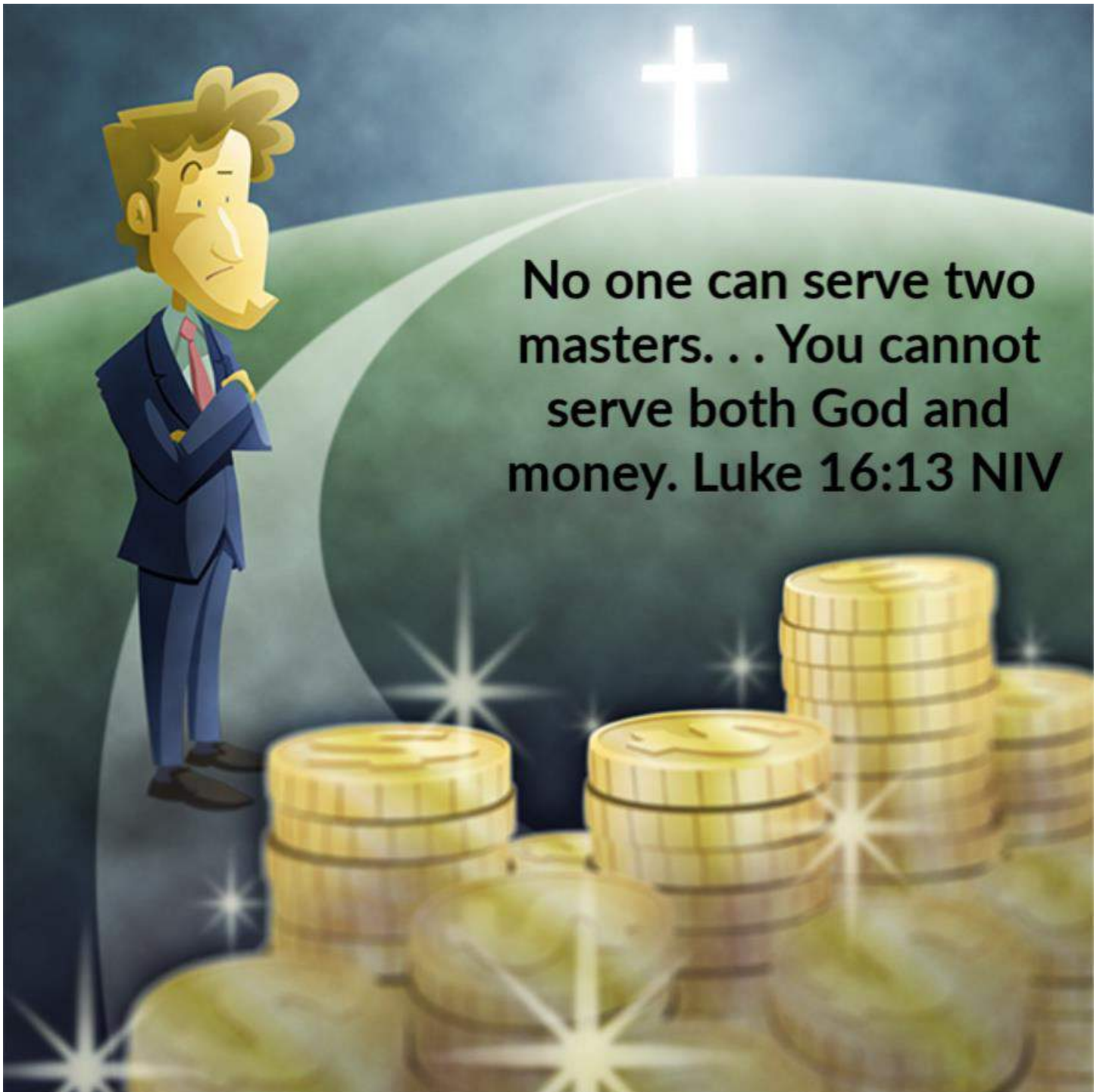




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## Bible Memory Verse

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**No one can serve two masters. . . You cannot serve both God and money. Luke 16:13 NIV**



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# “Putting God First”

## Crafts for Sunday School

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Use this simple [Sunday School craft](#) to help kids learn about putting God first. It’s part of our [lesson on Lazarus and the Rich Man](#).

It is important to give kids positive reminders about placing God first and foremost in their lives. It’s easy to be distracted and misguided, but it’s also easily helpful to provide visuals that point back to the Lord. The “clock” craft here is a decorative reminder for kids to keep their hearts focused on the “number one” thing first and foremost.

The “lava lamp jar” is an interpretation of the Rich Man and Lazarus story. It might be confusing to delve into elements of Heaven and Hell (especially when we really can’t know the details ourselves!), but we can emphasize the importance of justice and long-term satisfaction. Just as the elements of the jar get mixed up and then settle into layers, we can be sure that in our lives what seems “mixed up” or unfair will one day be put right and sorted out, according to God’s will.

### **Bible Verses or captions for these craft activities:**

But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. -1 Timothy 6:11

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. –Matthew 6:33

Put God first! Let everything else come later...

All will be right in the end...look to God first.



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# Craft one: Time to put God first!

## “Clock” decoration

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### You will need:

- Paper plate
- Construction paper (in arrow shapes)
- Scissors
- Stickers (if desired)
- Glue
- Markers/decorative materials



### Procedure:

1. Cut arrow shapes out of construction paper, one larger than the other.
2. Decorate the paper plate, writing down activities or things that take attention in our lives (school, sports, etc.). Write “GOD” at the top.
3. Decorate with stickers and other pictures, if desired.
4. Glue a large arrow to the plate, pointing to “God.”
5. Use a brad fastener to attach the smaller arrow in the center, allowing it to swing around on the plate. Attach a verse or caption if you like, and a string to hang the plate in a prominent place.



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# Craft Two: “Restoring the right” lava jar

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## You will need:

- Small clear jar (baby food jar, Tupperware, jam jar) or empty water bottle.
- Tape
- Stickers
- Water
- Oil
- Glitter
- Food color (optional)



## Procedure:

1. Decorate the outside of the jar with stickers, if you like.
2. Add water, about halfway filling the jar.
3. Pour oil on top of the water.
4. Add food coloring and glitter, if desired.
5. Seal the jar lid with tape.
6. Shake it up, and watch the layers settle back down!



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5. Add me (and our team) to your personal prayer list.

I'd love to hear your feedback on this download. [Tony@ministry-to-children.com](mailto:Tony@ministry-to-children.com)

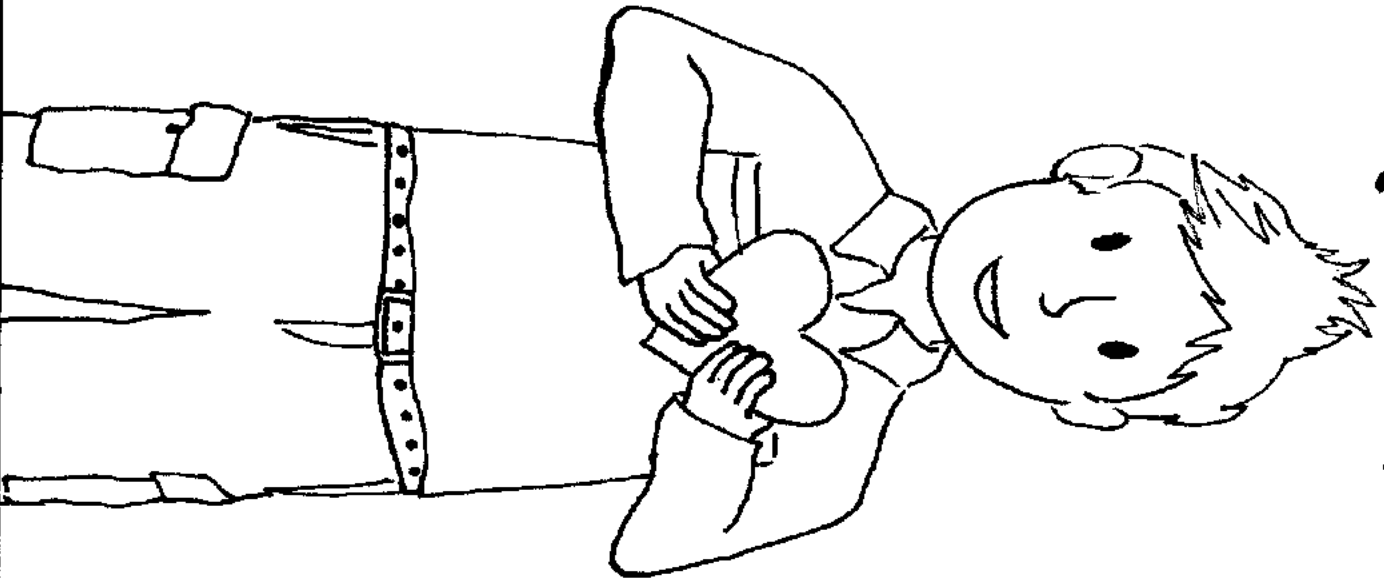
May God bless you and continue to bless your ministry!



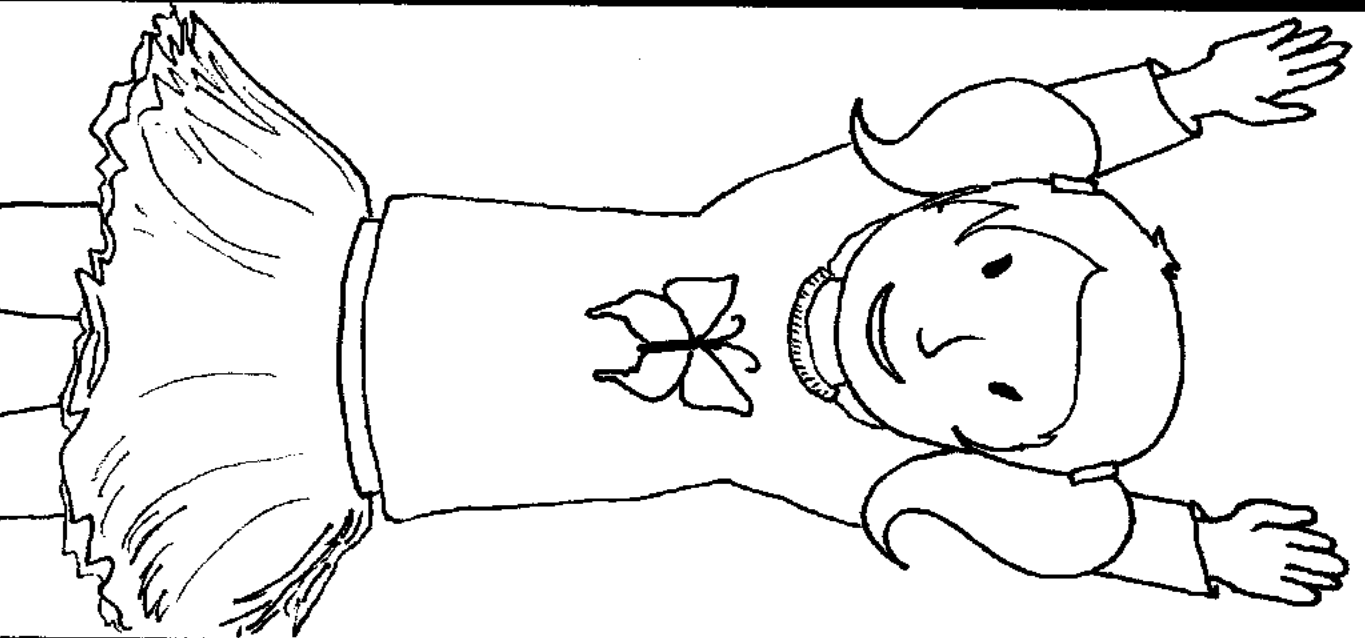
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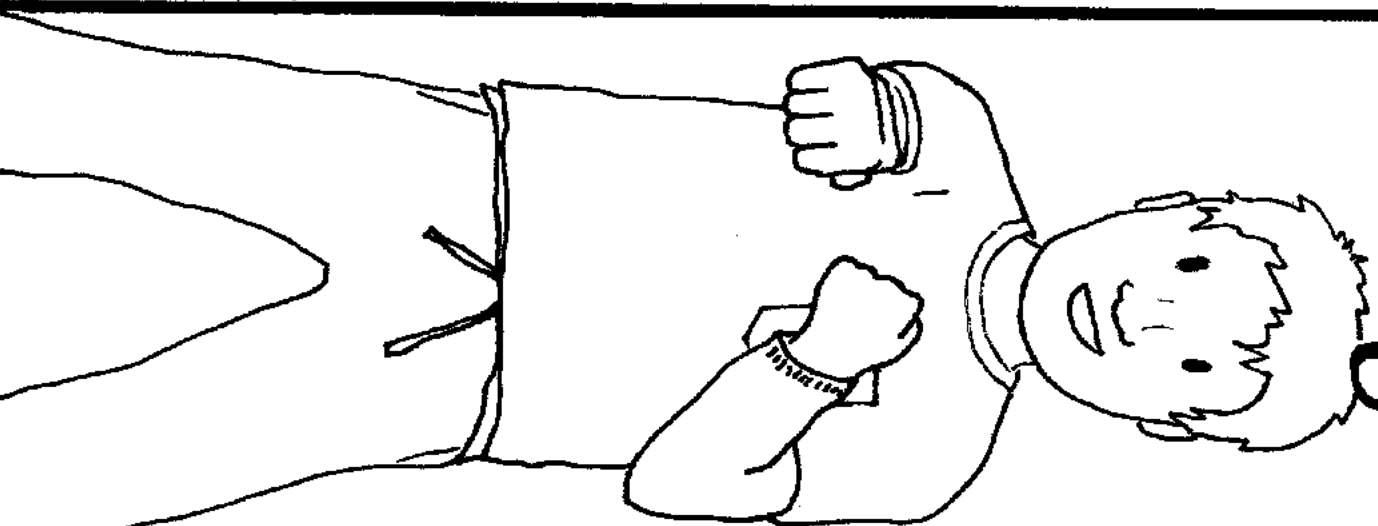
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