

The Game of Life

Theme

Living a life of service to others

Object

Game of Life, Monopoly, or a similar board game

Scripture

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Mark 8:35-36 (NIV)

Do you like to play board games? Some of the most popular board games are Checkers, Chess, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, and Clue just to name a few. One of the most popular board games of all time is called "The Game of Life." It was first introduced in 1860. Wow! That's more than 150 years ago!

The "Game of Life" is played very much like real life. At the beginning of the game, each player must choose what path he or she is going to take in their journey through life. They choose whether they are going to go to college or go out and get a job. As the game goes on, each player spins the wheel and moves his car the number of spaces on which the spinner stops. The space where your car lands gives you directions on what to do. On some spaces, you **MUST** follow the directions. On other spaces you only have to follow the directions if you want to. Just as in real life, you have many choices along the way, but what happens to you in the "Game of Life" depends on the choices you make. At the end of the game, the player with the most money wins. Is that true in real life? Do you think that when life is over, the one with the most money wins? Today we will see what Jesus had to say about that.



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In our Bible reading today, Jesus was teaching his followers about life. He said to them, "If you want to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel, you will save it. After all, what good is it if you gain the whole world, but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your own soul?"

Some people live as if the most important thing in life is getting more stuff—big houses, fancy cars, and pretty clothes. Others live as if the most important thing in life is following Jesus and serving him. How do they do that? By loving other people and doing good things for them. When Jesus lived on earth, everything he did was for others. If we follow his example, he promised that we will be the winners in "The Game of Life."

How about you? Do you want to be a winner in the "Game of Life?" Then stop thinking about yourself and start thinking about others.

Dear Father, we want to follow the example that Jesus set. We want to give up our selfish ways and give our lives in love and service to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: "The Game of Life"

Scripture Reading: Mark 8:34-37

RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT GAME: Have all of the children stand on the starting line. One child is chosen to be "it" and will stand at the finish line. When "It" says, "Green Light" the children may move towards the finish line. When "It" says, "Red Light" everyone must immediately stop. Any players who are still moving after "It" calls "Red Light" must go back to the starting line. The first child to reach the finish line and tag "It" is the winner and becomes the new "It". Continue to play the game as time permits.

JUMP ROPE RHYMING: Let the children write a rhyme and take turns jumping rope together while reciting the rhymes. The rhymes should be about today's lesson and choices made in the Game of Life. The rhymes can be short and repeated to the rhythm of the one jumping. The teacher may choose to divide the class into teams with each team writing a rhyme and JUMPING ROPE to their rhyme about today's lesson. If the children cannot make rhymes, the teacher can make suggestions to help them. EXAMPLES:

Jesus calls to you and me,
"Take your cross and follow me."
If you follow, you will see
Just how happy you will be.

Jesus seeing a big crowd,
Called out in a voice quite loud,
"Forsake all, come follow me,
Then you will quite happy be."

KNOCK, KNOCK GAME: The teacher will make up many slips of paper with choices, both good and bad, that people make in their life written on them. (Suggestions: take up my cross, follow Jesus, attend Sunday School, seek great wealth, gain the whole world, give to the poor, etc.) Place the strips of paper in a bag or small box that the children will draw from. The teacher will stand at the front of the class and the children will line up in front of the teacher. The game begins with the first person in line saying, "Knock, knock". The teacher responds, "What's your choice?" The child will draw a strip of paper out of the bag or box and read what is on the slip. If the

choice is a good choice, the teacher will say, "Come in" and the child will take a seat beside the teacher. If the choice is a bad choice, the teacher will say, "Go to the back of the line." Then the next child will say to the teacher, "Knock, knock." Continue the game until all of the children have made good choices and have been invited to come in. After the game is over, discuss how the life choices we make affect us.

JOY BOX: Give each child a small can or box to decorate on the outside and then draw or glue large letters for J.O.Y. on the container. Write Jesus by the J, Others by the O and You by the Y = Jesus, Others, You. Then give the children slips of paper that have choices we can make on each slip and have children read the choice and put it into their container. Encourage children to take out one choice from their JOY box each day and try to make that choice that day! (Suggested choices: Pick up my toys, read a Bible verse, prayer when I go to bed, help my mom or dad, dust a bookshelf)

GAME OF LIFE SMILES POSTER: Give the children supplies to make a large poster. Give children happy face stickers to stick on the poster to form the word - LIFE. Write GAME OF... above the stickers word of LIFE. Beneath the heading, let children write GOOD choices in colorful markers and write BAD choices in black markers.

MEMORY VERSE BAG: Supply each child with a paper lunch bag and markers to decorate the bag with today's Bible verse or choices we can make or to write GAME OF LIFE on the bag. Have today's Bible verse written out and cut into several pieces and put into an envelope so when the child is ready, the teacher can dump the Bible verse pieces of paper into their brown bag. Then let the children take the verse out of their bag and try to put the verse together. Encourage children to take their memory verse bag home and give to another member of their family to see if anyone in their family can put the Bible verse together.

GAME PUZZLE: Before class time, the teacher will have jig saw puzzles made up for the children to put together as a class. The teacher will make the puzzles from a large piece of poster board using words or pictures representing ideas from our lesson today. The teacher can draw the pictures for the puzzle or use magazine pictures or words, glue them to the poster board and then cut it into pieces for children to put together. Let the children work together as teams to put their CHOICES GAME PUZZLE together.

TREATS GAME: Put a bowl of treats (either cupcakes, candy or cookies) on a table on the far side of the room. Have all the children stand against the wall on the other side of the room. The teacher will ask questions about today's lesson for the children to answer. Each time they give a correct answer, they can move one GIANT step forward toward the TREATS bowl or basket, until they reach the TREATS. Have the

children sit in a circle enjoying their snack while the teacher tells the children that in the GAME OF LIFE, there is always something WONDERFUL that happens when we make GOOD choices and follow God's directions!

SING A SONG: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus; Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

Song: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

[Words and Music \(pdf\)](#)



[MP3 Accompaniment Track](#)

Song: "Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus"

[Words and Music \(pdf\)](#)



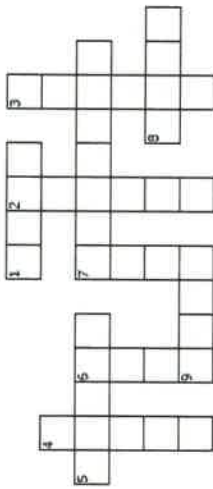
[MP3 Accompaniment Track](#)

About Carol Williams

Carol and her husband have served churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, Michigan, and Indiana. Carol loves to work with children so you will find her teaching in Junior Church and children's Sunday School. She also has clowning ministry in which she is known as Bubbles tc (the clown).

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Crossword Puzzle



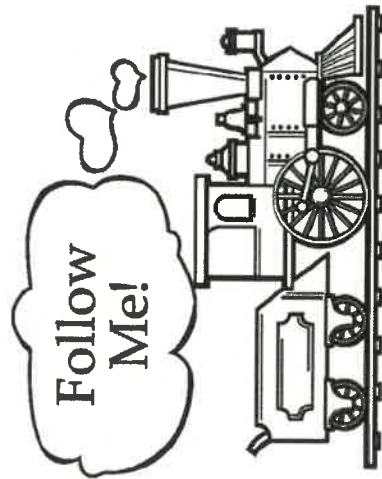
ACROSS

- The period between birth and death
- The object upon which Jesus was crucified
- To care about what you want without thinking of others
- To refuse to allow yourself something
- To no longer have something because it has been taken away

DOWN

- To be guided by someone else; to go behind
- The teachings of Jesus and the Apostles
- A large number of people gathered together
- The part of a person that continues to live after a person dies
- To keep someone or something safe from harm

FOLLOW	CROWD	SELFISH	LIFE	SOUL
GOSPEL	LOSE	SAVE	CROSS	DENY



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Children's Worship Bulletin

The Game of Life

Mark 8:34-38

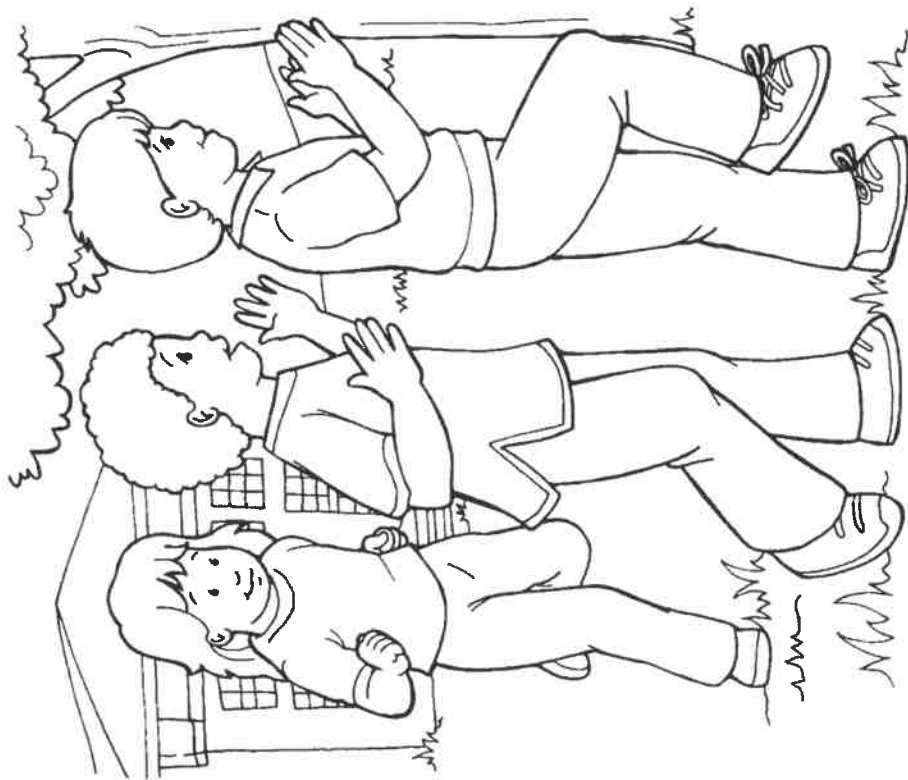
Word Search Puzzle

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

FORFEIT	WHOLE	GAIN	DENY
WORLD	LOSE	FOLLOW	GOSPEL
SAVE	GOOD	HIMSELF	SOUL
CROSS	DISCIPLES	LIFE	CROWD

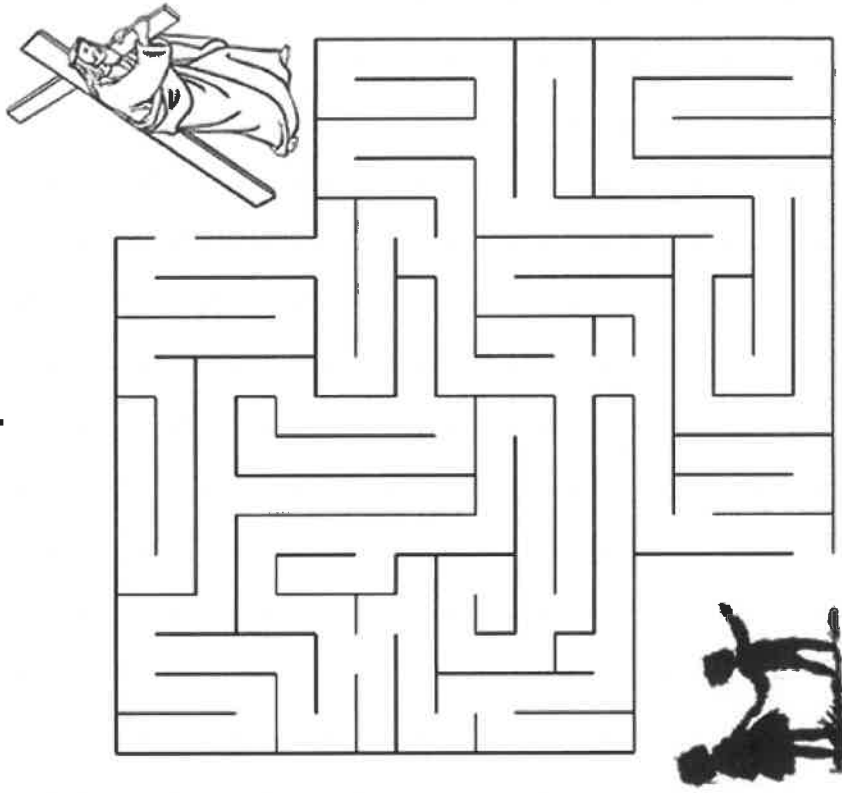
Your Church Name Here
Anytown, USA

Coloring Page



Maze Puzzle

Follow the path to Jesus.

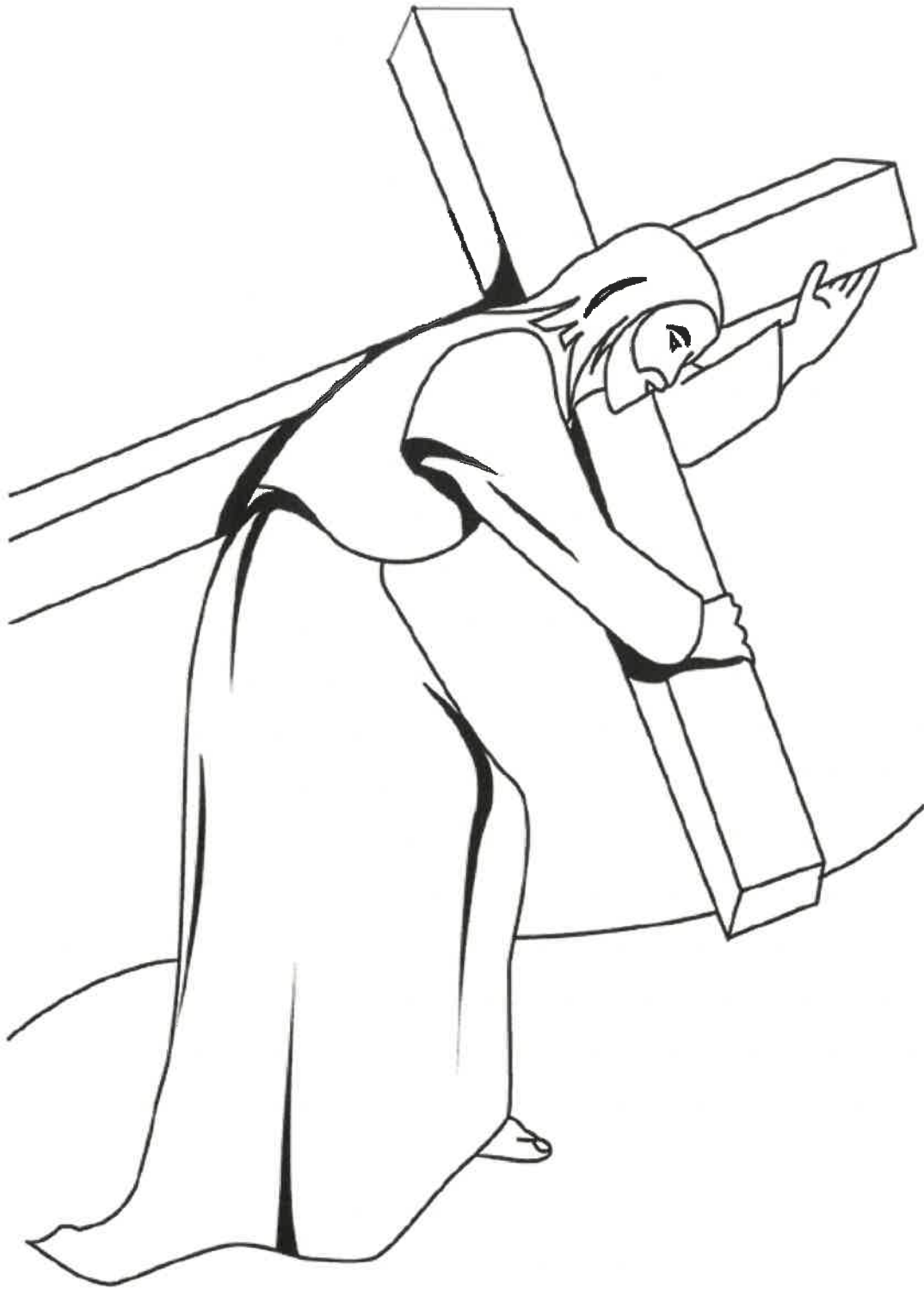


“Whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”
Mark 8:35b (NIV)

I will follow Jesus, Our Leader

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""Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me.."

Mark 8:34 (NIV)

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