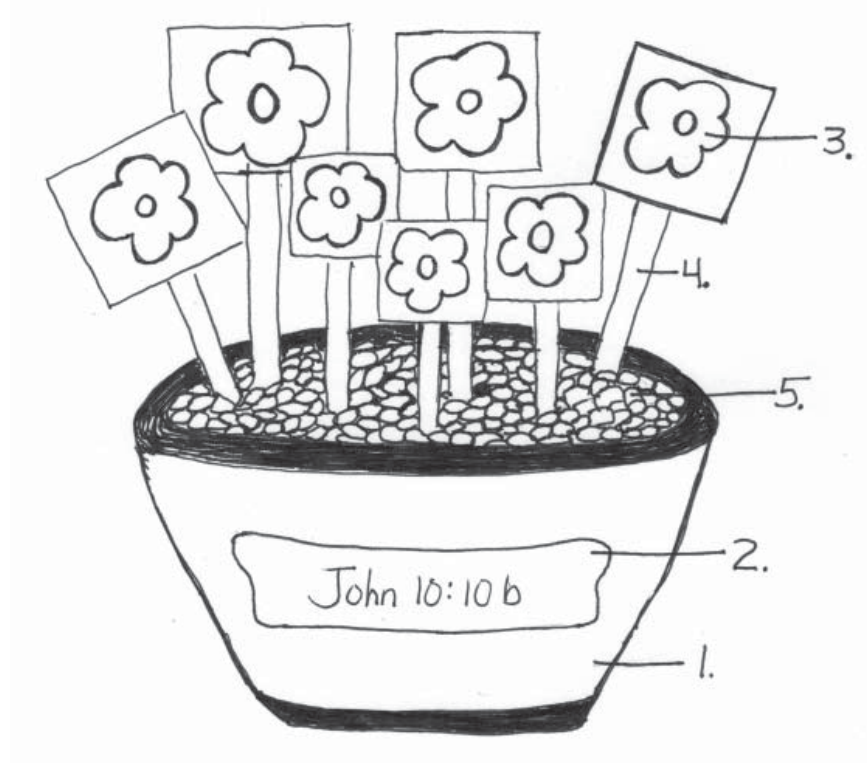


Flower Garden Instructions—Read before you begin!

As you do your devotional each day, we suggest you let each child make his own flower garden to help remind him of the lesson. This section tells you how to make a flower garden.

Supplies Needed:

1. **Container**--You will need to find a **container** that can serve as the base of your flower garden. A flower pot, bowl, or basket will work.
2. **Scripture verse**--Find a way to attach John 10:10b to your container. You may want to write the verse out on a peice of paper and tape/glue the paper to the container. If appropriate, you could also write the verse directly on the container.
3. **Flowers** (provided on page 16)--The flowers for your flower garden are all on page 16. Print these out (on card stock or heavy paper if possible) and cut them out. Use the square patterns on page 15 to cut square backings for your flowers out of the appropriate color papers. We recommend placing all your cut flowers/squares in a bag for safe keeping until you need to use them. You may also wish to put coloring supplies and glue in your bag so you will have everything you need each day to complete your flower.
4. **Stems**--You will need **popsicle sticks** to use as stems on which you can glue your flowers/backings. Four jumbo sticks (1") and three regular sticks (3/8") will work best. You can use straws instead of popsicle sticks, but you will need to staple the flower to the straw instead of gluing it.
5. **Base**--You will need to put something in the bottom of your container that will help your popsicle stick flowers stand. Dry beans, Styrofoam, or even dirt will all work.



Daily Flower Garden Instructions:

Every day, you will be decorating and adding a new flower to your garden. Although the “Garden” section in each day’s devotional will give you specific instructions, below are a few important things that you need to know.

You probably noticed when you cut your flowers that each flower had a little picture on it. These pictures are designed to help you remember the devotional readings. The devotional will tell you which flower to use that day.

After you finish decorating each flower, glue it to either a craft stick or staple it onto a straw. Glue/staple one of the colored squares to the other side of the craft stick/straw. The devotional will tell you what color square to use. Before you glue/staple the colored square, however, draw/write on it something to remind you of what you read that day. Once you’ve finished decorating the flower and backing, add your flower to your container!

Sample Garden Section:

Garden: Flower: Tomb center; **Square:** Yellow

Flower: *This tells you which flower to use. Here you would use the flower that has a tomb in its center.*

Square: *This tells you which color square paper to use as a backing for your flower.*

Palm Sunday: We Need Life

Do you know what today is? It's Palm Sunday, the beginning of Easter week! In just one week we will be celebrating one of the most important events in all history—Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

To prepare our hearts for Easter, we're going to take this week to look at what Jesus did for us by His life, death, and resurrection. We'll discover that the events of that first Easter week were all part of God's plan to bring us life. While He was on earth, Jesus once said,

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. *John 10:10b*

Jesus came to bring us spiritual life. God knew that we,

...were dead in trespasses and sins.

Ephesians 2:1b

This means that our hearts and spirits—the inside parts of us—are dead, or closed off, from God and His righteousness. Ever since Adam sinned back in the Garden of Eden, man has been born in rebellion against God. It is as though our souls are dead to God and His ways.

Think of a dead man for a moment. Can he help himself or make himself better? Of course not! A dead man cannot do anything at all. He is hopeless and helpless.

Likewise, the Bible teaches us that apart from God we are,

...without hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:12b NIV

Have you ever tried to make yourself good? If you have, you know that you cannot succeed. Although you might try your hardest, you simply *cannot* make yourself good. The Bible says it's just as impossible for us to do good as it is for someone to change his color skin.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

Jeremiah 13:23NIV

Even when we do something that appears good, we do it with the wrong motives and in our own strength. Our hearts are dead—they are separated from God. On our own, we are completely hopeless.

But there's good news! Easter is all about how Jesus came and brought us life. Because of the events of Easter week, we can have new life.

Think About:

So often we forget that we are hopeless and helpless on our own. We try to make ourselves better and grow discouraged when we fail.

But our sin doesn't surprise God. He knows that on our own we are and always will be hopeless. That's why He sent Jesus to bring us life.

When you see your sin today, instead of trying to fix or hide it, run to God, ask for forgiveness, and thank Him for sending Jesus to bring you life.

Prayer:

Dear God, I'm overwhelmed sometimes when I look at the evilness of my own heart. Thank you that my sin doesn't surprise you—that you sent Jesus to bring me life. Please help me to remember this and to depend on you instead of myself. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Garden: Flower: Snowflake center; **Square:** Black

Note: If you have not already done so, read the "Flower Garden Instructions" section at the beginning of your devotional and follow the instructions.

It's time to start adding flowers to your flower garden! Use the black square today to remind you of sin. Just like you cannot make that black square white, so we cannot make our hearts acceptable in God's sight.

The little snowflake in the center of your flower is to remind you that, although we cannot change ourselves, God had a plan to bring us life—to make it so that we could be clean and righteous in His sight.

On the back of your square, you may wish to draw or write something that will remind you how much you need Jesus to bring you life.