

A Dream of a Tree

Teacher's Notes

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a huge tree. The vision meant that he thought he was greater than everyone. When we think we are greater than everyone, we become like an animal, just as he did. To become truly human or heavenly, we must look to the Lord, ask His help to do what is right, and not think we are better than others.

Daniel 4 Lesson Plan		Materials Needed
1. Welcome Activity (2-3 minutes)	Be a Tree p. 1	
2. Focus on the Word (5-7 minutes)	Read Daniel 4 and discuss p. 2	shortened version of text included on p. 3
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	I Am Like a Tree Book pp. 4-11	crayons or markers, glue and glitter, cotton buds (e.g. Q-Tips), thick <u>pink</u> water-based paint, paper towels or wipes, stapler
	The Tree That's Me Song pp. 12-13	stiff paper, craft sticks, scissors, crayons or markers, tape, device for showing online video
	Picture to Color p. 14	crayons or markers
4. Recitation & Closing (2-3 minutes)	Recitation and Closing p. 15	Parent Note p. 16

New Church Concept People and Trees

Early childhood is like a tree sprout emerging from the seed. Youth and young adulthood are like that sprout growing into a trunk with slender branches. Earthly truths we first take in are like leaves. Our first steps into the marriage of what is good and true are like the flowers. The good deeds done from a caring spirit are like the fruit. The propagation of wisdom from love is like the seeds. See *Divine Providence* 332.3

Welcome Activity: Be a Tree

Gather children in a circle, all standing.

Imagine what it would be like to be a tree. Let's stand tall like trees. Plant your feet firmly on the ground, like the roots. Your legs and body are like a strong trunk. Reach your arms up in the air like branches. Let your fingers be like the leaves. Now, let's pretend the wind is blowing. Wiggle your fingers in the breeze. Now the wind is stronger. Imagine your branches are waving to and fro.

What it would be like to have birds resting on your "branches" or animals climbing your trunk? Who might come and eat your delicious fruits?

Our story is about king Nebuchadnezzar, who had a dream about a big tree. Let's find out what he saw.

Focus on the Word

New Church Concept People and Animals

In themselves people are no different from animals. Their senses, appetites, natural desires, and affections are similar. So are their good loves such as loving companions, offspring, and married partners. However, people are superior to animals because they have an inner life which animals do not have. That life is the life of faith and love from the Lord. If the life of love from the Lord were not present in the will, and the life of faith from the Lord in the understanding, a person would not be human. See *Arcana Coelestia* 714

New Church Concept The Stump

The stump of the roots which they should leave in the ground means the Word being understood as to the letter only, which is knowledge in the memory. The bands of iron and brass mean that the interior truths and goods are closed up and bound. See *Apocalypse Explained* 650.32

Read: Daniel 4. A shortened version is included on page 3. For young children you may wish to summarize some of the story and read aloud the sentences printed in **bold**.

1. **What did king Nebuchadnezzar dream about?** A huge tree that reached up to heaven.
2. **The tree looked beautiful to king Nebuchadnezzar. It had big leaves and lots of fruit. What lived in or near the tree?** Birds lived in the branches, and animals grazed underneath.
3. **What happened to the tree?** It was cut down. The animals and birds left.
4. **Who told Nebuchadnezzar what his dream meant?** Daniel.
5. **Nebuchadnezzar thought the tree was beautiful because it was a picture of him. He thought he was great and that everyone could see how great he was. In fact he thought he was better than everyone else. He thought he had built a splendid kingdom all by himself! Is it possible for us to do things by ourselves?** No, the Lord gives us the power to do everything. We could not do anything without Him!
6. **Do you sometimes pretend not to hear your parents when they are telling you to stop doing something? King Nebuchadnezzar didn't listen to Daniel. He kept behaving like he was the best of all. So what happened to him?** He became like an animal.
7. **Perhaps you've seen someone acting like an animal—someone who is angry and wants their way? We call this having a temper tantrum. Often people act that way when they are thinking only about themselves.**
8. **Then King Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes to heaven, and his life changed. He became a person again and could live nicely with other people. When we are being angry and selfish, we must lift our eyes to the Lord too, and do what He tells us. Sometimes this can take a long time—just as it took Nebuchadnezzar a long time to do this.**
9. **We can be happy when we obey our parents, and do what the Lord's Word tells us to. We can be like a beautiful tree, a home for good thoughts and loving actions.**

Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams of a Tree

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was in my palace. ⁵ As I was lying in bed, the visions of my head troubled me. ⁶ So I commanded that the wise men of Babylon be brought to interpret the dream. ⁷ When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it. ⁸ Finally, **Daniel (Beltshazzar) came and I told him the dream.**

⁹ I said, “Beltshazzar, the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you. Explain my dream and its interpretation. ¹⁰ These are my visions: **Before me stood a tree** in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. ¹¹ **The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the heavens;** it was visible to the ends of the earth. ¹² **Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it animals found shelter, and birds lived in its branches;** from it every creature was fed.

¹³ **“I saw a watcher coming down from heaven. ¹⁴ He called: ‘Cut down the tree and cut off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals get out from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain. ‘‘Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants. ¹⁶ Let his heart be changed from a man and be the heart of an animal, till seven times pass by.**

¹⁸ **“Now, tell me what the dream means, for none of the wise men can interpret it. But you can, because the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.”**

¹⁹ Daniel (Beltshazzar) answered, **“O King, ²⁰ the tree you saw, which grew large and strong—²² you are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to end of the earth. ²³ “The king saw a holy one coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it....’**

²⁴ **“This is the interpretation: ²⁵ You will be driven away from people and live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High reigns over all kingdoms on earth. ²⁶ The command to leave the stump with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. ²⁷ Therefore, O King: Renounce your sins. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”**

²⁸ **All this happened. ²⁹ Twelve months later, as King Nebuchadnezzar was walking on the roof of the palace ³⁰ he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” ³¹ A voice came from heaven saying, “King Nebuchadnezzar: Your kingdom has been taken from you. ³² You will be driven away and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High rules over all kingdoms on earth.”**

³³ **Immediately King Nebuchadnezzar was driven away and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.**

³⁴ **At the end of that, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me. ³⁶ At the same time my sanity was restored and I was restored to my throne. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because all His works are truth and His ways just.**

(Daniel 4:4-37 adapted from the NIV)

I Am Like a Tree Book

Materials Needed for Each Child

I Am Like a Tree book pp. 5-11, crayons or markers, glue and glitter, glitter tray, cotton buds (Q-Tips) for painting, thick pink water-based paint, paper towels or wipes to clean up, stapler

Prepare in Advance

Print *I Am Like a Tree* book and cut off the bottom edges. Gather supplies. Mix pink paint in small containers for sharing. Write each child's name on the first page of the book (if you know them already).

New Church Concept Correspondences of the Parts of Trees

Roots: We must be rooted in the Lord's Word. See *Doctrine of Life* 93

Leaves: True ideas from the Word. See *Arcana Coelestia* 885

Flowers: Happy thoughts from the joy of useful service. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5116

Fruit: Good actions we do because we love the Lord and want to obey Him. See *Arcana Coelestia* 885

Birds: Thoughts. See *Arcana Coelestia* 745

Animals: Affections. See *Arcana Coelestia* 2179

The Word often compares people with trees. The New Church teaches that parts of a tree correspond to parts of the human mind. Children will create books that compare parts of a tree with parts of themselves.

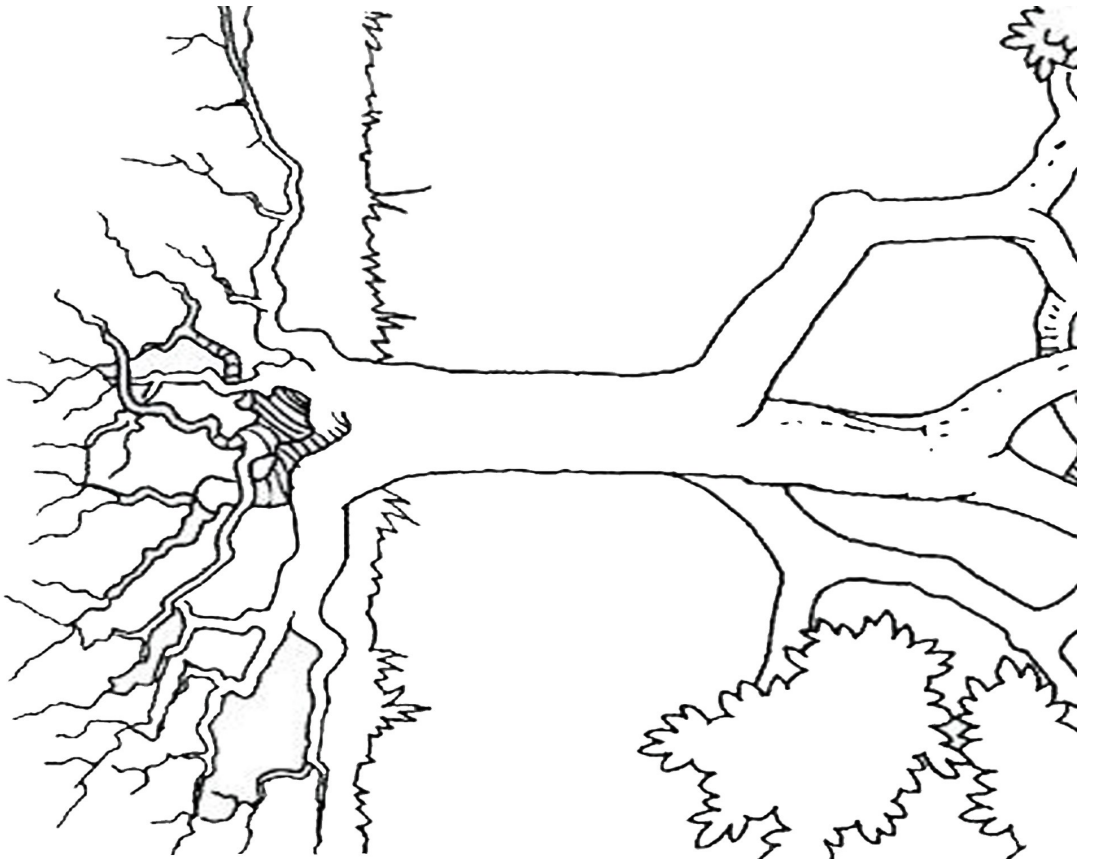
1. The Lord's Word tells us that we are like trees. We are going to make a book that shows how this is true. We'll start with the roots. Where do the roots live? They live deep underground. They take in water and food so the tree grows strong. Worms and insects help prepare the soil for the trees to get food. Our minds need food too! The Lord's Word "feeds" our minds so we can grow toward heaven.
2. Hand out the page "Trees are rooted in the earth" and markers or crayons. Invite children to color the picture of the tree. Add insects and worms in the soil. We are rooted in the Lord's Word. Color the Word. Hand out glue and invite the children to make lines radiating from the Word to show how special it is. Sprinkle glitter over the glue and set the pages aside to dry.
3. Hand out the page "Strong trunks and branches reach to the sky." Color the picture of the tree. Add your own branches that reach to the sky. Color the picture of the baby and add a picture of yourself—showing how big and strong you have grown since you were a baby.
4. Hand out the page "Leaves make food for the tree to grow." Add more leaves to the branches. Leaves correspond to true ideas from the Word. For "True ideas help heaven grow in me", color in the stems and add flowers.
5. For the page "Lovely flowers give joy", color the picture. Paint blossoms on the branch using a cotton bud (Q-Tip) dipped in pink paint. Color the picture of the children. Draw a toy or food between their hands to show that they are sharing. Set aside to dry.
6. For the page "Trees grow fruit for us to eat", color the picture and add your own fruit. On the opposite page, draw yourself doing something good.
7. For the page "The Lord makes many kinds of trees", color the trees. On the opposite page, decorate the many kinds of people who have heaven inside them.
8. Finish the book by decorating the cover page and writing the child's name on it.
9. Gather the pages, put them in the correct sequence, fold them in half and staple them together along the folded edge.



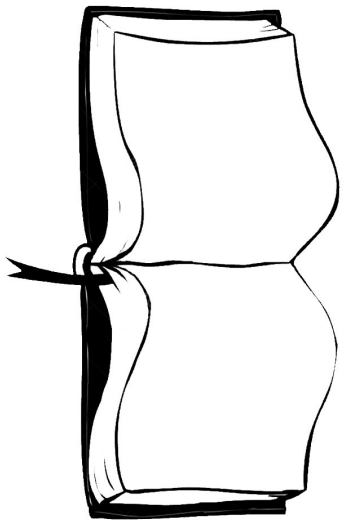
I Am

Like A Tree

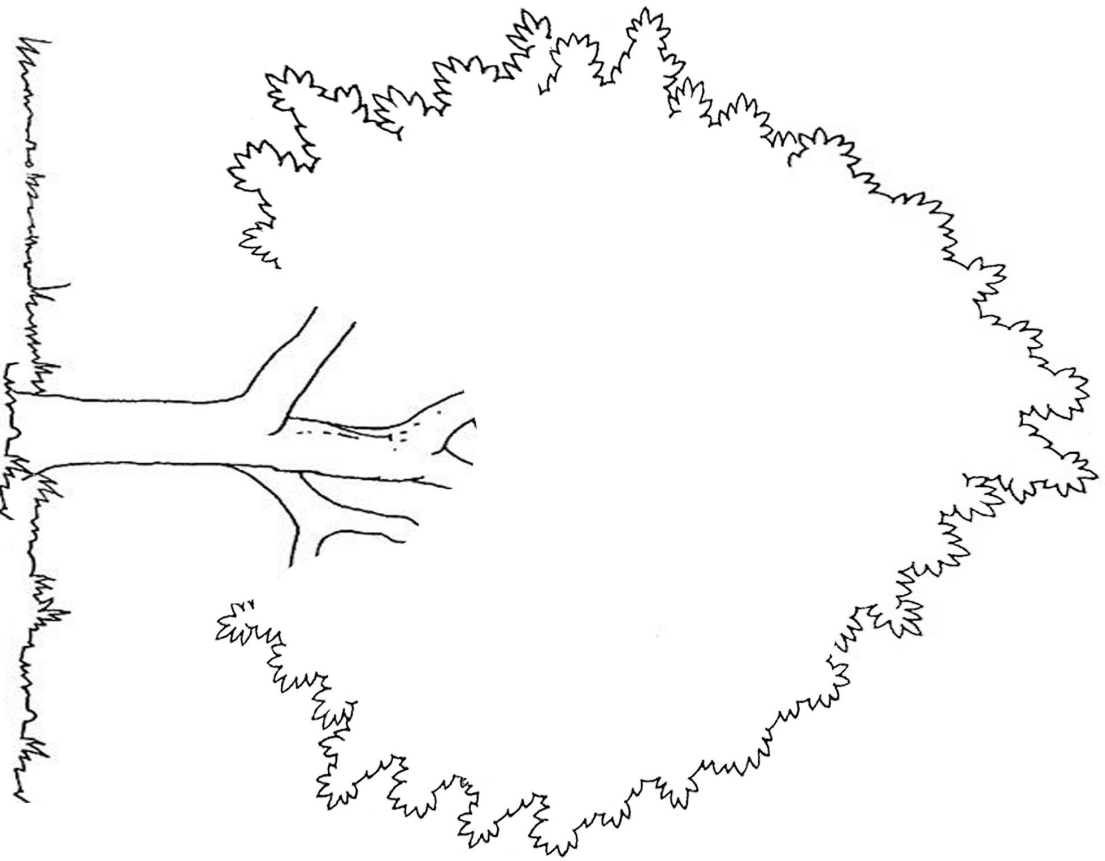
By _____



Trees are rooted in the earth.



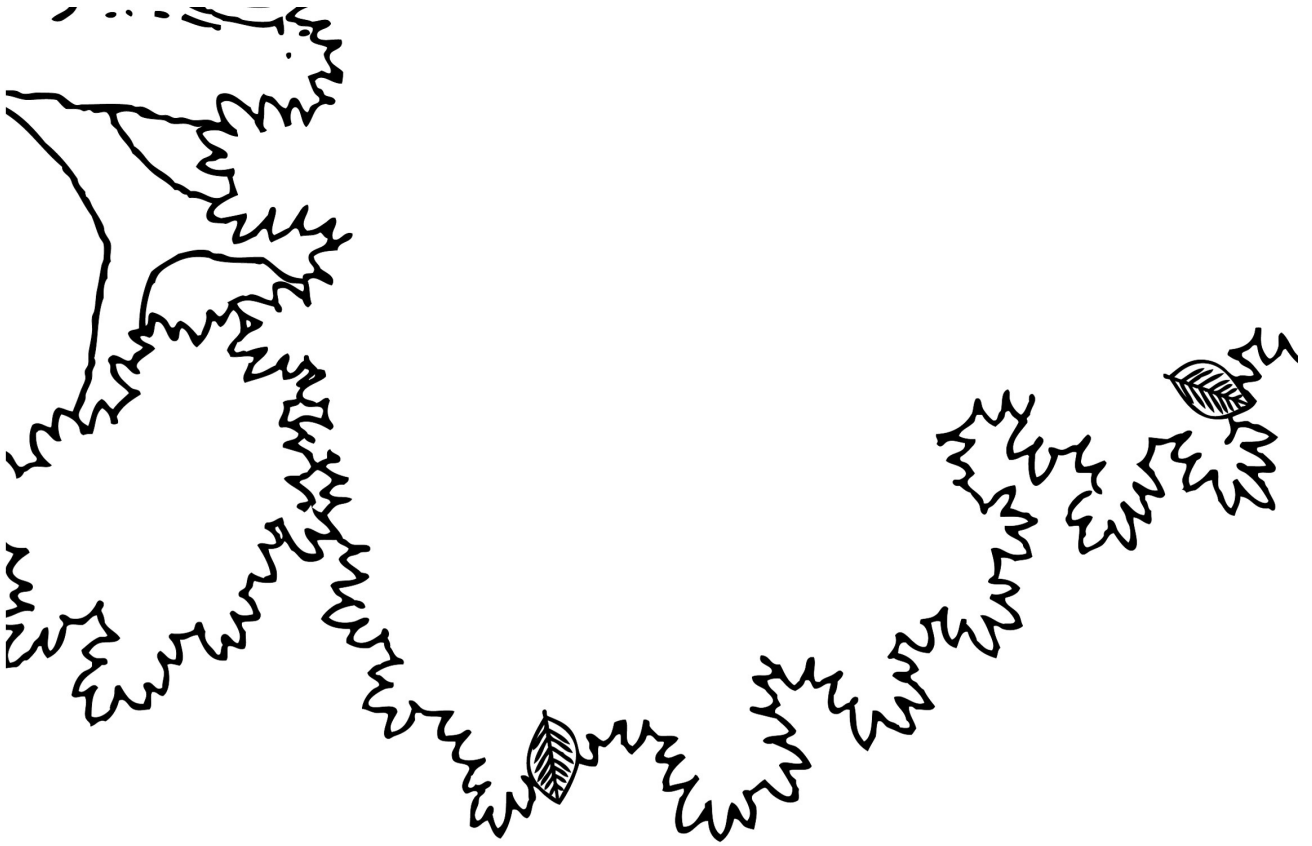
I am rooted in the Lord's Word.



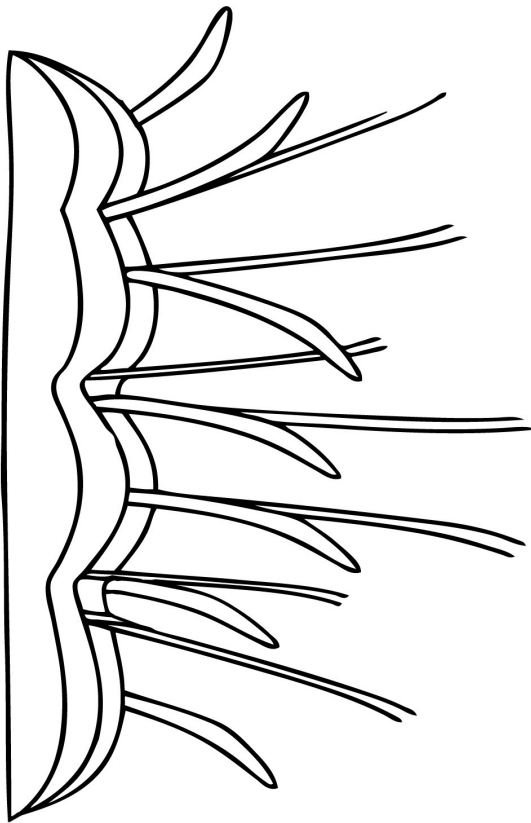
Strong trunks and branches reach to the sky.



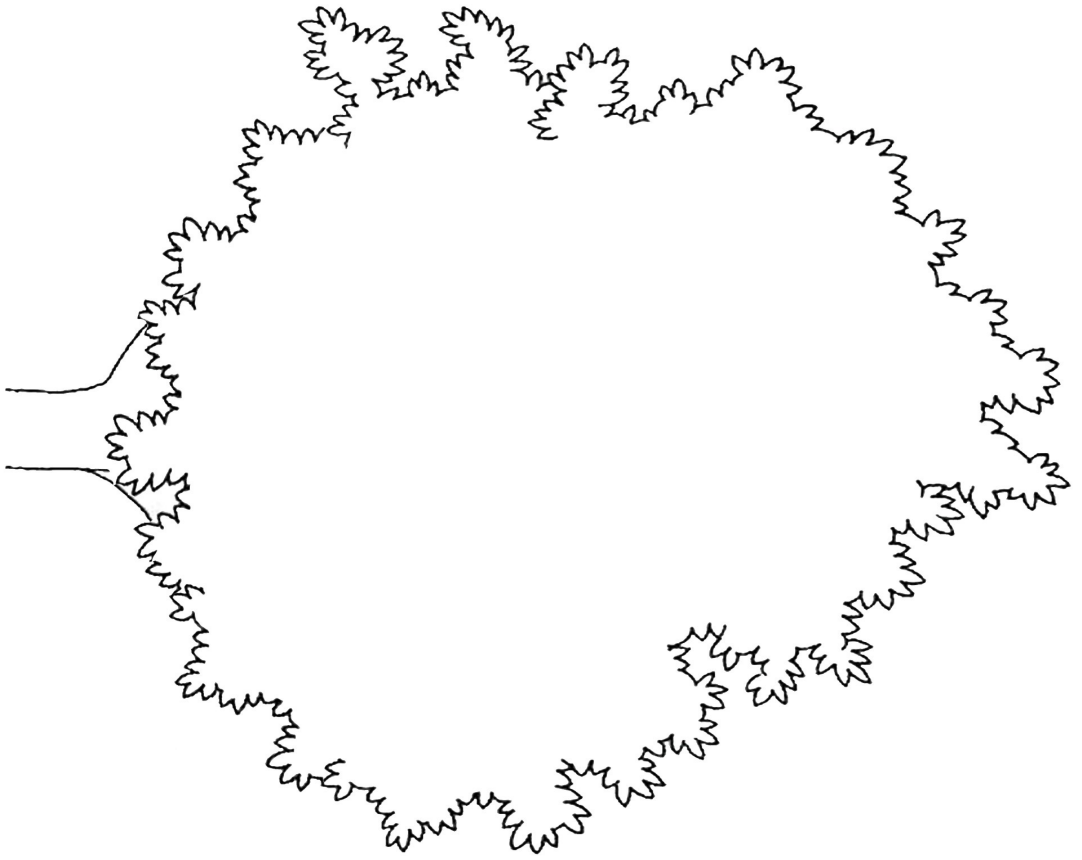
Love for the Lord can grow strong with me.



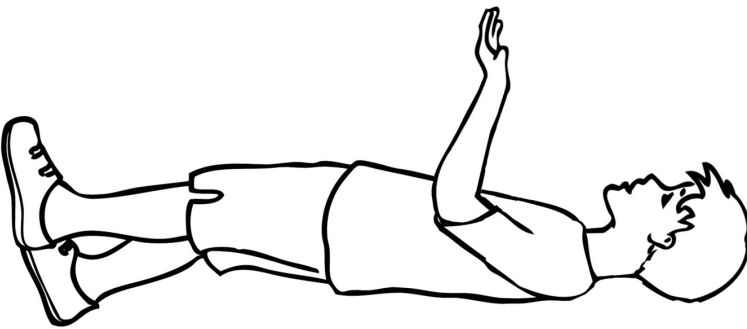
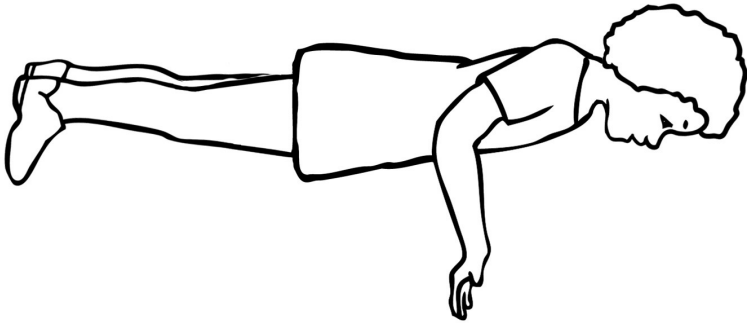
Leaves make food for the tree to grow.



True ideas help heaven grow in me.

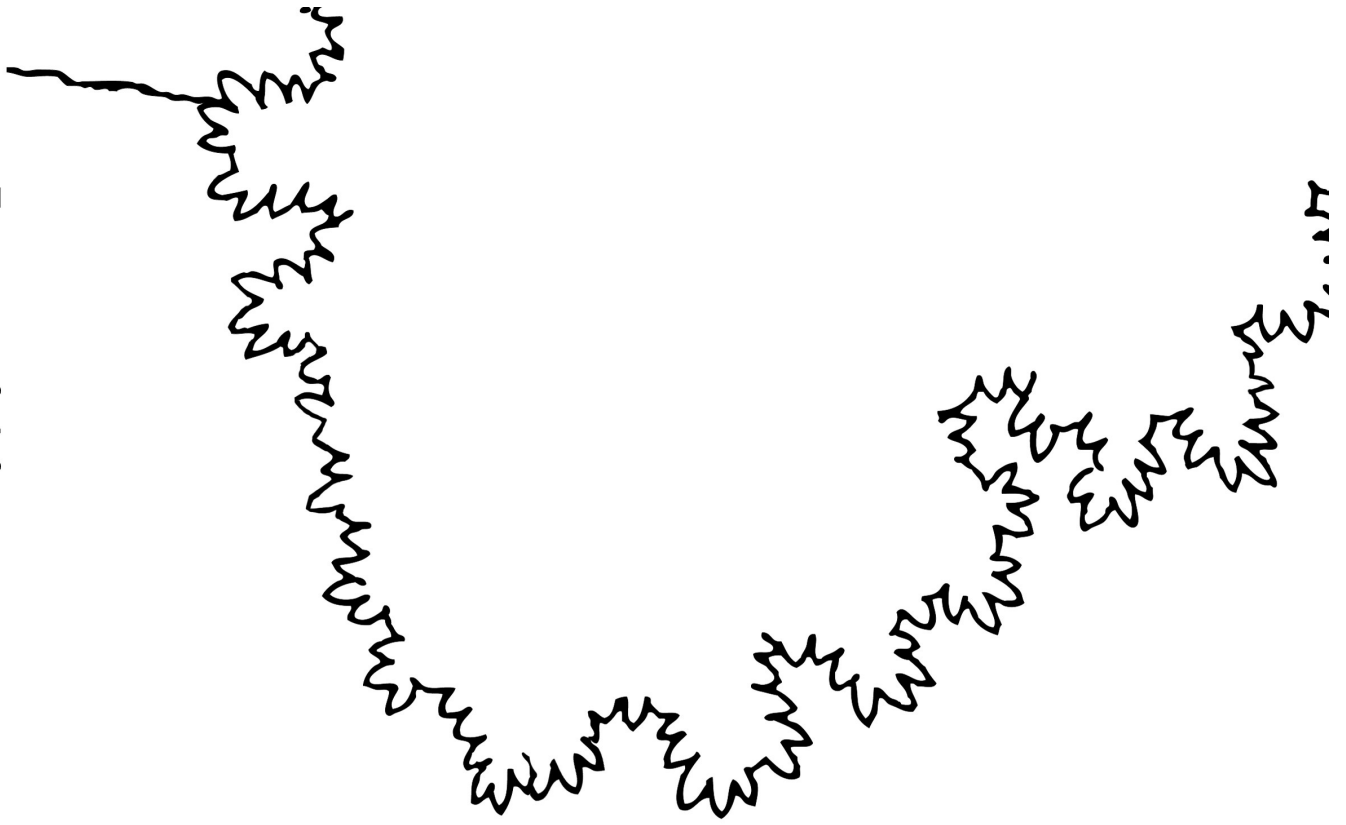


Lovely flowers give joy.

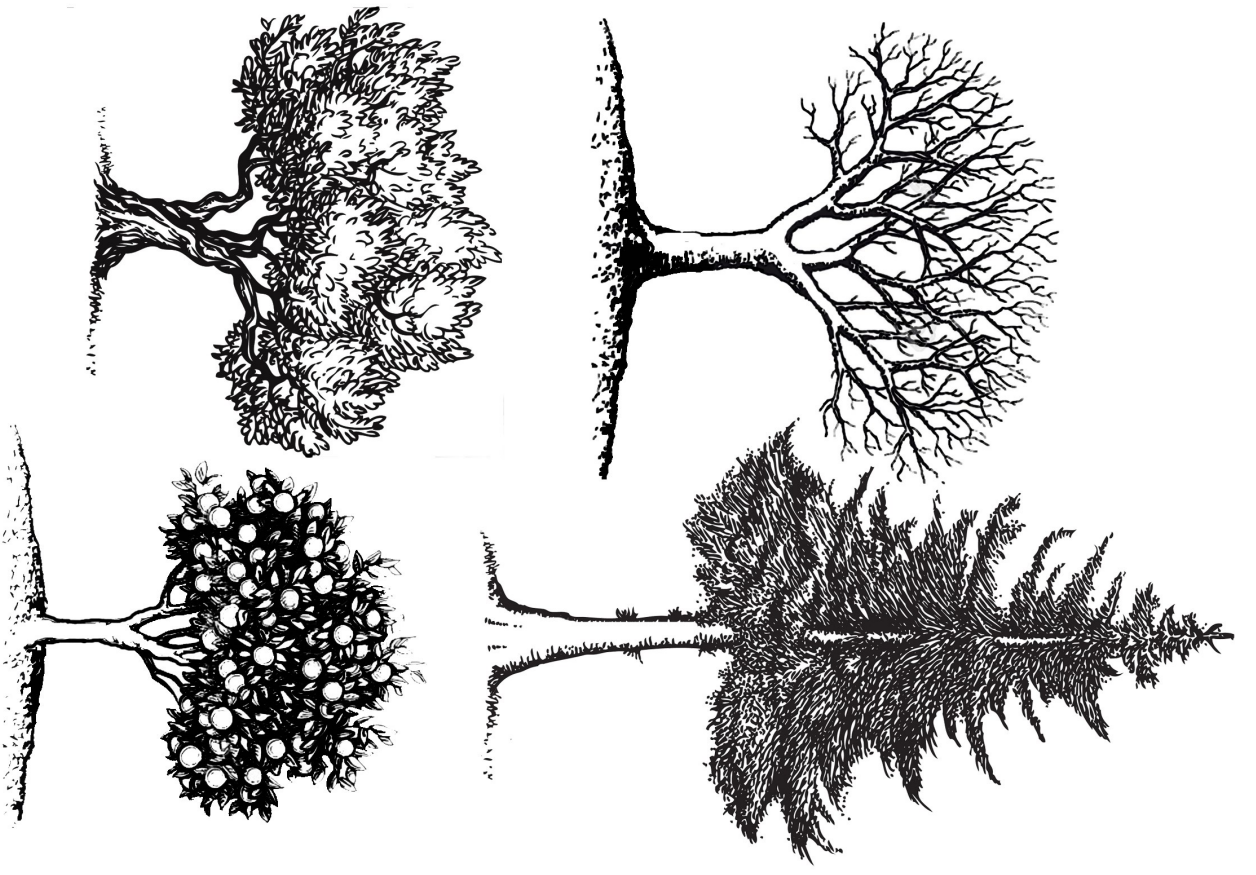


Doing what's right brings joy.

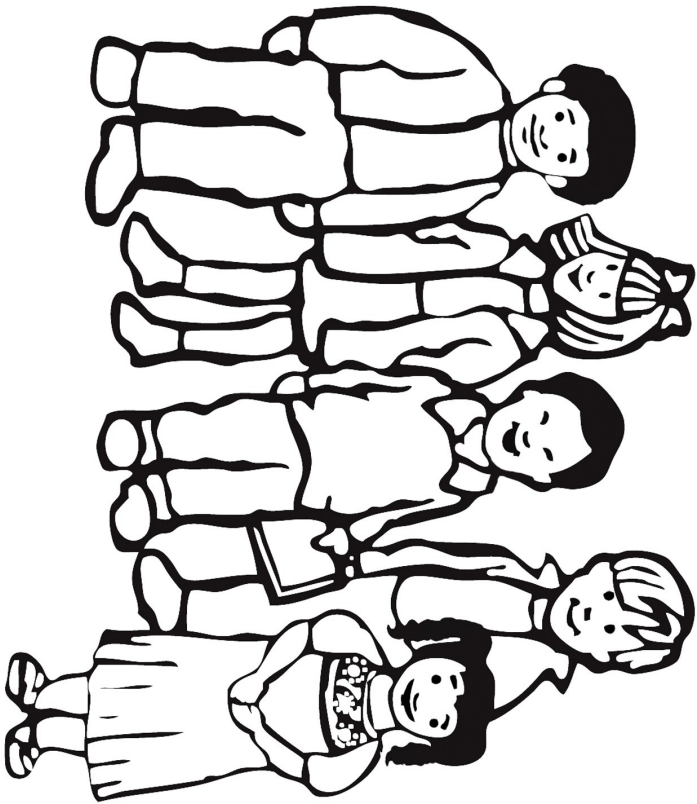
Trees grow fruit for us to eat.



My fruits are good deeds I do for others.



The Lord makes many kinds of trees.



Many kinds of people have heaven inside.

The Tree That's Me Song

Materials Needed

copies of *Fruit Shapes* p. 13 printed on stiff paper, craft sticks, scissors, crayons or markers, tape, device for showing online video at www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-tree-thats-me-song/

Prepare in Advance

Students will need 2 fruit shapes each. Print enough for them to have choices. Cut apart the fruit shapes. For a young group, you may wish to cut the fruit out ahead of time as well.

New Church Concept People and Trees

In the Word a person is compared to a tree. The truths of faith are compared to leaves, and forms of the good of charity to fruit; the seeds from which new trees grow correspond to truths which spring from good, or to faith which springs from charity. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8326

In the Word, we are described as trees, and our wisdom, arising from love, is described as a garden. See *Divine Providence* 332.3

The Word compares people to trees in numerous places. Children will imagine themselves as fruitful trees by making paper fruits they can hold, and learning a song about fruitful qualities we need to invite into our spirits so we can serve our friends and the Lord in the best way possible. These qualities are called “fruits of the spirit” (see Galatians 5:22-23, *True Christian Religion* 571).



1. How is a plant “fruitful”? (It grows food for people and animals to eat.)
2. What is your favorite kind of fruit?
3. The Lord has created many kinds of fruits for us. I have four kinds of fruit here: apples, oranges, pears and peaches. Choose two of these fruits to decorate.
4. Color the fruits. When finished, tape a popsicle stick to the back of each fruit to use as a handle.
5. Now let’s hold our fruits in our hands and put our arms out to the sides and stand tall like a tree. Can you feel the warm sun shining? It will help the fruit ripen. Here comes a breeze. Let’s make our arms wiggle about in the wind!
6. Now we are going to learn a song about the kind of tree we want to be. Play *The Tree That’s Me* video online at www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-tree-thats-me-song/. Sing the song several times.

The Tree That’s Me!

(sung to the tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*)

Gentle, joyful, patient, kind,

God’s great goodness in my mind.

Faith and love and self-control,

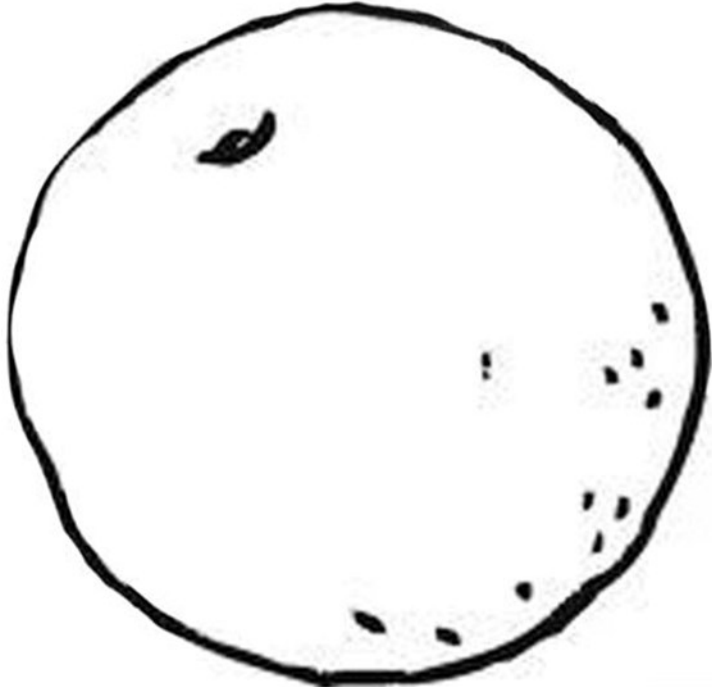
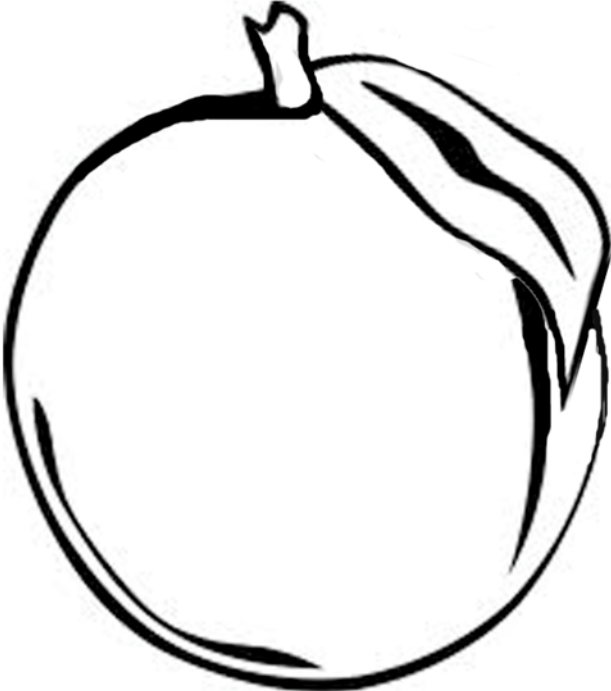
Give me peace within my soul.

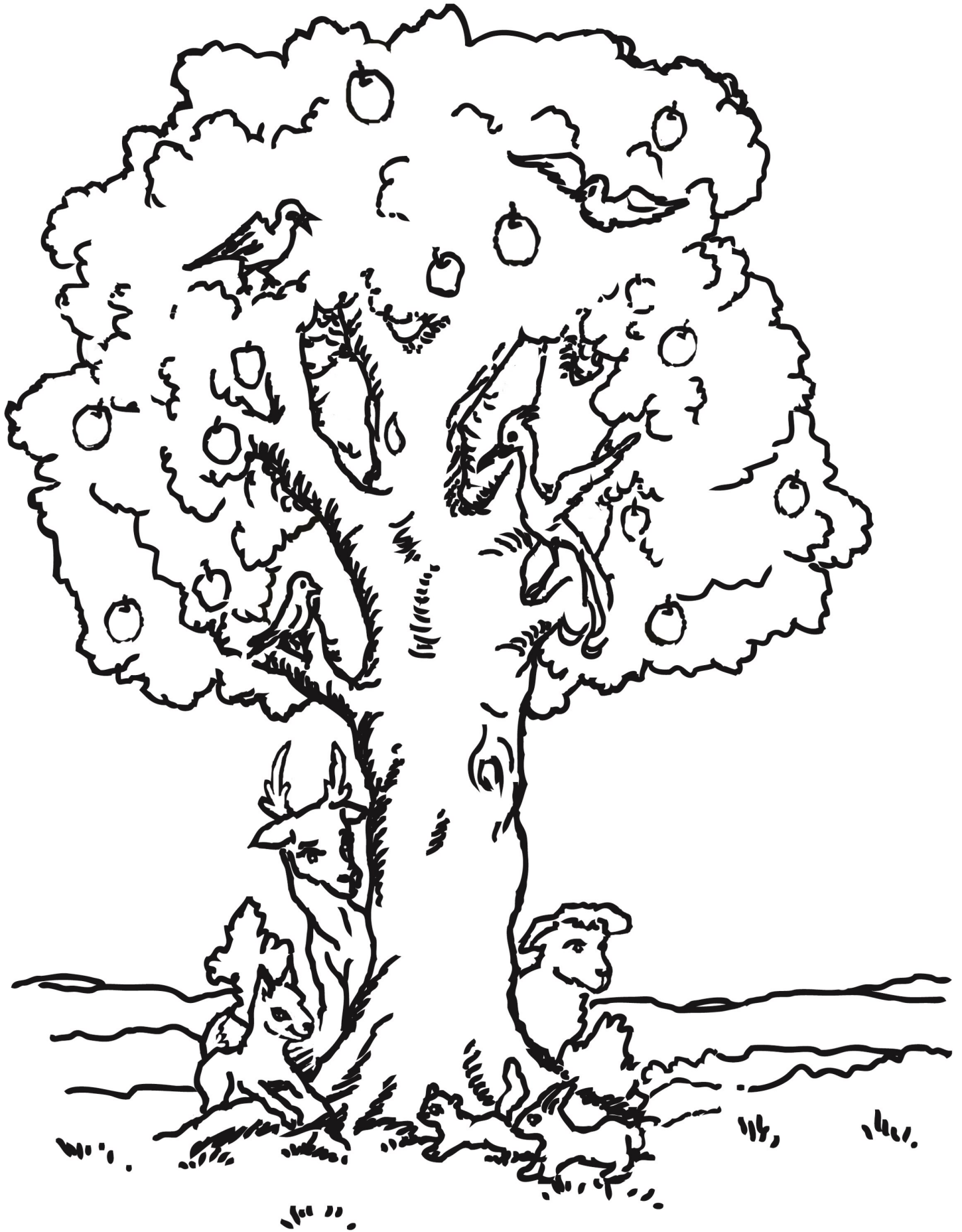
Please God make the tree that’s me,

Kind and loving as can be.

7. Stand like trees, hold your fruits and sing the song again.

Fruit Shapes





Recitation and Closing

Each lesson in the Daniel series includes a recitation. The recitations are taken from prayers in the book of Daniel. We will be learning one sentence with each lesson, and building on each sentence until all six sentences can be recited together.

Introduce the 4th sentence of *Prayers in Daniel*, the recitation for this lesson: "He gives wisdom to the wise." The Lord gave Daniel the wisdom to explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream and warn him to change what he was doing.

Try saying the sentence aloud and inviting the children to repeat it after you. If needed, break the sentence into phrases, e.g. "He gives wisdom", "to the wise." Invite children to repeat just one phrase at a time. End by joining the phrases together and saying the entire sentence.

Review sentences 1, 2, and 3 and then recite sentences 1, 2, 3 and 4 together.

Prayers in Daniel

1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.
2. He reveals deep and secret things.
3. How great are His signs!
- 4. He gives wisdom to the wise.**
5. He removes kings and raises up kings.
6. I thank You and praise You, O God.

Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted

Closing

When we obey our parents, and do what the Lord's Word tells us to we can be like a beautiful and fruitful tree, a home for good thoughts and loving actions.

Give *Parent Notes* (p.16) to children as they leave.

Cut the Parent Notes apart and give one to each child.

Nebuchadnezzar Dreams of a Tree

Dear Parents,

Today we heard about Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in which he saw what looked like a beautiful tree. The tree had to be cut down because it was not good, but Nebuchadnezzar found out how to really love the Lord.

Ask your child how people are like trees. Listen to a song online at www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-tree-thats-me-song/.

Please help your child say sentences 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the *Prayers in Daniel* this week.

Thank you.

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