

“I Was in Prison...”

The Man Possessed by Demons
Luke 8:26-39

Level A

Ages 3-6

Series Theme: You shall love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself.

Lesson Focus: The Lord has the power to help us get rid of bad thoughts and feelings.

Reading Summary: Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee and landed in the land of the Gadarenes. They were met by a man possessed by demons who lived among the tombs outside of the town. Recognizing Jesus, he begged Him not to torment him. Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Although he was chained, the spirit had often seized the man so that he broke his chains and was driven into the wilderness. Jesus asked the spirit’s name, and the spirit answered, “Legion,” because it was really many demons. The demons begged to enter into a herd of swine that were grazing nearby. As soon as this happened, the swine rushed down a steep slope into the Sea of Galilee and drowned. People came to see what had happened and found the man in his right mind, sitting at Jesus’ feet. People in the region were afraid and asked Jesus to leave. He told the man to return to his house and tell others what the Lord had done for him.

| Lesson 6 | | Materials Supplied | Materials Needed |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes) | Activity | Being in Prison directions p. 2 | |
| 2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes) | Read the Word and Talk About It | see <i>Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2 | Bible or copy of Luke 8:26-39 |
| 3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes) | Make create a prison and then lift the bars to reveal a happy house | Prison and House directions p. 3 <i>Prison Template</i> p. 5 <i>House Template</i> p. 6 | stiff paper for printing, wide black permanent markers, clear plastic bags, scissors, tape, stapler, newspaper or scrap paper to protect table <i>optional:</i> crayons or markers |
| | Make and Act Out put together pigs, draw bad thoughts on them and then throw them into the “Sea of Galilee” | Pigs into the Sea directions pp. 3-4 <i>Pigs into the Sea</i> pp. 7-10 | color paper for printing pigs, black or dark markers, stapler, scrap paper to crumple and stuff inside <i>Pigs into the Sea</i> , blue bed sheet or towel to represent the “Sea of Galilee” |
| | Coloring Picture | Casting out Demons p. 11 | crayons, markers or colored pencils |
| 4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes) | Memory Verse introduce the memory verse for the week | Memory Verse <i>Parent Notes</i> p. 12 | |

1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

Being in Prison

Space the children around the room so they are not near each other. Have them kneel down on the floor, shut their eyes and curl up into balls. No peeking. Once they are all curled up, ask everyone to be quiet. Stay quiet for about 30 seconds. Tell them you are going to “visit” each one of them. When you touch their backs they may uncurl and sit quietly until everyone is sitting up.

1. What was it like to be all curled up by yourself?
2. Were you lonely?
3. Imagine what it would be like to be far away from your family. This is what it is like if you are in prison. Prisons are places where people go when they have done things they should not do. They cannot be with their family or friends.
4. The man in our story could not be with his friends and family either. Let’s find out why.

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Luke 8:26-39. Many teaching pictures are available online, e.g. www.bitly.com/SMLuke8.

Today’s story is about a man who could not behave the way he wanted to because too many evil spirits were with him. Although he *wanted* to do what was right, he kept doing things that hurt himself and others as well.

The Lord crossed the Sea of Galilee with His disciples and as He landed the man met Him.

Where was the man living? In a cave outside the town. People believed that it was not a clean place and that anyone who went there was not clean either. Nobody could go near the people who lived there.

What had people done to help the man? Chained him up so he wouldn’t hurt himself or anyone else. **He was so strong that he broke the chains, so it did not work.**

Sometimes evil spirits stir up bad feelings and thoughts inside us. For example, we might get angry if we do not get something we want. When have you felt this way? Was it easy to stop yourself from saying or doing something unkind?

Evil spirits are people who once lived in the world and now live in hell. They let selfishness rule in their hearts, and they like to stir up bad thoughts and feelings in our minds. When this happens we discover selfish feelings in our own hearts, but we can ask the Lord to help us fight these feelings.

Where did the Lord send the demons? Into the pigs.

What did the pigs do? They rushed over a cliff and fell into the sea. This is like the way the Lord can send evil spirits that are attacking us back into hell. When we are struggling with bad thoughts and feelings we can ask the Lord for help. He has the power to send the evil spirits away.

What happened to the man after the demons left him? He was his old self again and could be with other people safely. **People were amazed! The Lord told the man to go back to the town and tell others what had happened.**

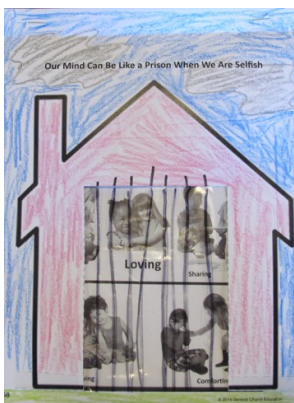
If we ask the Lord for help when we have bad thoughts and feelings He can take them away and bring us heavenly thoughts and feelings instead.

3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

Choice Prison and House

In our story, the man possessed by demons lived in a cave. After being freed by the Lord, he went back to living in a house in the town with other people. In the Word, a house represents a person's mind. Our minds can be like a prison when we are trapped by selfishness. But when we act in loving ways, our mind is like a wonderful house!



1. Place a copy of the *Prison Template* (p. 5) that you have prepared in advance in front of each child with the picture side showing.
2. When evil spirits send bad feelings into our minds those feelings can be like a trap or a prison. It can be hard to get out of them. They are like prison bars coming down in our minds. Let's draw some prison bars on this house to show what this is like.
3. Using black markers, show the children how to draw stripes or bars on the plastic (see picture just above). Young children may need help with the permanent markers to prevent a big mess!
4. We can help the Lord to set us free by trying to stop thinking bad thoughts and by doing loving things for other people. What are some loving things we can do?
5. Give each child a copy of the *House Template* (p. 6). Look at all the loving things these people are doing. Talk about each activity.
6. Help the children put the *House Template* behind the *Prison Template*. Staple the pages together at the top so the first page can be lifted. Practice lifting the *Prison* page to show how helping others helps us escape from the imprisoning feelings sent by evil spirits.
7. *Optional*: Color dark clouds around the outside of the *Prison*. Make a blue sky with the sun shining on the *House*.

Materials Needed

Prison Template p. 5 and *House Template* p. 6 for each child, printed on stiff paper; wide black permanent markers; clear plastic bags (4½ x 6"; 11 x 15cm), scissors, tape, stapler, newspaper to protect table

Prepare in Advance

Print *Prison Template* and *House Template* pp. 5-6 on stiff paper. Cut along the dotted gray lines on both pages. Cut the plastic bags into two pieces along the seams. Tape one piece of plastic to the back of each *Prison Template* as shown below.



Choice Pigs into the Sea

When we make an effort to do what is right, the Lord helps us by removing the selfish feelings from our hearts and the mean thoughts from our minds. Children draw bad thoughts, feelings and actions on pictures of pigs, make the pigs into paper "bean bags" and throw them into the "sea".

1. Give the children several *Pigs into the Sea* (pp. 7-10) and a dark marker. Brainstorm things that are bad thoughts, feelings or actions and then invite the children to draw them on the pigs.
2. When they have finished, help the children fold each pig page in half.

Materials Needed

Pigs into the Sea pp. 7-10, color paper for printing, black or dark markers for each child, stapler, scrap paper for crumpling and stuffing inside the pigs, blue sheet or towel

Prepare in Advance

Print pigs on color paper. Find a blue bed sheet or towel to represent the "Sea of Galilee."

Pigs into the Sea *continued*

3. Staple the two sides together, but not the bottom, creating a pocket.
4. Crumple scrap paper and stuff it into the pocket. Staple each pig closed.
5. When all the pigs are finished, spread a blue sheet or towel on the floor to represent the Sea of Galilee.
6. Gather the children at one side of the room holding their pigs to create a "herd" of pigs. Tell them you are going to read a verse from the story. When they hear the words "ran down the steep place" they are to run to the "Sea of Galilee" and act as the Lord's helpers by throwing the pigs into the sea. Read the following verse: "Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran down the steep place into the lake and drowned" (Luke 8:33).
7. The people taking care of the pigs must have been very surprised to find that their pigs had all run into the lake! And how happy the man must have been to have no more bad thoughts.
8. Repeat the activity if the children want to do it again. Remind them that the Lord asks us to get rid of bad thoughts, feelings and actions by asking for His help.



New Church Concept Possession

There are natural spirits who do not unite with our thoughts when they come to us...but enter our bodies and take over its senses, talking through our mouths and acting through our limbs. It seems to them as though everything of ours were theirs. These are the spirits that possess people; but they have been cast into hell by the Lord and moved decisively away; so possession like this no longer occurs. See *Heaven and Hell* 257

Materials Needed
copies of *Casting out Demons* p. 11; crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Choice Coloring Picture: Casting out Demons

Hand out copies of *Casting out Demons* (p. 11) for children to color.

4. Wrap It Up

Memory Verse

The recitation is set to music with actions for easy learning. Watch online at www.bitly.com/ForIWasHungryMV. Sing along to the video and learn the actions. This week's focus is on reviewing the first five phrases and learning the sixth and last phrase, below.

For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.

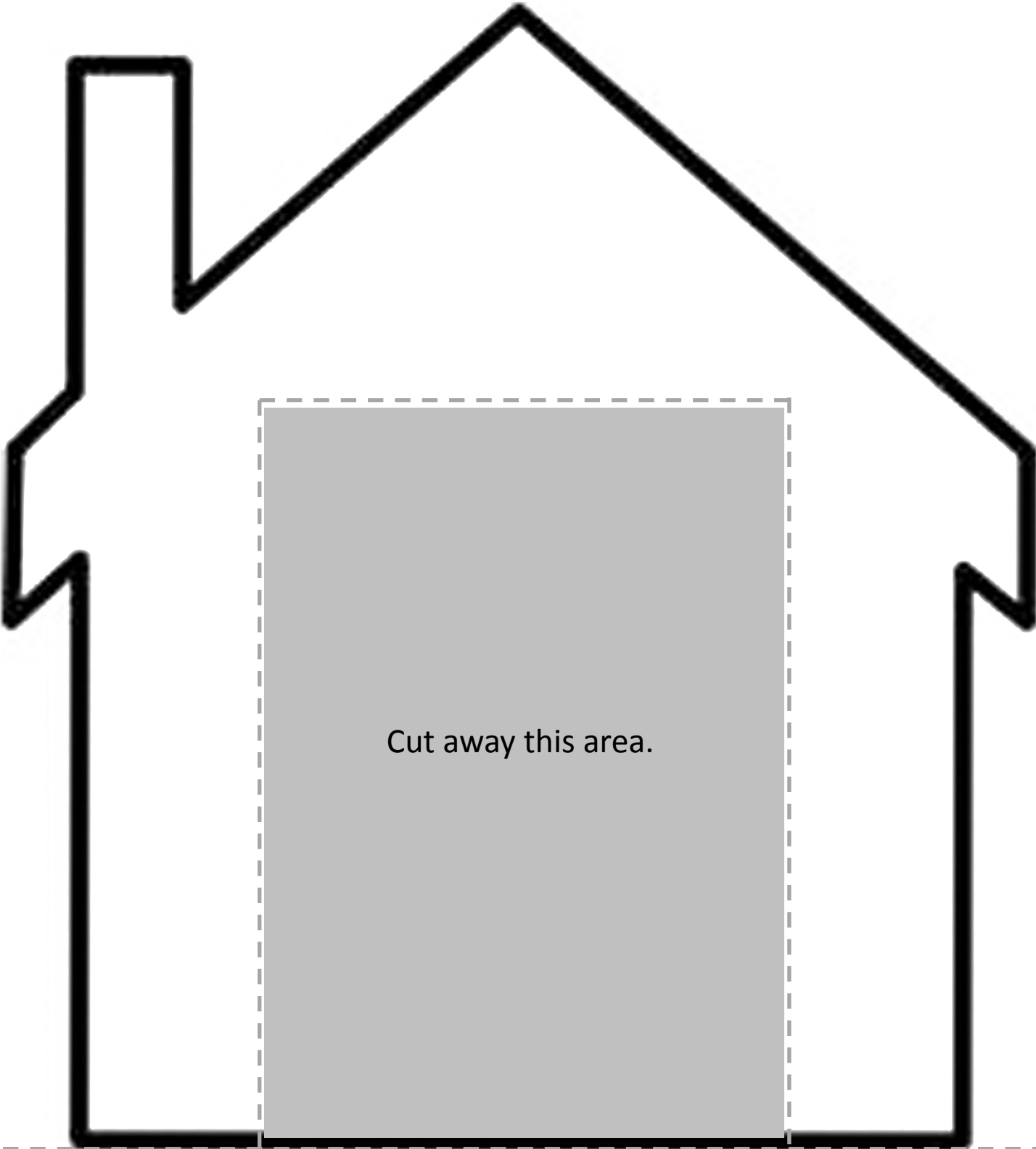
Matthew 25:35-36

Closing

The next time you have bad thoughts, remember you can ask for the Lord's help to send them away, just like the Lord sent the evil spirits into the pigs that ran down the cliff into the Sea of Galilee.

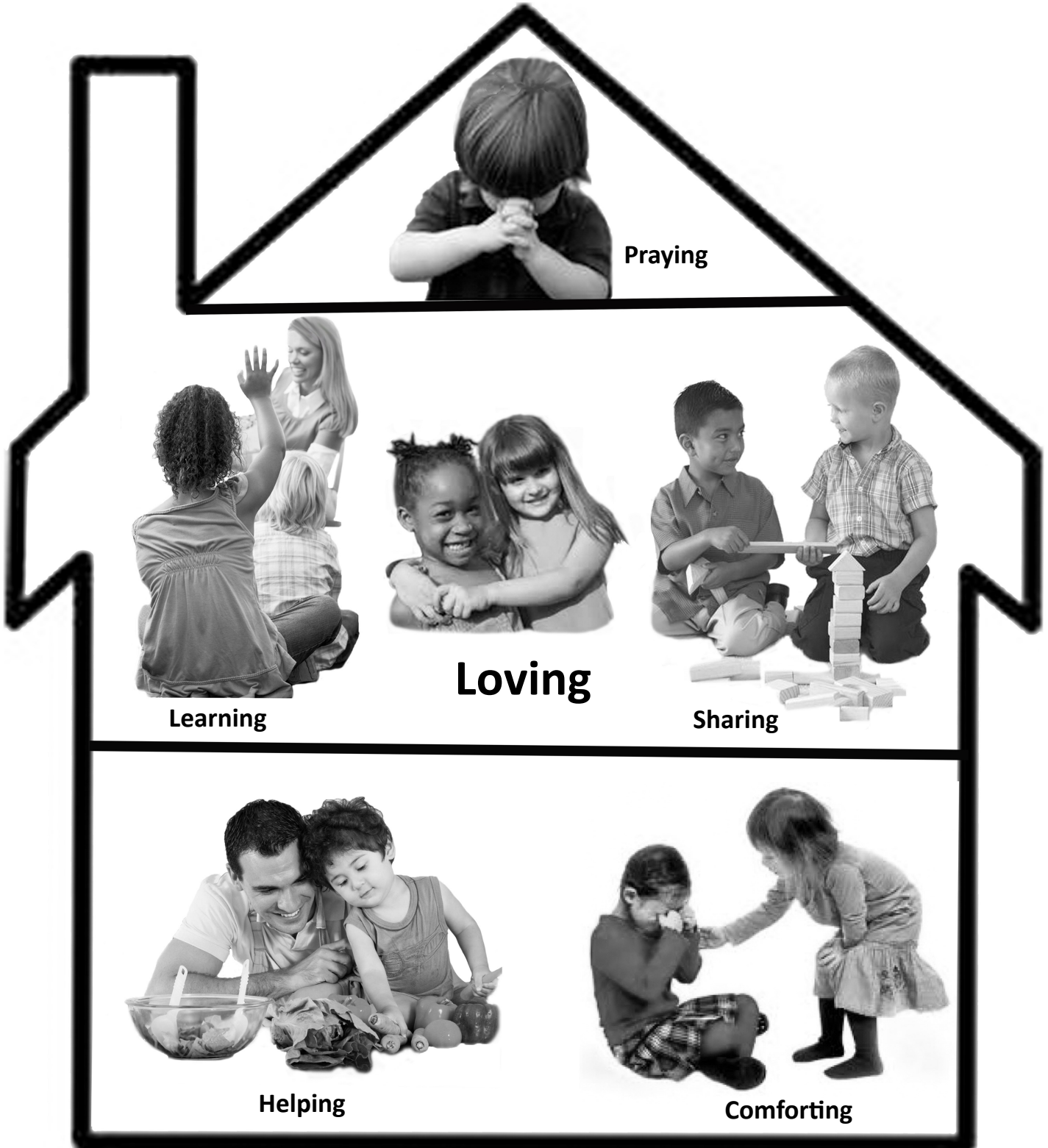
Give Parent Notes (p. 12) to children as they leave.

Our Mind Can Be Like a Prison When We Are Selfish

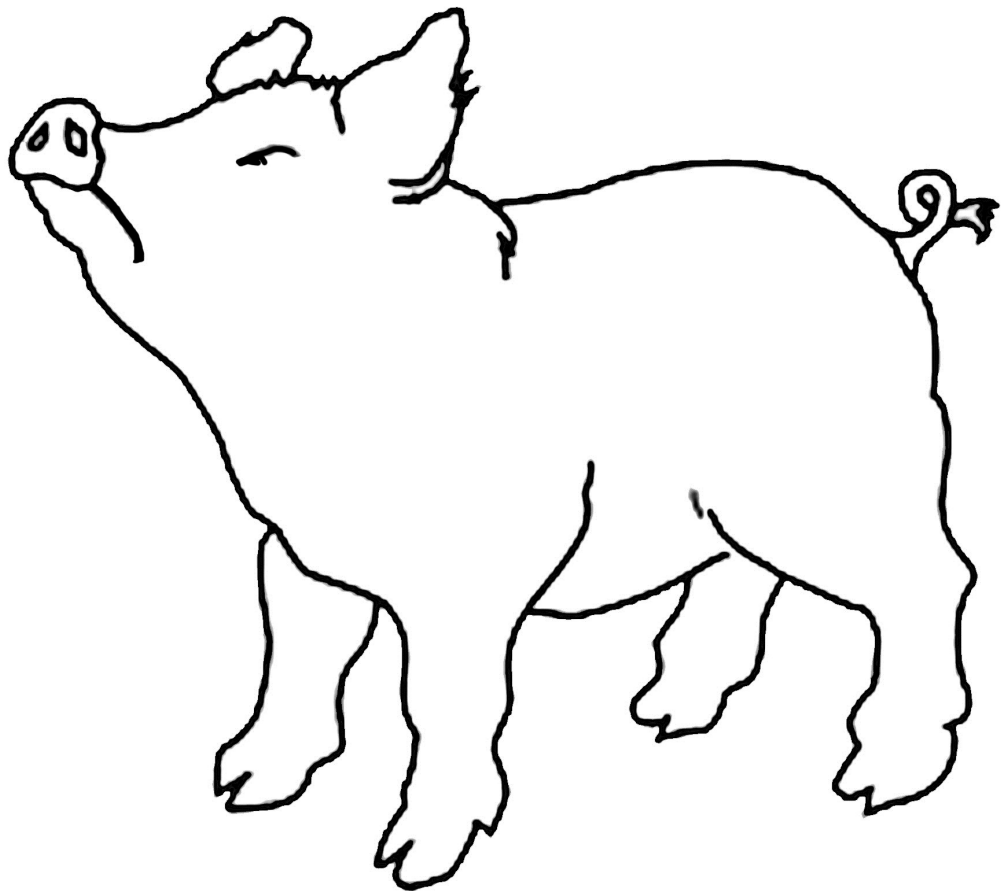
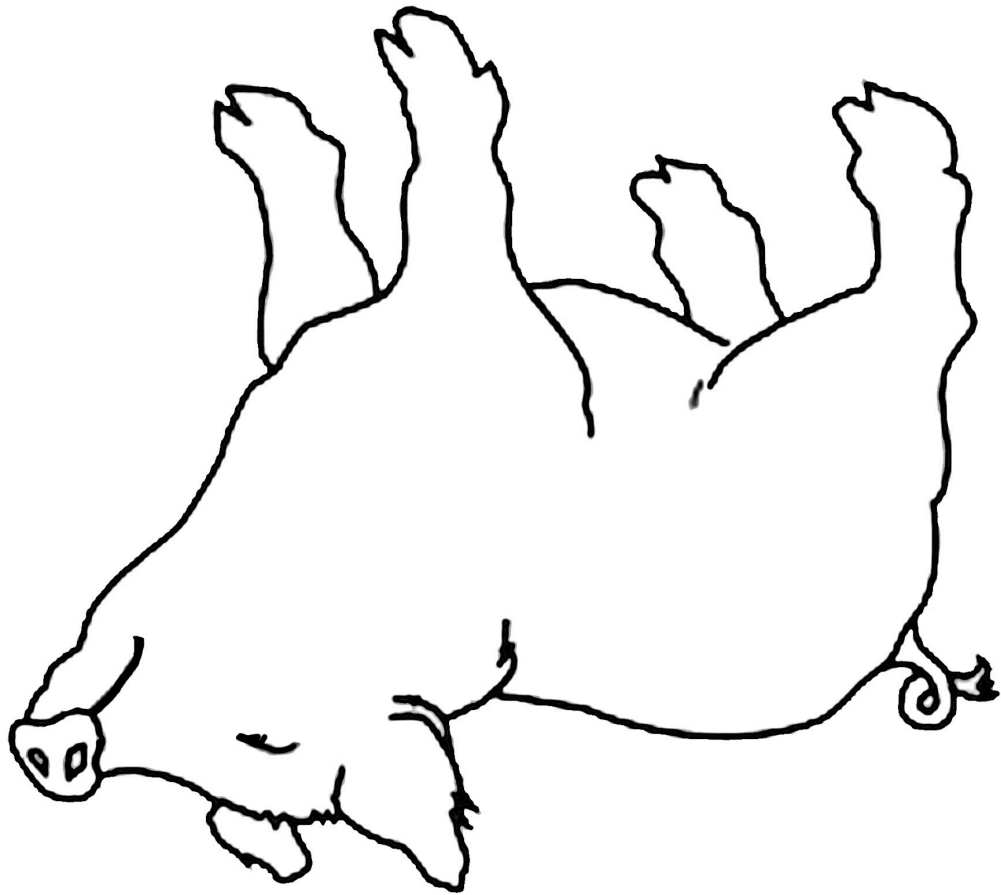


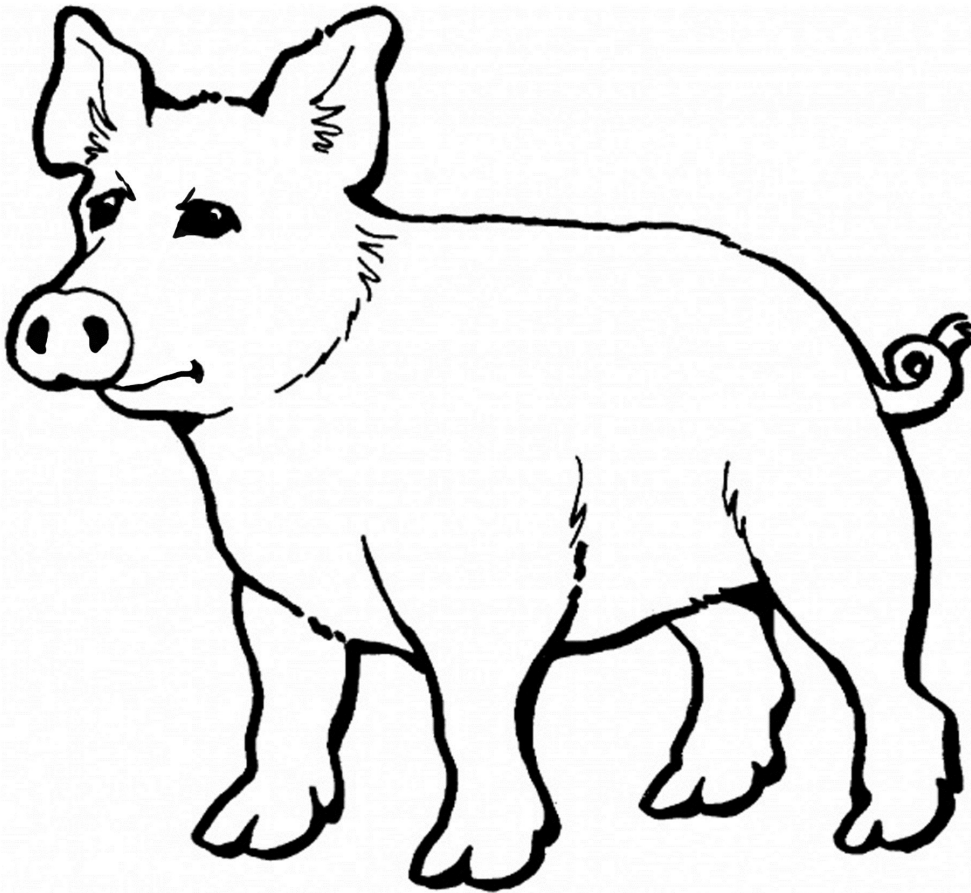
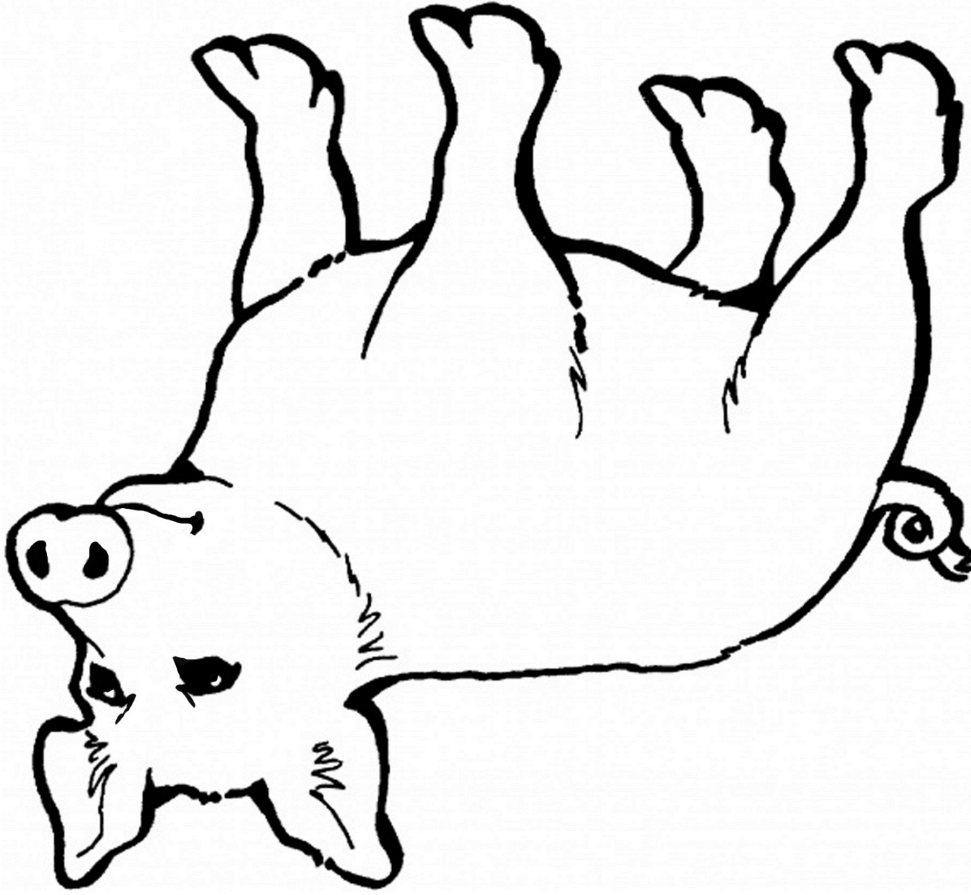
Prison Template

Our Mind Can Be Like a Wonderful House When We Are Loving!

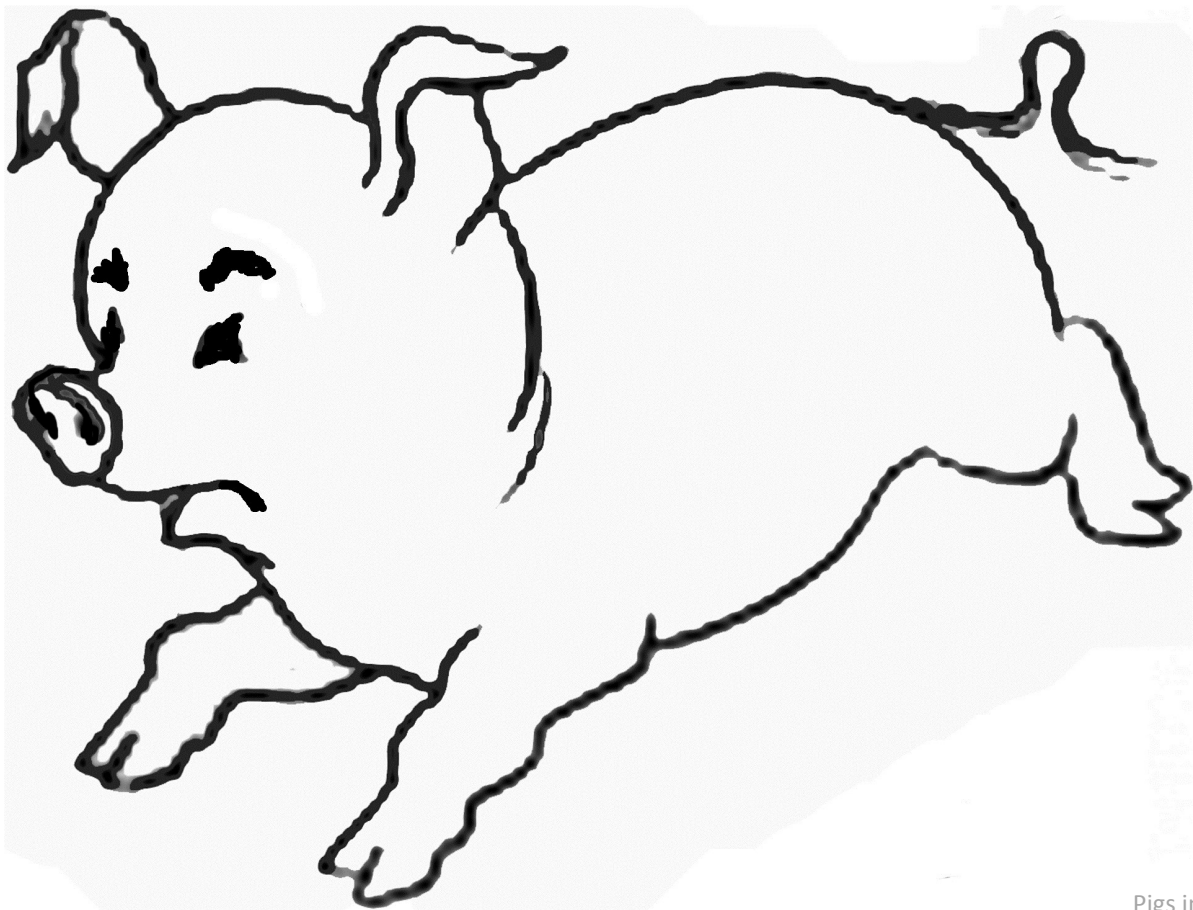


House Template

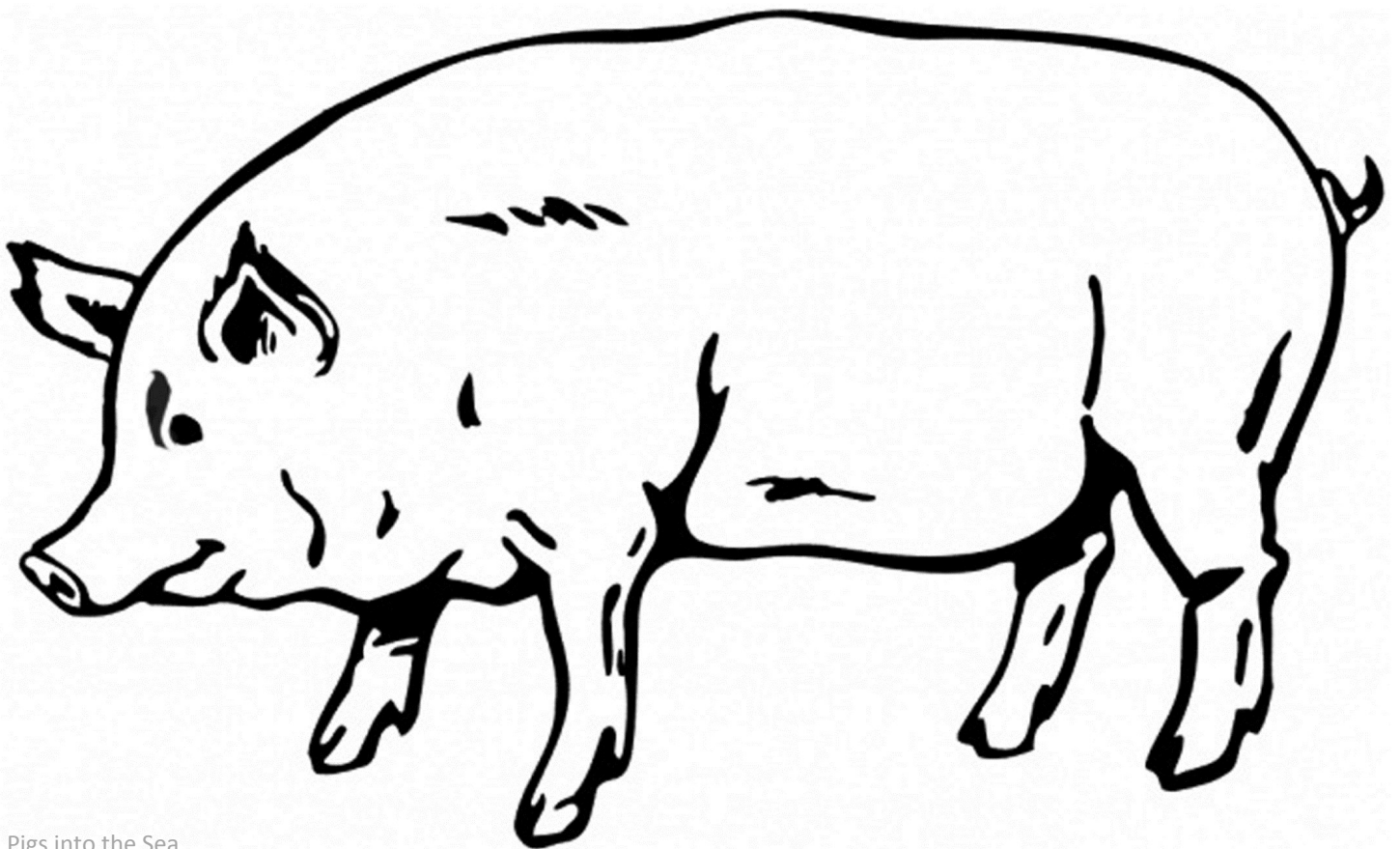
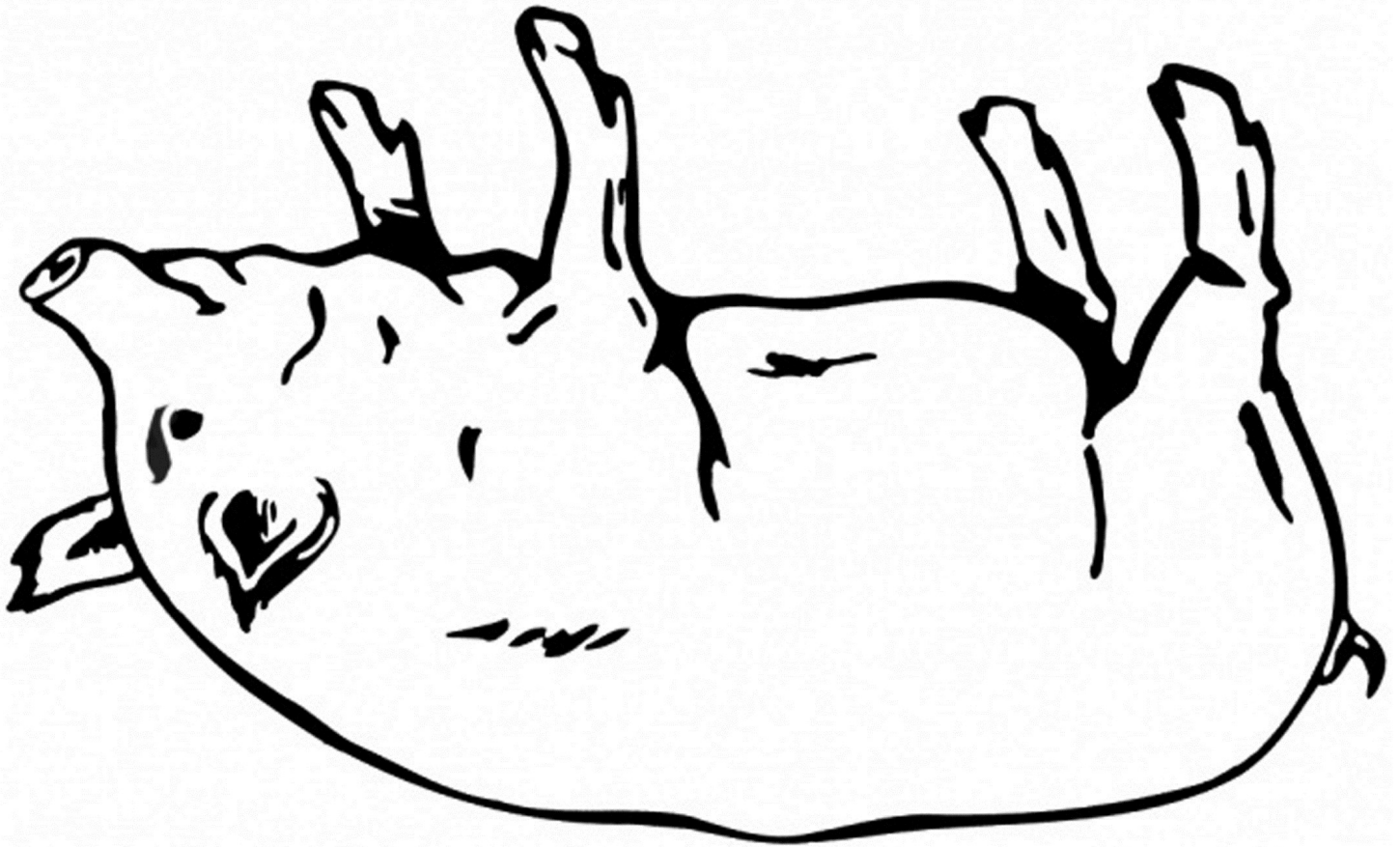




Pigs into the Sea



Pigs into the Sea



Pigs into the Sea



Casting out Demons

Parent Notes

Make a copy for each child. Hand out as children leave.

PARENT NOTE

Dear Parents,

Today we learned about Jesus healing a man who was imprisoned by evil spirits. Jesus cast out the evil spirits into some pigs, and they rushed into the sea!

We finished learning our Memory Verse today. We encourage you to continue reviewing the verse by singing the song we learned. Your family can sing along online at www.bitly.com/ForIWasHungryMV.

Memory Verse

For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. (Matthew 25:35-36)

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