

God's Peace, My Peace

A complimentary lesson from your partners at Cook Communications Ministries to help the kids in your ministry deal with the stress and anxiety of war.

Lesson Overview

Bible Truth We can know God's peace even when scary things are happening in the world.

Bible Basis You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed (Matthew 24:6).

Step 1 Use items to make alarming sounds and invite kids to tell what scares them. Explain that God's peace is about what's in your heart, not what's happening in the world. Answer tough questions about why God allows terrible things to happen.

Step 2 Explain the prayer walk. Send some kids on the prayer walk while others make the "Guardian Angel" or folded dove "Wings of Prayer" crafts.

Step 3 Assure kids that nothing will happen that is a surprise to God. Reaffirm God's power and pass the peace as kids leave.

Start with the Heart

As military powers face off for armed conflict, think for a moment about how the situation weighs on your mind. Perhaps you're close to someone who will be in harm's way, perhaps not. Wherever you find yourself in this time and space, remember that the peace and prosperity many of us take for granted has never been a given, and is indeed not the norm in many places around the world today.

This lesson offers the hope that despite the menacing prospects, our hearts can remain at peace. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

Can you think of a better gift to give the children in your ministry than these words? Since the events of 9/11, our children have fears that we only imagined at their age. They may not ask or even know how to seek help and comfort. But they do need it. The prayer walk which is the centerpiece of this lesson is a whole-body prayer that can quiet their fears and help them connect

to Christ, the author of love, the illuminator of peace.

Begin your personal journey to the peace of Christ by turning off the TV. (That's a great word to pass on to parents as well. A barrage of violent images is disturbing and invasive to young minds and hearts.) Take a deep breath, surrender control to your Lord and ask him to center you in his love. Not feeling especially holy or trusting? Remind yourself of this truth: Jesus' presence does not depend on how you feel. Trust him. He's there, he's real, and he is the Savior. Take another breath and with it ask him to help you recognize his still, small voice. Trust, faith, godly whispers and an open heart will prepare you to make and take a prayer walk with your kids.

And, oh, how they will long to imitate you! Your peace will become their peace. Together you'll learn to trust God's unfailing power to reign supreme over the earth—the earth he created and has never abandoned. He is with you today and all the uncertain tomorrows.

Preparation

The preparation for this lesson requires approximately two hours. Once you have set up the prayer walk, you may want to have it available for several weeks, for both children and adults.

__ Photocopy the Guardian Angel, Wings of Prayer and Comfort from God's Word handouts. Copy the angel on sturdy paper.

__ Gather items you can use to "raise an alarm" such as a whistle, an emergency flashlight with rotating beacon, or pans you can bang together.

__ Use blue or green electrical tape to lay out a prayer walk around the edges of a classroom, down a quiet hallway, or in an hexagonal pattern in the center of a large room. If you're able to obtain a large canvas tarp, you'll be able to roll up the tarp and keep the prayer walk for future use.

__ Record the prayer walk script from pages 5-6 onto two tapes or CDs. Include a background of quieting, wordless music. Place two portable tape or CD players with earphones at the entrance to the prayer walk.

__ In a separate craft area, set out the Guardian Angel and Wings of Prayer handouts (pp. 7-8) along with completed samples, scissors, glue sticks, brads, straws, a hole punch and markers. Glitter glue is optional.

__ Set up the following stations along the prayer walk. Use colorful carpet squares for easy-to-see prayer station markers.

Station 1

__ marbles __ clear glass bowl filled with water
__ Bible with a bookmark at Psalm 46

Station 2

__ slips of paper __ pencil __ small wastebasket
__ Bible with a bookmark at Psalm 23

Station 3

__ small cross __ 1 quart zip top bag 1/3 full of colored hair gel, air squeezed out and sealed __ photocopy of the prayer card below

Station 4

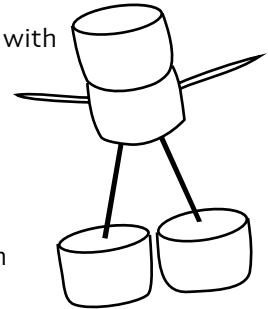
__ uncut loaf of bread __ bowl of grapes __ Bible with a bookmark at Luke 22:17-20

Station 5

__ small jar of olive oil __ Bible with a bookmark at Isaiah 49:16

Station 6

__ mirror __ marshmallows
__ toothpicks __ placemat
__ sample marshmallow person



Christ be with me.

Christ within me.

Christ behind me.

Christ before me.

Christ beside me.

Christ to win me.

Christ to comfort and
restore me.

Christ beneath me.

Christ above me.

Christ in quiet.

Christ in danger.

Christ in hearts of all
that love me.

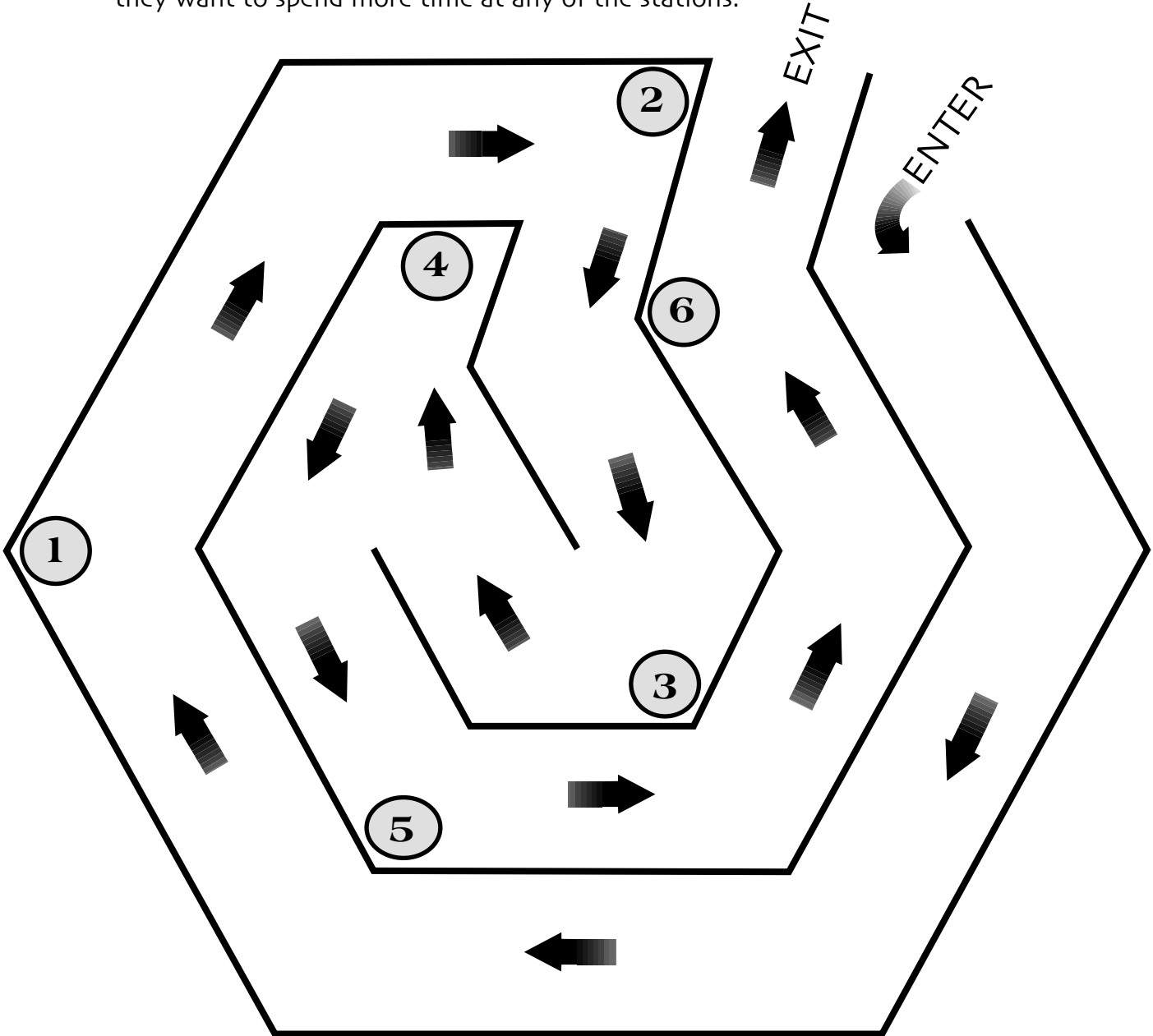
Christ in mouth of friend
and stranger.

Amen.

Translated from the Irish by Cecil Frances Alexander, 1889

Prayer Walk

Lay out the path with blue electrical tape. Mark the stations with carpet squares and set out the props described in the lesson. Add arrows to direct the kids. Ask children to walk the path prayerfully as they listen to the tape or CD. Pace the participants so that someone new enters the path when the previous person has reached the third prayer station. Remind children that they can stop the tape if they want to spend more time at any of the stations.



The Lesson

Step 1

Gather kids on the floor around you. Let selected kids help you make "alarming" noises by blowing whistles, banging pans together, or running lights and sound from emergency flashlights.

Wow—what a ruckus!

- What pops into your mind when you hear a siren or some other kind of alarm?
- What kinds of alarming things have you seen on TV this week?
- What do you think about when you see and hear these things?

There are scary things happening in our world—there's no doubt about it. God has a special message for us in times like these, and that's why we're doing this special lesson. It's amazing when you think about it, but nothing ever happens that's a surprise to God. Listen with your whole heart to these words from Psalm 47.

Invite a confident reader to read Psalm 47:7-8: "For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne."

There's a question I've wondered about sometimes. Maybe you've wondered about it too. If God is king over all the earth, why does he let terrible things like war happen? Let kids respond.

We know from the Bible that God created a perfect world. Then sin entered it and ruined everything. God cleaned it up once with a great flood. Then he gave laws to Moses so his people would know how to live. But evil people ignored God's ways. God's own people had their country destroyed. Enemies even tore down the beautiful temple in Jerusalem. God didn't stop them. He did something even better. He sent a Savior—his own son, Jesus. Evil men killed Jesus, but that wasn't the end—it was the beginning.

When Jesus rose from the dead, he conquered evil and death. He offers us peace in our hearts that nothing in the world around us can touch—not

war, not divorce, not sickness—nothing at all!

But you don't get that peace by punching a button on a vending machine or downloading it from the Internet. The peace that Jesus gives comes from opening your heart to him, reading his words, and taking time to listen. So today we're going to take a walk with Jesus—a prayer walk.

You'll take turns going on the prayer walk—just a couple of you at a time. When you're not on the walk, you can work on your choice of craft projects. Display completed sample Guardian Angel and Wings of Prayer projects.

The Guardian Angel is a cool thing to hang in your room, to remind you of God's promise to send angels to watch over you. The Wings of Prayer is a place for you to write or draw your very own special prayers about things that are important to you. You can work on these projects at the craft tables until I call you to go on the prayer walk. When you've finished the prayer walk, return to the craft tables and finish up.

Now let's go see what the prayer walk looks like.

Step 2

Lead kids to the prayer walk.

The path before you is very much like one you'd travel to get to the middle of a cool, green wood, or an autumn-crisp mountaintop or the heart of a field of summer flowers. It leads you somewhere special. It's kind of a symbol of our walk with Christ. There is nothing "magical" about the prayer walk. It's simply a way to pray using your feet and legs, heart and soul. And it is through prayer we talk to God and open ourselves to hear his voice. Not sure how all this happens? Don't worry. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be our helper.

I'll invite you to enter the prayer walk one by one. When the first person gets to the third station, I'll call on another person to begin. When you start, pick up a (portable tape or CD player), put on the earphones and start the tape. If you'd like to spend a longer time at any station, just stop the tape (or pause the CD). When you finish the walk, rewind the tape and hand it off to the next person.

The Prayer Walk Script

Record this script onto a tape or burn it on a CD. Include a background of wordless, quieting music. Speak in a calm voice to set the pace for the prayer walk. Include time for kids to walk between stations.

I invite you to enter into God's peace. Remove your shoes. Take a deep breath. Let it out. Walk slowly down the path to the first station. Feel the soles of your feet as you walk. Once you reach Station 1 sit down on the carpet. Relax. Pick up a marble from the pile. Hold it in your hand. Make it your worry marble. Give it a worry name. Offer your worry to God then drop it into the bowl of clear water. If you think of another worry, pick up another marble and do the same. The water is like God's love—it surrounds our worries so we can let them go. God doesn't want us to worry about things we have no control over. Remember God's love when the worry bug bites.

Open the Bible and read Psalm 46. Then sit quietly for a moment and pray. *[Music plays.]*

Now it's time to rise and walk to Station 2. Stay on the path.

Once you reach Station 2 sit on the carpet. Relax. Pick up a pencil and a slip of paper. Write or draw on the paper a hurt you wish God to forgive. Think of times you hurt a friend. Perhaps you took something that wasn't yours. Cheated on a test? Hit your brother or went into your sister's room while she was away? Write down what grieves your heart, what makes you feel guilty. Confess to God and ask for his forgiveness. Put your pencil down and tear the paper in half and in half again. Crush the paper pieces into a small ball. Throw it away.

Open the Bible and read Psalm 23. Then sit quietly for a moment and pray. *[Music plays.]*

Now it's time to rise and walk to Station 3.

When you arrive, kneel on the carpet. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply. Relax.

You are in the center of the prayer walk, the Christ Center. Make this a quiet, holy place where you worship Jesus who is our hope and salvation. He is the light of the world. Close your eyes and remember how Jesus calmed the storm...how he healed the sick...how he welcomed children into his arms. Jesus knows you by name. He loved you enough to give his life for you. Jesus was there at the creation of the world. He is God's own Son, the Savior. Jesus sits at the right hand of God in heaven. Our hope is in him.

We can have hope now in all we do and wherever we are. Open your eyes and trace the face of Jesus on the

gel bag in front of you. Read the Prayer Card silently. Then sit quietly for a moment and pray. *[Music plays.]* After you pray smooth the gel in the bag.

Now it's time to rise and walk to Station 4.

Sit. The bread and grapes here remind us of the last time Jesus ate with his friends before he died on the cross. He told them to keep on sharing this meal. It's Jesus' way of saying, "Don't forget me. Remember what I went through for you. Now I'll be with you when you're hungry, tired and frightened. I am with you always."

Take a piece of bread and eat it. Remember that Jesus knew pain, and he can comfort you.

Take a grape and eat it as well. Remember that Jesus poured out his life to bring peace to the hearts of those who believe in him.

Tell Jesus how much you love him.

Open the Bible and read Psalm Luke 22:17-20. Then sit quietly for a moment and pray. *[Music plays.]*

Now it's time to rise and walk to Station 5.

Sit in this place of honor. In Bible times, people honored special guests by anointing them with oil. Priests used special, fragrant oil to mark things that were set apart for God's use. Put some oil on your finger and rub it on the back of your hand. Smell the oil on your hand. God's presence in your life is soothing and fragrant. You are set apart as his special child. God loves you and cares for you. Be joyful and at peace.

Open the Bible and read Isaiah 49:16.

God knows of the angry, evil people in the world. But you are in God's hands. Put another dab of oil on your finger and use it to draw a heart on the palm of your hand. Breathe the warm scent of the oil again. Thank God for surrounding you with his love. Then sit quietly for a moment and pray. *[Music plays.]*

Now it's time to rise and walk to Station 6, your final stop.

Sit one last time. Think of all the ways you have prayed in this special place. You gave God your worries. You asked for forgiveness. You talked to God in quiet spaces, quiet places...and he to you. Now it is time to pray for others. Pick up the mirror. What do you see?

People all around the world look from eyes much like yours. They wish for the same things you do. To love and be loved. To laugh and to be comforted. God wants that for them too. The world is a community a lot like your school, church or neighborhood. Put down the mirror. Make a marshmallow person and set him or her on the placemat. Then pray that people will come to know our wonderful Creator who loves and laughs and holds us close. Pray also for the safety of our military men and women fighting for our country.

Open the Bible and read Micah 6:8. Then sit quietly for a moment and pray. *[Music plays.]*

Now rise and continue your journey out into the world. Go in peace to love and serve Jesus.

[End of prayer walk script]

Continue to lead children from the craft tables to the prayer walk and back again. Circulate among the children as they finish their Wings of Prayer and Guardian Angel crafts. Ask them to tell you what they'll do with their crafts after class. Ask early finishers to help you clean up.

Step 3

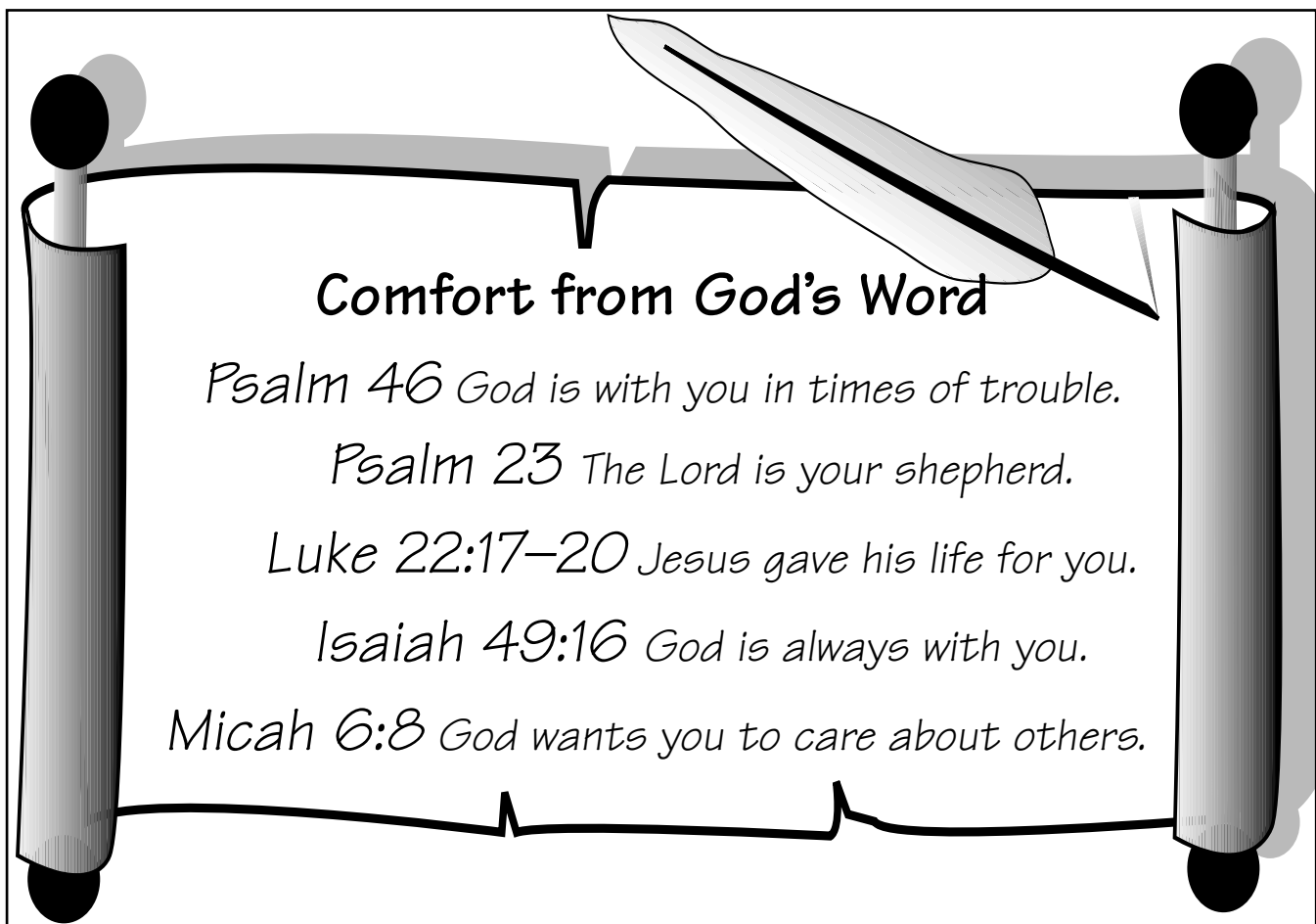
Gather everyone in a circle. Have kids put their crafts behind them.

- What will you remember from today's experience?
- What was your favorite part?

I have a card with all the Bible references you read today. You can look them up in your Bible again and again and find God's peace and comfort. Now that you've experienced God's peace, you have a personal mission: to pass it on to everyone around you. We don't know how soon peace will come to the world. But we do know that God's peace can come to your heart whenever you open yourself to him.

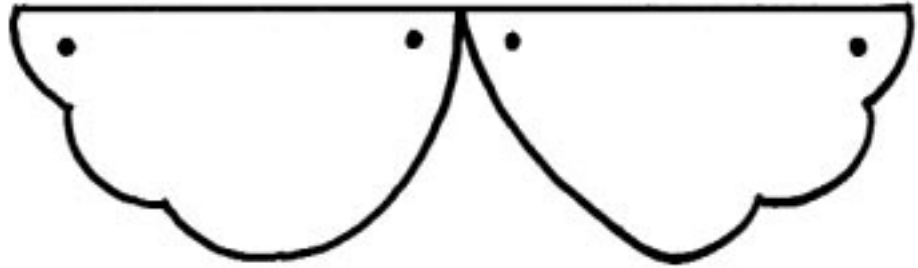
Let's close today with the ancient Christian tradition of passing the peace. I'll show you how it works. Call a child to stand with you. Extend your hand and say: **The peace of Christ be with you. Instruct the child to respond, **And with your spirit.** You and the child repeat the sequence with others, and they in turn pass the peace to others as they leave.**

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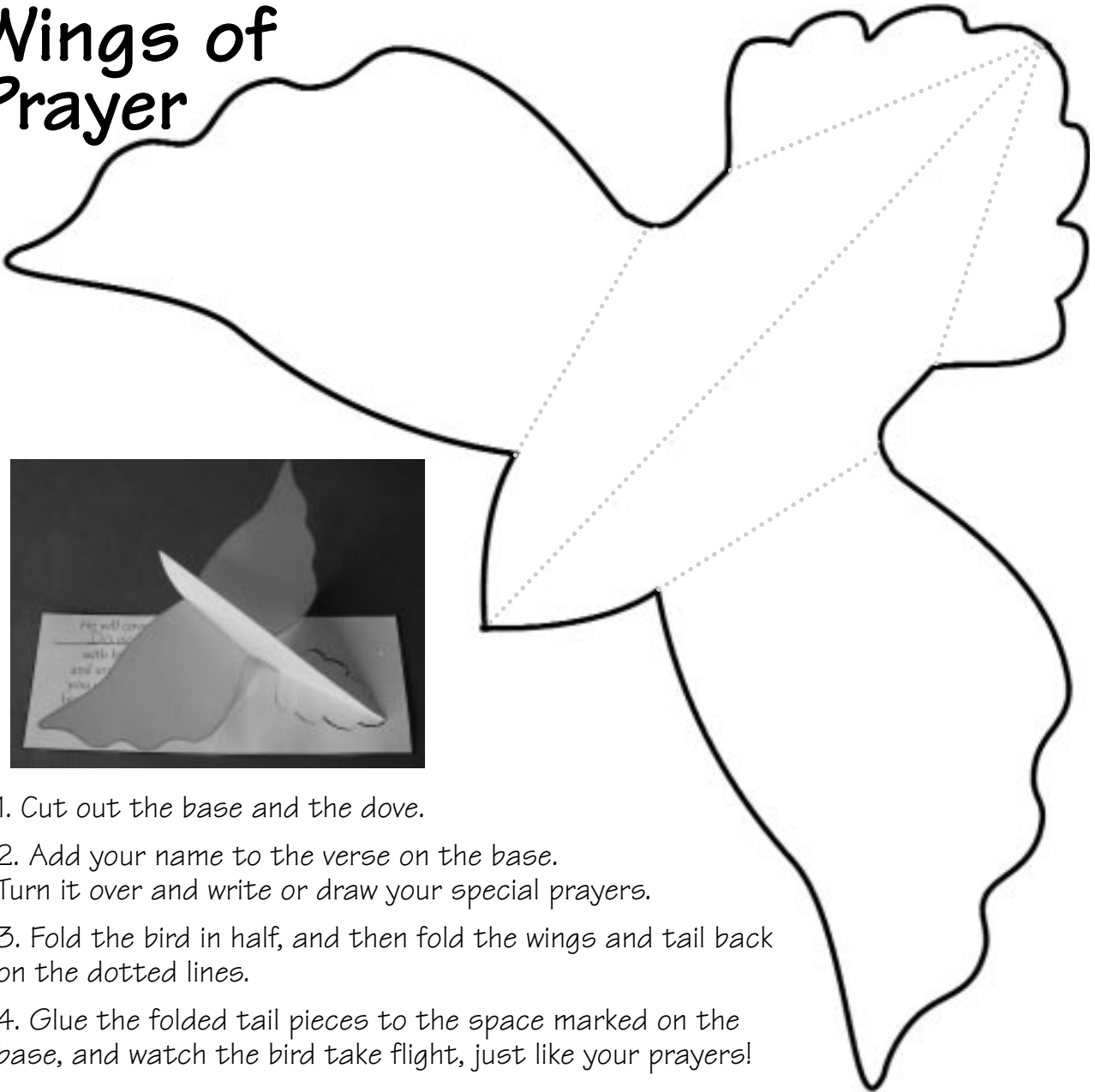
Guardian Angel

1. Cut out the angel and the wings.
2. Line up the second set of wings behind the angel. Push brads through the dots on the angel and the wings.
3. Bend a straw in the middle. Punch holes one-half inch from each end of the straw and through the dots on the wing tips. Fasten brads through the holes.
4. Move the straw up and down to make the angel fly. Keep your angel in a special place to remind you of God's comfort and care.



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Wings of Prayer



1. Cut out the base and the dove.
2. Add your name to the verse on the base.
Turn it over and write or draw your special prayers.
3. Fold the bird in half, and then fold the wings and tail back on the dotted lines.
4. Glue the folded tail pieces to the space marked on the base, and watch the bird take flight, just like your prayers!

He will cover you,

with his feathers,
and under his wings
you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be
your shield and rampart.

Psalm 91:4

