



The Farmer's Story

Day Two: The Rocky Soil

Mission Arlington / Mission Metroplex
Rainbow Express Spring Break 2005

Day Two Opening Time

Pre-Rainbow Express Gathering

You will begin each day by knocking on doors and then playing games to help attract children to your Rainbow Express.

Song Time/Puppets

When it is time to begin your activities, have all the children sit down in a large group. It would be helpful to bring a tarp for them to sit on. When the children are together and seated on the tarp, begin your song time.

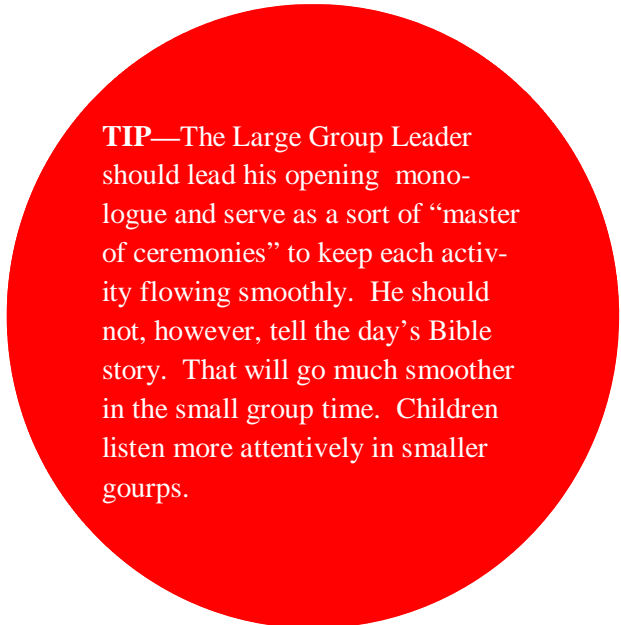
The Song Leader will come to the front of the group to lead songs. One or two others may also want to come to the front to help show motions. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs.

During this time you will also have the puppets sing their song(s). Doing the puppet show in between songs can help keep the children's attention. You are provided with one song for each day. If the children are responding well and enjoy the puppet music, it is okay to perform more than one of the songs and repeat the songs from day to day.

The Farmer

Each day the Large Group Leader (playing the part of the Farmer) will welcome the children and provide an introduction to the day's themes and activities. The more creative and engaging the character of the Farmer is, the more interested and involved the children will be during the large group. Prepare ahead of time by making the Farmer a costume. Consider using props such as a bag of seeds, a shovel, or a watering can.

The Large Group Leader will come to the front of the group and explain the day's theme before the children divide into their small groups. The next page is a guide for the day's opening. *Do not simply read from this page.* The children will quickly lose interest if the Farmer just reads. Read through the discussion guide repeatedly and be able to lead it from memory. Do not feel that the Large Group Leader has to memorize and recite this page. It is not necessarily intended to serve as a script. Rather, use it as a suggestion to help you know how lead the opening time.



TIP—The Large Group Leader should lead his opening monologue and serve as a sort of “master of ceremonies” to keep each activity flowing smoothly. He should not, however, tell the day's Bible story. That will go much smoother in the small group time. Children listen more attentively in smaller groups.

The Farmer's Opening

Thank you everybody for coming back to my farm today. For those of you that are new here today, I'm the farmer and it is very nice to meet you. I'm glad you're here to help me again. We still have a lot to learn about soil.

Yesterday we learned about hard soil. Hard soil doesn't let seed come in. That's why it can't do what it's supposed to do. We learned that some people are like that. They don't want to believe in Jesus. We learned that we can choose to be like good soil. We can love God and obey what He tells us.

Today I have a new soil problem. Instead of hard soil, I have rocky soil. Rocky soil is when the ground is full of rocks. Sometimes you find big rocks, sometimes little ones. But plants can't grow well in rocky soil. Rocky soil is one of the very worst kinds. It's very tricky. Rocky soil gives farmers a lot of problems.

When a seed starts to grow, it needs roots. Roots are like long strings that come out of the seed. The roots are under the ground, so we don't see them. The roots are what help the plant grow. Without strong roots, the plant dies.

In good soil, the roots have lots of room to grow. Then the plants can grow big and strong. In rocky soil, the roots can't grow. The rocks get in the way. The tricky part is that you can't always see the rocks. If you put seed on rocky soil, the plant might grow up fast. You might think you have a strong plant. Then, all of a sudden, one day the plant is gone. That's why rocky soil is so bad.

Sometimes we act like rocky soil. We start out all sweet and nice, and then we turn mean, or angry, or sad. Or have you ever had somebody that started out as your friend, and then started to treat you badly? That's being rocky soil. We do that to God too sometimes. We learn something about Jesus, and we might do it for a little while, but then we stop. Or we say that we love God, but then we don't obey what He asks us to do.

God doesn't want us to be like rocky soil. He wants us to be like good soil. God wants us to love Him. He wants us to obey what He asks us to do. That's how we can be like good soil. We can learn about Jesus, and then do what He wants us to do. The most important thing that Jesus wants us to do is let Him be a part of our lives. We want to help you know how you can let Jesus be your very best friend.

Memory Verse Activity

When the Farmer finishes his opening time, the Memory Verse teacher will come to the front to lead the memory verse activity. The large group memory verse activity for day two is "Memory Verse Challenge." See the back of the packet for instructions for this activity.

Day Two Small Groups

Divide Into Small Groups

When the Memory Verse Teacher finishes leading the large group Memory Verse activity, divide the children into small groups. One teacher or a teacher/helper pair will sit with each small group. Make the groups as small as possible to allow for the maximum possible one-on-one time. As the groups are formed, spread out so that each small group can sit in a circle. Let each group be at least several feet apart from each other to cut down on noise and other distractions. As the groups sit down to begin their activities, the Craft Coordinator and the Memory Verse Teacher need to make sure that each small group has the craft supplies they need and a copy of the one page memory verse poster.

Small Group Story Time

When you tell the story use as many interactive elements as you can. You are going to be outside talking to kids with short attention spans. Keep them involved so they will hear the story! Remember that involving the children will help them pay attention. Use hand motions and sound effects. Have your children repeat things back to you. Ask questions.

DO NOT READ TO THE KIDS. TELL THEM THE STORY! Even though you will be telling and not reading the story, have your Bible open to the story in your lap. This will help the children recognize that the story comes from the Bible and is not simply a fairy tale or something we have made up.

Helpers: While the story teller is teaching, sit with the children and be a good example by listening to the story. Watch for children who need special attention.

Today's Story: Peter and the Magician—Acts 8:9-14, 18-25

We're learning a lot about soil this week. Yesterday we learned about hard soil. Hard soil doesn't do its job because it doesn't let the seed in. We learned that some people are like hard soil. They don't love Jesus and obey what he says.

What kind of soil did the farmer tell us about today? (*Let the children tell you about the rocky soil.*) Rocky soil doesn't do its job either. The plants grow up really fast, but they don't stay strong. The rocky soil doesn't take care of the plants, and then the plants die. Jesus taught us that some people are that way. They start out wanting to obey Jesus. They might act for a little while like they love God. But they don't really let Jesus be in their lives. They don't really let God change them on the inside. Just like the rocky soil, they start fast but then give up.

Peter met a man that was like the rocky soil. That man's name was Simon. Let me tell you about Simon's story. Simon was a magician from a city called Samaria. He knew how to do all kinds of neat things. Simon knew lots of really cool magic tricks. Pretty soon, Simon was the most famous man in Samaria. Everybody wanted to see his magic tricks. They followed Simon around and listened to every word he said.

Simon was pretty happy. He liked having people follow him around. He liked being famous. He liked getting to tell people what to do. Simon the Magician thought that he was

the most important guy around.

One day, something happened to change Simon's life. A man named Philip came to Samaria. Philip was a friend of Peter's. Philip loved Jesus, and wanted to tell people about all the wonderful things that Jesus did. Philip was different from the other people in Samaria. He did not follow Simon around. He did not care about Simon's magic tricks. He just wanted to talk about Jesus.

Pretty soon, the people in Samaria started to get excited about Jesus too. They liked listening to Philip. They liked learning about Jesus. They were glad that to know that Jesus loves all people. The Samaritans started following Philip around. They liked to hear about Jesus, even more than they liked seeing Simon's magic tricks. The people in Samaria stopped listening to Simon.

Simon did not like this. He decided to go see what everybody was so happy about. He wanted to know why they weren't watching his magic shows any more. Simon went to see Philip. He listened to Philip talk about Jesus. Simon told everybody that now he believed in Jesus too. Simon started to follow Philip around, learning everything he could about Jesus. More and more Samaritans were beginning to believe in Jesus.

Peter heard about what was happening in Samaria. He came there to help his friend Philip. Peter taught the people about Jesus. He prayed for them. Peter also did some amazing things. Do you remember the story we learned yesterday? Peter helped the man that could not walk. Peter healed people in Samaria too. He would pray for them, and then they would get better.

Simon watched everything that Peter did. He was very confused. He thought that Peter had special powers. Simon did not understand that Jesus was really helping the people. Simon the Magician decided he wanted special powers. He thought that if he could heal people, the Samaritans would make him famous again. Simon missed having people follow him around and listen to him.

Simon went to see Peter. "Peter, I want to have powers." He said. "I will pay you money if you will give me powers. I want all the people to follow me again. I want to be rich and famous and in charge."

Peter was very upset. Jesus never cared about being rich or famous. Jesus loves us. He wants us to love other people. God's power is to help others, not to be selfish. "Simon, I hope all your money goes away if you think you can buy God's gifts. You're not really a part of what's happening here. Your heart doesn't really care about Jesus. Tell God you're sorry for having such a bad attitude. Ask Him to forgive you for only thinking about yourself. I can see you still are living your old life. You haven't let Jesus change you."

Simon became very sad. Peter was right. Simon didn't really care about obeying Jesus. He didn't really want to let Jesus be in his life. Simon just wanted to be famous again. He started out following Jesus very quickly, but then he gave up just as quickly.

Simon was like the rocky soil we learned about. When he first heard about Jesus, he was very excited. But he never really changed. He didn't listen to what Jesus says and obey it. Peter was like the good soil. He knew that Jesus loves us. He told everybody he could about Jesus. We have to choose what kind of soil we are going to be like. Are we going to stop learning about Jesus, like Simon did? Or will we try hard to obey Jesus, like Peter did?

The most important thing we can do to obey Jesus is let Jesus be part of our lives. Jesus loves us very much. He knows that the bad things we do keep us away from God.

That's why Jesus died on the cross. Jesus made a way to take away those bad things. Then He came back to life. Now, if we believe in Him, He can be a part of our lives. If you want to know how to have Jesus come into your life, just talk to us.

Prayer Time

Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Ask them for things they would like to pray about. Tell God how awesome He is. Ask Him to help you and the children in your small group to listen to God and obey Him. Pray that the children in your group will get to know God and feel the love He has for them.

Craft

While still in your small groups, lead the children in making the craft for the day. The craft time is not only a way to reinforce the lesson, but it also allows time to get to know the children in your small group. During this time, ask them questions about their families, friends, and school. Invest in their lives.

Plastic Cup Planter

Supplies: 1 double-sided half page per child, 1 plastic cup per child, crayons, scissors, tape, seeds or beans

Directions

1. Give each child 1 double-sided half page
2. Pass out the crayons and have the children color the half page. As the children are coloring talk about how Peter knew it is important to love Jesus.
3. Give each child a cup.
4. Tape the half page around the cup.
5. Next pass out to each child a seed/bean for them to take home and plant. Go over the things they will need to do to make it grow. Then share about the things we need to do to be able to grow as a Christian. Talk about how important it is pray, read the Bible, go to Bible study, and tell others about what we learn.

Memory Verse Activity

Each day the small group time will include a Memory Verse Activity. The Memory Verse time is one of the most important activities of the day. We want these children to remember God's word and why it is important to them. A list of potential activities is included in the back of this packet. Use a different idea from that list each day to help the children learn the words of the verse and to explain why it applies to their lives. (Some require extra preparation, so be sure to review the list in advance.) The memory verse for this week is

1 John 5:3—Loving God means to obey His Word, and His Word is not hard to obey.

When all the small groups are beginning to wrap up their memory verse activities, begin to re-gather the groups on the tarp for large group .

Day Two Closing Time

Closing Time

When the small groups are finished with their activities, lead everyone back to the large group area for a closing time. Each day the Large Group Leader (playing the part of the Farmer) will end the day's program by reviewing what has been learned. The closing time will involve a short skit/object lesson featuring the Farmer and two helpers, played by other members of your group. The more creative and engaging the characters are, the more interested and involved the children will be during the large group. Prepare ahead of time by making costumes. Consider using props such as a bag of seeds, a shovel, or a watering can.

Following is a guide for the day's closing skit. Do not simply read from this page. The children will quickly lose interest if the Farmer just reads. Read through the skit repeatedly and be able to perform it from memory. Do not feel that the actors have to memorize and recite this page. It is not necessarily intended to serve as a script. Rather, use it as a suggestion to help you know how lead the closing. In this script the two helpers are simply referred to as Helpers 1 and 2. Using names will help the children identify more with the characters and the concepts being presented.

Skit/Object Lesson

(Note—This activity will work better if you do a little preparation ahead of time. In this object lesson, the farmer is going to give each of his two helpers instructions on drawing a picture. The farmer will show a picture to the children, and then describe step by step how the two helpers should draw it. The best way to do this is to use two posterboards and two wide black permanent markers, one for each helper. Before Rainbow Express, draw the picture on one of the poster boards in very light pencil. During the object lesson Helper #1 will stand far enough away from the children that they cannot see the pencil drawing already on the posterboard. He can then trace the pencil image with a black marker. In this way the "good" helper will be able to exactly reproduce the picture and give the object lesson more impact.)

I hope you liked the story today. Simon the Magician and Peter were very different people. Simon was like the rocky soil. Rocky soil can look good, but it's really bad. Simon acted like he loved God, but he didn't obey what God wanted. We don't have to be bad soil like Simon. God gives us a choice. We can choose to love God and obey Him like Peter did.

Now that we have learned about Peter, Simon, and the rocky soil, it is time for you to help me again. I need to teach my two helpers more about working here at the farm. Yesterday we had some trouble. Do you remember what happened? One of my helpers did not listen. He did not obey what I told him to do. Hopefully today he will do a better job.

(Have the same two helpers as yesterday come to the front. Give each one something to draw on and with. It may help to have two additional people involved, one to hold up the paper for each of the helpers. The two helpers should stand so that the children can see what they draw but the Farmer cannot.)

Today I want to make sure that my two helpers have learned to follow instructions. I am going to tell them how to draw a picture. I want you to tell me if they are doing a good job. Do you remember that yesterday one of these helpers did not do a very good job following instructions? Helper 2, did you learn your lesson yesterday? Are you going to follow my instruc-

tions? *(Have Helper 2 respond vigorously and emphatically that he has learned his lesson and will do much better now. Have him promise to do exactly as the farmer says.)*

(Hold up the stick figure picture included in this packet.) This is the picture that I want my helpers to draw. It's a picture of a farmer throwing seed, just like we have been learning about this week. *(Have the Farmer give step by step description/instructions to the two helpers about how to draw the picture. I.e. the Farmer could say "Start by making a circle near the top of the page for the head. Then draw a farmer hat on top of that circle . . ." As the Farmer gives instructions, Helper #1 uses the marker to trace the light pencil picture you prepared ahead of time on his posterboard. When the Farmer is done, he will have an exact replica of the picture in the farmer's hand. Helper #2 once again messes up each step of the process. Helper #2 should humorously and exaggeratedly make mistakes with each new instruction the Farmer gives. As he makes each mistake, Helper #2 noisily declares that he learned his lesson yesterday. He should explain that today he is going to be very careful to do exactly what the Farmer wants him to do. All the time that Helper #2 is completely ignoring the Farmer's instructions, he must proclaim himself to be the best helper of all, since he always does what the Farmer says. At the end, his picture should look nothing like the example in the Farmer's hand.)*

Now, my two helpers should be done with their pictures. What do you think children, did they do a good job today? I was glad to hear Helper 2 say that he learned his lesson. He said that today he is going to do a very good job following instructions. Do you think he did? Okay helpers, show me your pictures. *(Have the two helpers turn so that the Farmer can see their drawings.)*

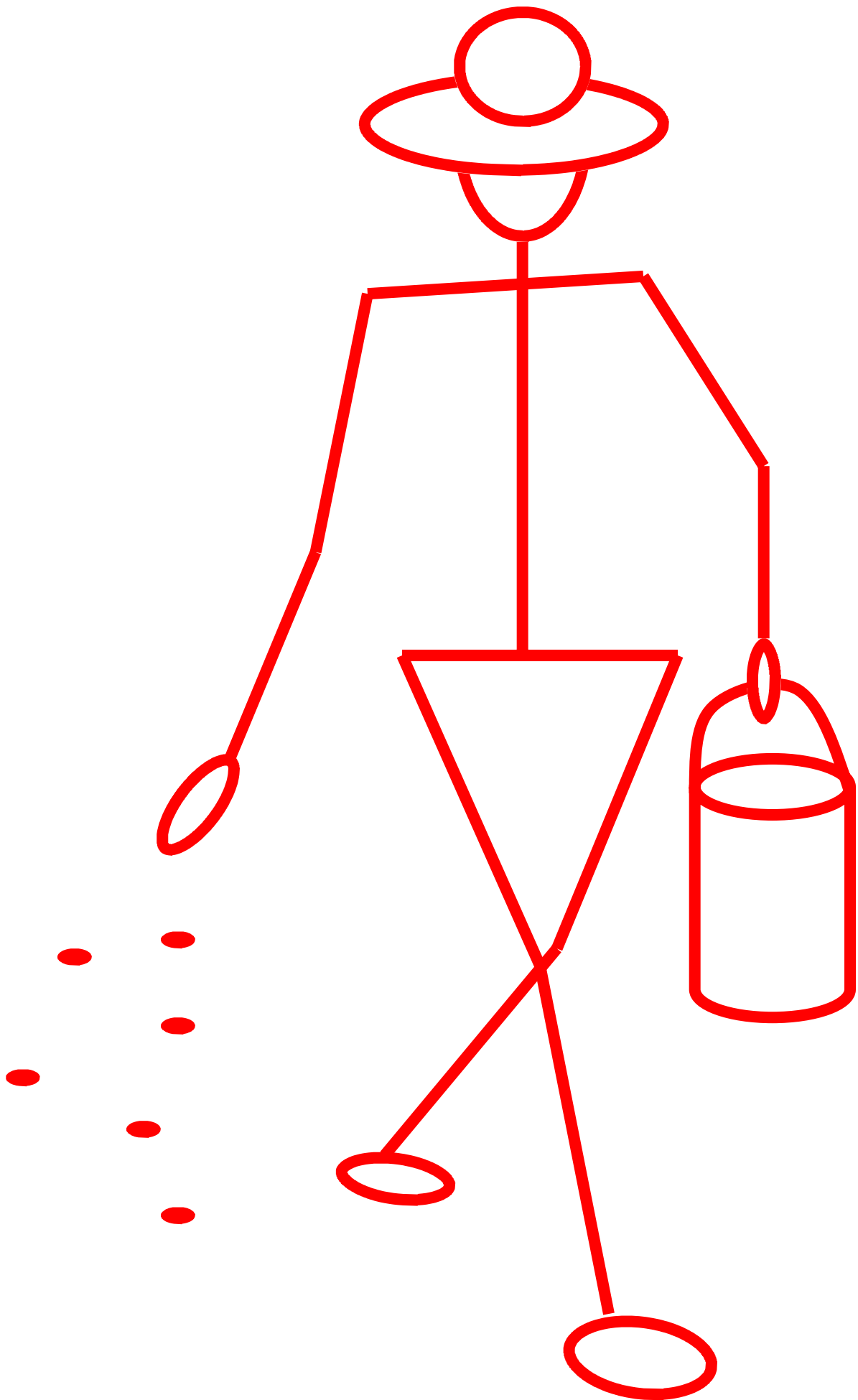
Oh my goodness! Helper 2, you still did not follow my instructions. You said that you were listening. You made a big show of talking like a good helper, but you did not obey like a good helper. I am very sad to see this.

Today Helper 2 acted like Simon the Magician in our story. He wanted everybody to think he was doing what he was supposed to do. But he did not change on the inside. That's what rocky soil is like. People look at it and think that it is good soil. But inside, it's not good. People can do that too. We might say we love God. We might even go to Bible Study every week. But if we don't let Jesus be part of our lives, and change us on the inside, that's not enough.

Jesus loves us very much. That's why He died on the cross and came back to life. He made a way to forgive us when we mess up, just like I'm going to forgive my Helper. Jesus wants to be in our hearts. He wants to help us with every part of our lives. If you want to know how you can ask Jesus to be in your life, talk to us today. We would love to help you know how.

Game Time/Snacks/Wrap-Up

When you are finished, pray together and be ready to play games until the end of the Rainbow Express program. After the game time, pass out snacks, clean up the area, and walk everyone home. Return to Mission Arlington to turn in your materials and attendance sheet.

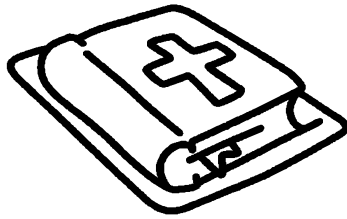




Loving God means to obey His Word,
and His Word is not too hard to obey.



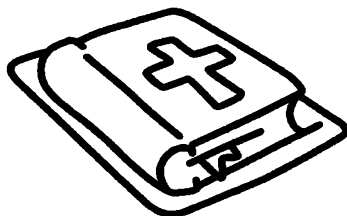
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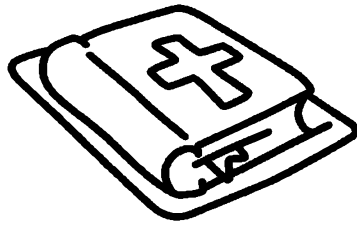


Nosotros demostramos que amamos
a Dios cuando obedecemos sus



mandamientos; y obedecerlos no es difícil.

1 Juan 5:3



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