

Excuses, Excuses

Theme

Making excuses to God

Object

An invitation

Scripture

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Matthew 22:1-3

Look what I have. It's an invitation to a party. A friend of mine is having a birthday party and has invited me to come. Look what it says at the bottom of the invitation... it says, "R.S.V.P." Do you know what that means? (The term R.S.V.P. comes from the French expression "répondez s'il vous plaît", meaning "please respond".) It means that my friend wants me to reply to the invitation and say whether I will attend the party or not.

Sometimes people who receive an invitation to a party don't want to go, so they make up excuses. Here are some excuses they might use:

- I've had a bad cold and I just can't seem get over it.
- I think we are going to visit my grandmother.
- We are having a test at school and I need to stay home and study.
- I have to go to soccer practice.
- Mom said I have to babysit my little brother.

Making excuses isn't new. Even back in Bible times people made excuses. Jesus once told a story about a king who threw a party, but none of the people he invited showed up for his party. In Jesus' story, the king was going to have a party for his son who was getting married. Since he

was a king, and this was his only son, you can imagine that it was going to be quite a celebration and it was a tremendous honor to be invited!

All of the plans had been made, the food was prepared, the invitations had been sent. The day of the celebration came, but no one showed up! The king sent his servants to see where the people were and why they had not come to his celebration. The people all began to make excuses about how busy they were.

The king was very upset, so he told his servants to go out into the streets and invite everyone they saw to come to his son's wedding celebration. They did exactly what the king told them to do and the Bible tells us that the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Can you guess who the King was in the story that Jesus told? It was God. I'm sure you know who his Son was in the story. Right, it was Jesus.

Jesus has sent you an invitation. You will find his invitations in here. (Hold up a Bible.) The Bible is full of invitations from Jesus. He says, "Whoever is thirsty, let him come and take the free gift of the water of life." (Rev. 22:17) He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) He says, "Let the little children come to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14) Jesus has invited us to come to him, and yet, some people are still making excuses.

Father, thank you for Jesus, your Son. We thank you for his invitation to come and receive the free gift of life which he offers. Without making excuses, we say, "Yes, Lord, Yes!" Amen.

Group Activities

Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams

Sermon Title: "Excuses, Excuses"

Scripture Reading: Matthew 22:1-14

EXCUSES GAME: Have children sit in a circle with a big ball! A child will toss the ball to another player and give an excuse that they can think of. The child who catches the ball will then give an excuse and roll or toss the ball to someone else, etc. Children will begin to realize how funny excuses sound. Begin to tell the story.

TEACHER WITH EXCUSES: The teacher can start the class with EXCUSES, such as I can't take attendance because I don't like this pencil, I can't write on the chalk board because the chalk is too short, or I can't get your construction paper because my back hurts, I can't open this can of cookies because the lid is on too tight, etc. Children will begin to get the LESSON VERY QUICKLY!

THEME IN CHALK: Write our theme today on the chalkboard but leave out many letters for children to guess at during the lesson. After someone has guessed the theme words of MAKING EXCUSES TO GOD, let children children write their own names on the board if they have ever made excuses.

R.S.V.P. 2 GOD BOOK MARKER: Children can cut out letters R - S - V - P and glue them to another piece of paper in the shape and size of a book marker. Give children markers to write the 2 GOD and write Matthew 22:1-3. Hole punch the top and let children put a ribbon in the top of the book marker.

BIBLE INVITATIONS: Give children pages to staple together to form a BIBLE (the cover can be a colored piece of construction paper and the pages can be white. Children can write one of the invitations from our lesson, on each page of their BIBLE INVITATIONS (written on the cover of their "Bible"), such as Rev 22:17, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 19:14, Matthew 16:24, Hebrews 4:16, John 6:35, Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 55:3, Psalm 101:2, Mark 10:14 and John 7:37.

PLAY DRESS UP: Give children choices of dressing up like a KING, or a Bride or as servants. After being dressed up, let them recite and try to memorize the verse. Take a picture of the kids all dressed up to put in a frame the next week! The teacher could have a large poster board with the Bible verse written out on it, to have the children hold while taking the picture.

PARTY TIME: After listening to the Bible story today, let children have a short "party time" with the dress up, balloons, whistles, party hats and music and some treats in a basket, etc. Review the story about people not wanting to come and that others were invited and had a great time. Ask the children who the KING was in the story and who was His Son and what INVITATION does Jesus send to US? THANK JESUS for inviting us to come and receive the FREE gift of life which He offers.

FREE GIFT: The teacher can have a gift wrapped for each child to take home at the end of class. Tell the children that it is a FREE GIFT from the teacher. On the gift TAG, the teacher can write, RECEIVE GOD'S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION, or another Bible verse or saying about today's lesson, as teacher chooses.

SING A SONG: "YES, LORD, YES" or "I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS"

Song: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

Words and Music (pdf)



MP3 Accompaniment Track

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About Carol Williams

Carol and her husband have been in the ministry for 35 years. They have served churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, Michigan, and for the last 14 years in Indiana. Carol loves to work with children so you will find her teaching in Junior Church and children's Sunday School. She also has clowning ministry in which she is known as Bubbles tc (the clown).

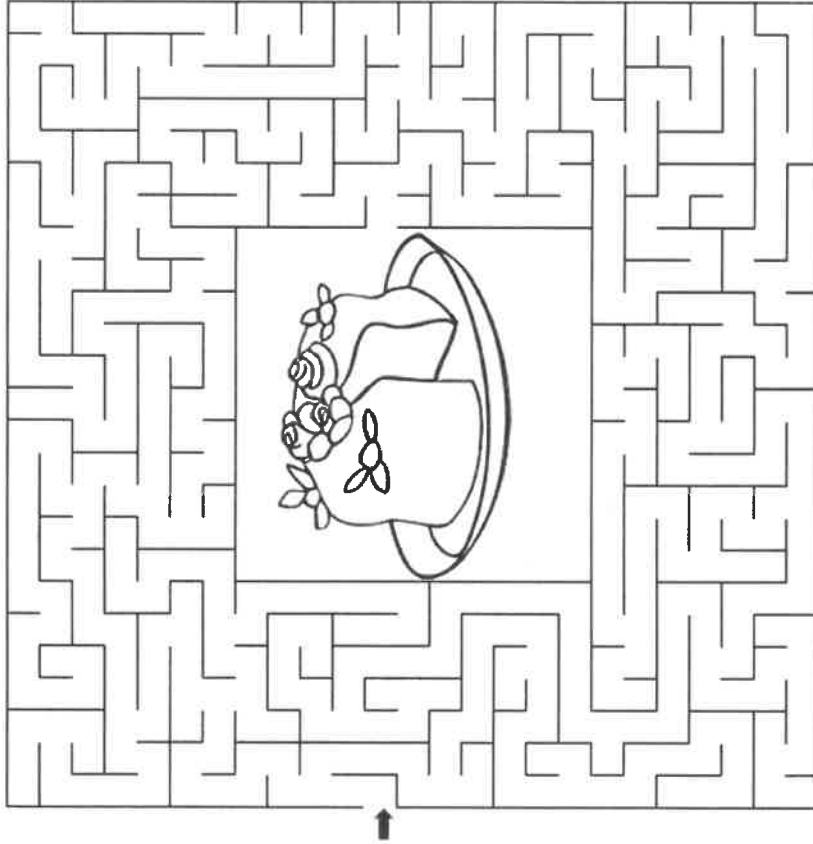
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Maze Puzzle

You are invited to the wedding banquet!
Can you find your way to the wedding cake?



You're Invited!

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Children's Worship Bulletin

Parable of the Wedding Banquet

Matthew 22:1-14

Word Search Puzzle

R U D E N Q C O R N E R S E L C
 Z N E I K P M G U E S T S V
 N X D O N O A E Z G T P N Z S
 O Q P N D N L E R C B J D E P E
 B P Z G W T E R T A O X V B U R
 X A N R T I E R U B M S A G V
 H I N A R E B W I K L E M R A
 K R C Q R C A E N J C E T Q N
 H Z U T U Z H D V L Q G S G T
 E F S G T E W D I C Q M B F S
 A T F L N S T I T S I Y M I T
 V K L E L K L N E B E D R L P
 E Z R K P S O G D X S R S L I
 N D U T R E F U S E D Q L E J
 N W A U D V I Z T N P J G D L

PARABLES
 GUESTS
 SERVANTS
 FILLED

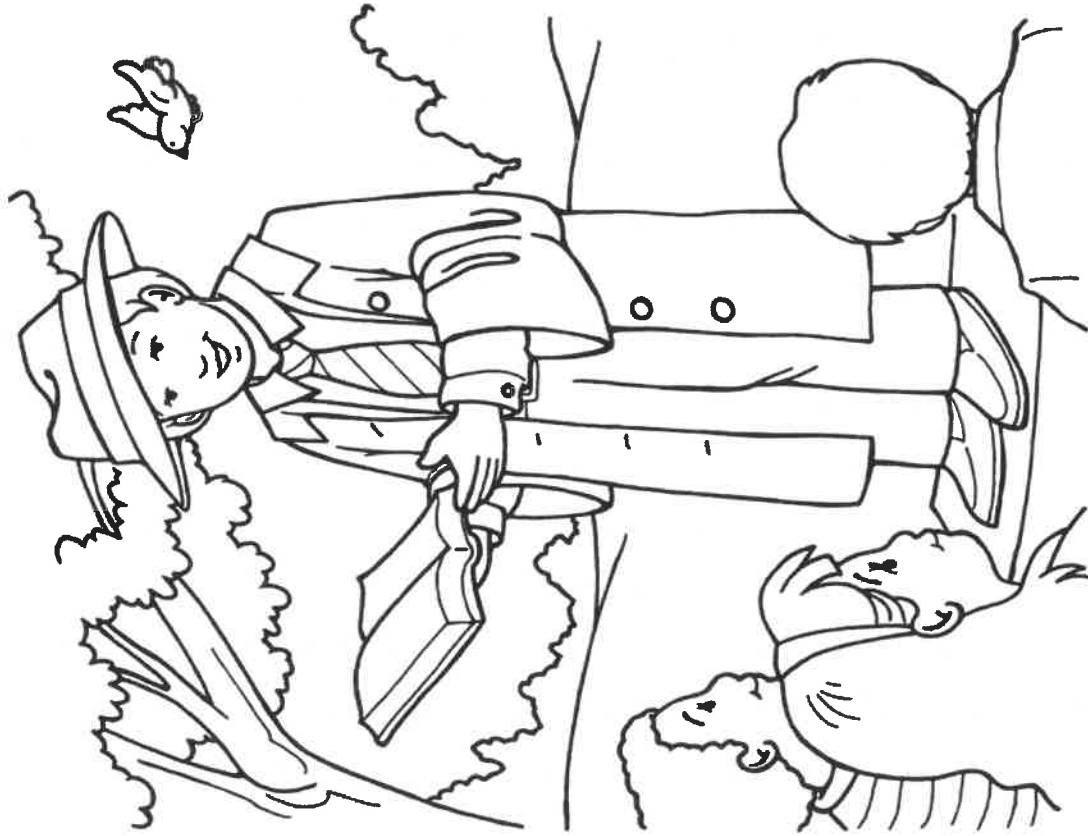
STREET
 HEAVEN
 CATTLE
 REFUSED

INVITED
 KINGDOM
 COME
 WEDDING

BANQUET
 CORNERS
 OXEN
 DINNER

Your Church Name
 Address
 City

Coloring Page



Inviting others to Jesus.

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Decoder Puzzle

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
P	R	V	G	K	W	S	T	L	X	Q	E	A	D	H	F	B	N	C	O	U	I	J	Y	M	Z

- 4-21-12-7-8-7 _____
- 22-18-3-22-8-12-14 _____
- 14-22-18-18-12-2 _____
- 1-13-2-13-17-9-12 _____
- 6-12-14-14-22-18-4 _____
- 7-12-2-3-13-18-8-7 _____
- 17-13-18-11-21-12-8 _____
- 2-12-16-21-7-12-14 _____

INVITED	WEDDING	BANQUET	DINNER
SERVANTS	GUESTS	PARABLE	REFUSED

Invite Someone





"Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see."

Matthew 22:9 (NLT)

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