

Peter

Reading

from John 18

Simon Peter and another one of Jesus' followers went along after Jesus. This follower knew the high priest, so he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. But Peter waited outside near the door.

The follower who knew the high priest came back outside, spoke to the girl at the door, and brought Peter inside. The girl at the door said to Peter, "Aren't you also one of that man's followers?" Peter answered, "No, I am not!"

It was cold, so the servants and guards had built a fire and were standing around it, warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

They said to him, "Aren't you one of that man's followers?" Peter said it was not true; he said, "No, I am not."

One of the servants of the high priest was there. This servant was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off. The servant said, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" Again, Peter said it wasn't true. At once a rooster crowed.

from John 21

When they finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

A third time he said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" Peter said, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you!" He said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Peter

Wondering

I wonder what happened on the days between.
I wonder which word you will keep.

Thinking

The last week of Jesus' life was ... let us say ... eventful. John spends almost half his gospel on the last seven days of Jesus' earthly life, and many of the events recorded could each take anyone a long time to process.

We've just had the raising of Lazarus, for goodness sake! That would a lot of getting my head round. Followed straight by Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem – there's a whole sermon series right there.

Then we have Jesus overturning the tables and declaring the temple to be 'his Father's house'. What was that all about? And the Last Supper? We've been talking about that for centuries and we still haven't quite got that figured out.

So by the time we come to the evening, and we've had the trauma of watching as Jesus is betrayed, arrested and carted off, everyone is stressed out of their minds.

Q: How would you have been feeling as one of Jesus' followers? What would you have done – tried to prevent Jesus' arrest? – argued for him in the court? – raised a rebellion? – faded into the background? – something else?

Peter takes quite a bold step compared to most of the disciples. He follows Jesus into the courtyard. Perhaps this is not Peter's finest hour, but at least he showed up. Most didn't.

However, when people start to question him, Peter's courage collapses. He has seen what happened to Jesus and he's got a pretty good idea of what's on the cards. This is Roman justice, after all – swift, efficient, and brutal.

It's hardly surprising that Peter mutters an expedient lie. I suspect that in the same circumstances I'd have done it too. How many of us have not had cause to regret something we have said or done in moments of stress?

Q: What do you think of Peter's denials? What would you have done? What difference do you think it made?

One of my favourite parts of Easter story is from the end of Mark's gospel, where the women are told to spread the news of Jesus' resurrection to his disciples *and Peter*. They are to make sure that Peter knows that Jesus is back and will meet him in Galilee.

I wonder what Peter thought when he heard that. I wonder how he felt about being specially singled out. Was Jesus making an example of him? Did he even rank as a disciple anymore? I wonder what mixture of dread and joy was churning through his stomach when he first saw Jesus.

Just as Peter had three opportunities to acknowledge his Lord in the courtyard and failed, so now, over breakfast on the beach, he has three opportunities to be restored. Peter's answer to all three questions is, "Lord, you know."

Q: What did Jesus know? What did Peter know? How would you have answered?

Peter

Responding

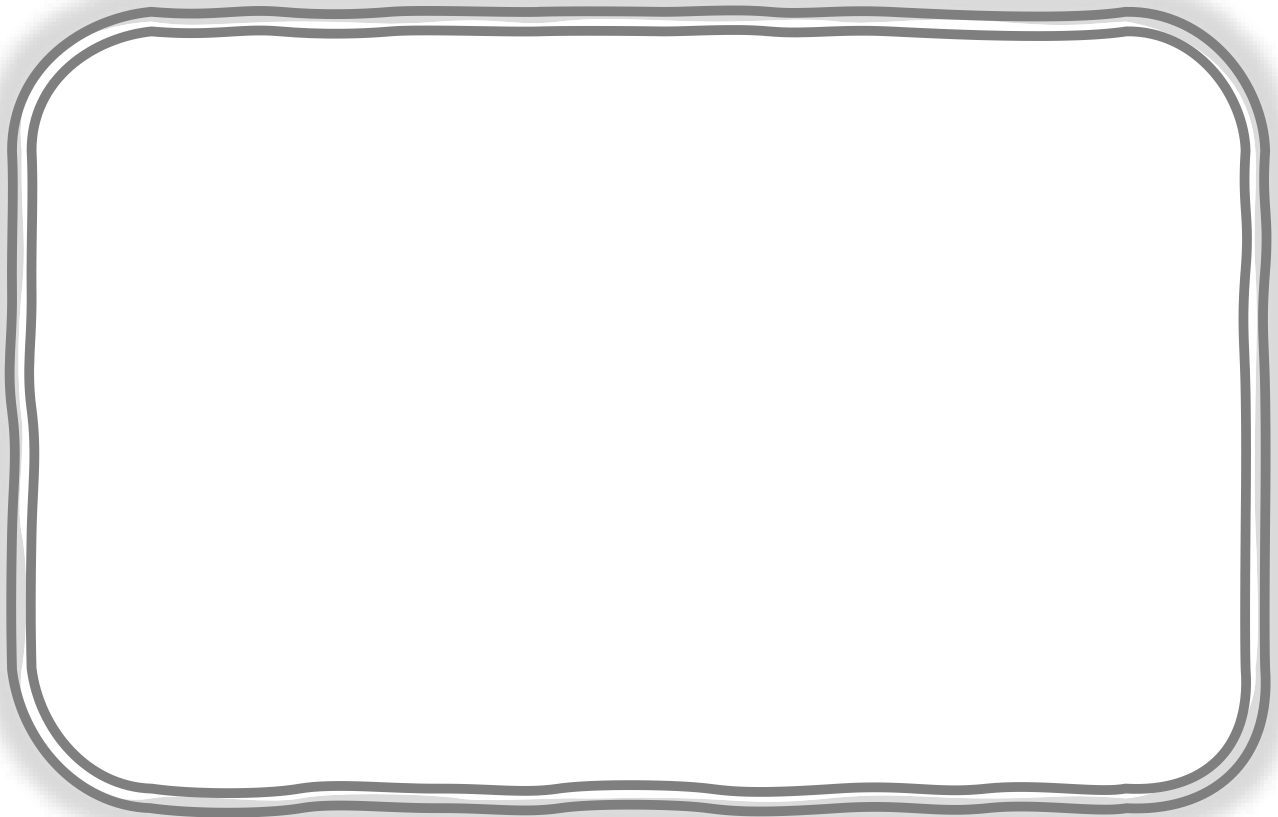
Lord,
you know everything;
you know that I love you.
Yet my words often do not match.

Lord,
you know everything;
you know that I love you.
Yet my actions sometimes tell a different story.

Lord,
you know everything;
you know that I love you.
Yet the thoughts in my head are not always fit to be seen.

Lord, forgive me,
Lord, restore me,
Lord heal me,
please.

Amen.



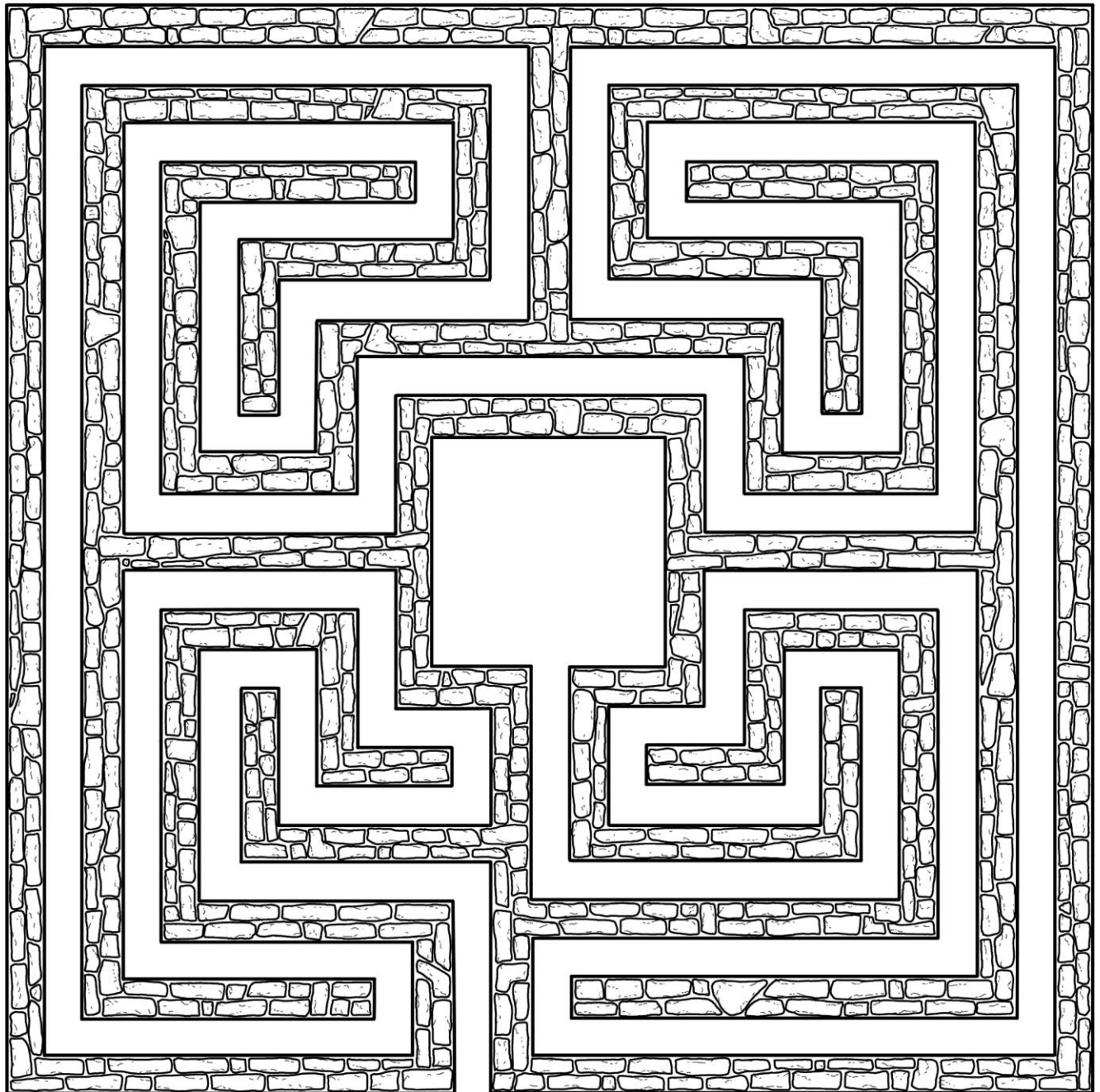
Labyrinth

Take your fingers for a walk through this traditional Roman labyrinth. Many of this design can be seen in the mosaics of Roman villas.

As you walk between the stone walls, remember Peter in the courtyard.

How do the long, straight walls make you feel?

What does the central space feel like?



Creating

Courtyard Fire Basket

We can make this simple craft to help us think about how Peter felt when he was standing around the courtyard fire.

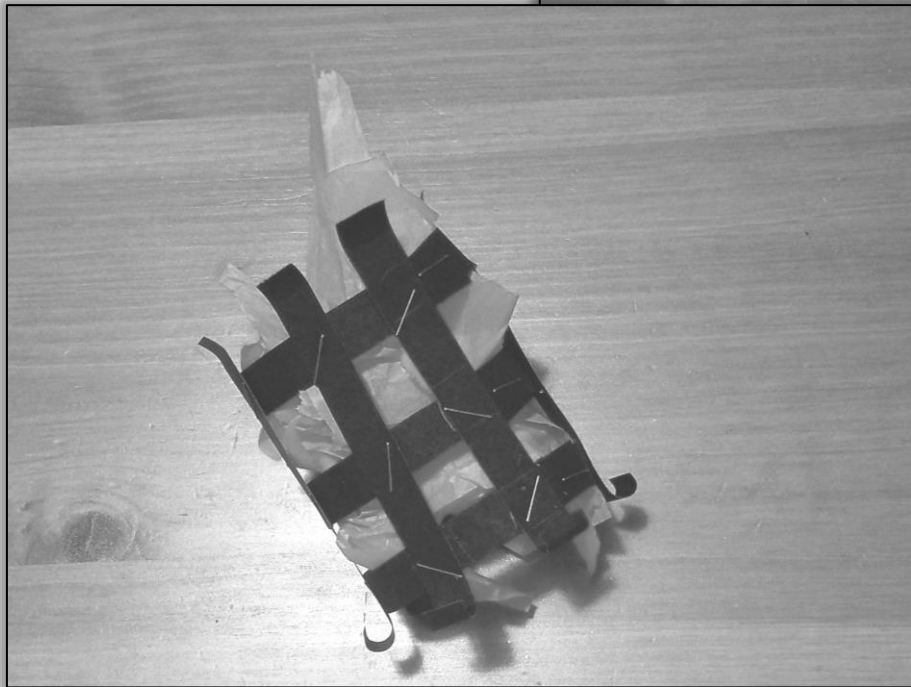
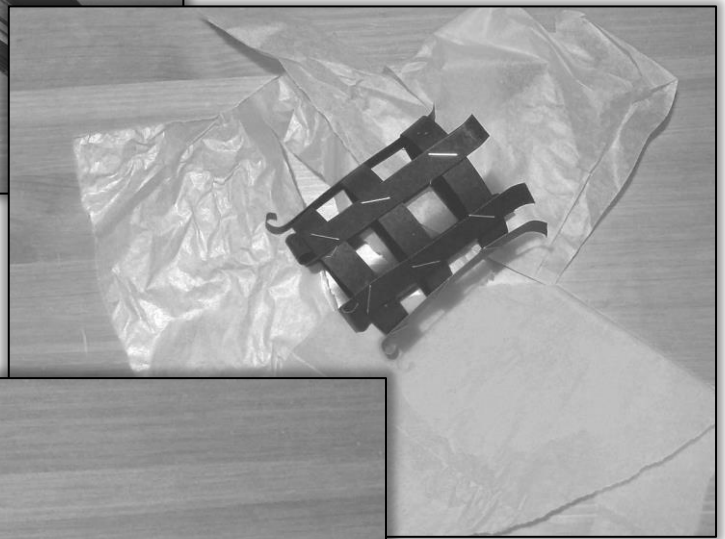
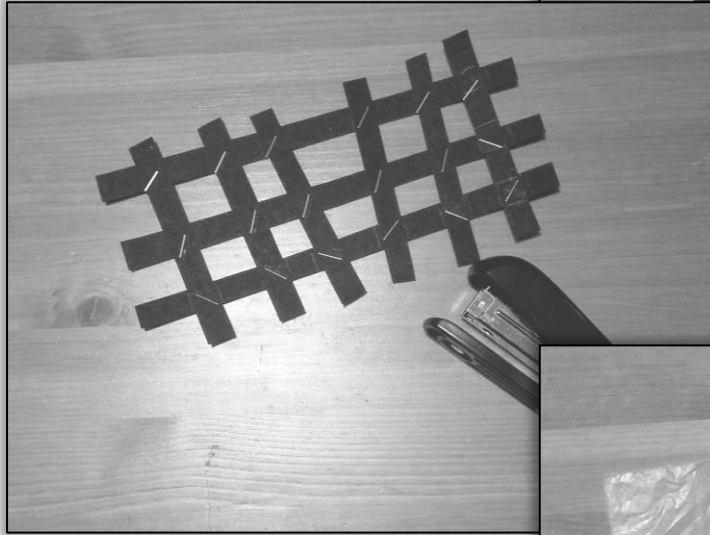
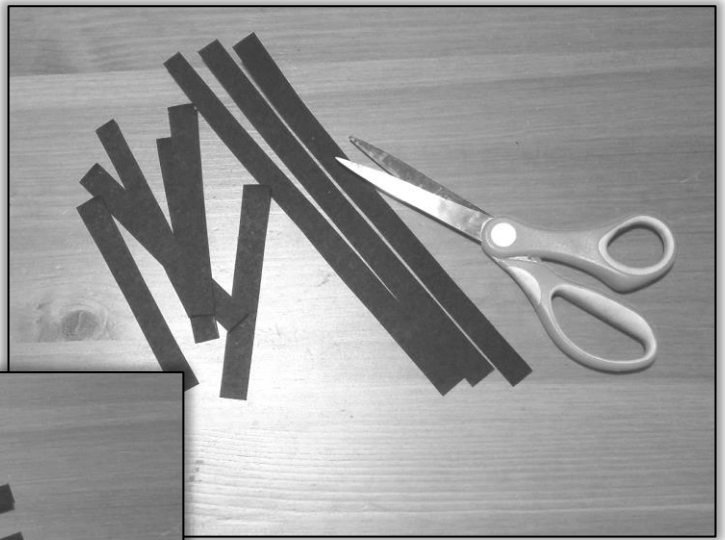
It makes a great nightlight too, and you can adapt it for lots of other Bible stories that feature fires.

You will need:

- thick black paper or thin card painted black
- scissors
- pencil
- stapler
- red, orange and yellow tissue paper
- battery-operated tea light

What to do:

1. Cut the card or thick paper into strips about 1cm wide and 20cm long. You will need 6 strips for each fire basket.
2. Colour or paint the strips black, and cut three of them in half so that you have three long strips and six short strips.
3. Lay the three long strips sideways on the table, and put the six shorter strips on top, evenly spaced, like fence posts.
4. Make sure the short strips stick out a bit top and bottom, and the long strips stick out at each side.
5. Use a pencil to mark where the strips meet, then staple the strips together at the pencil marks to make a grid.
6. Now bend your grid around to make a tube and staple the ends of the long strips together.
7. Bend the bottoms of the short strips to make feet for the fire basket.
8. Tear some pieces of tissue paper in red, orange and yellow to make flames, and fill your basket with fire.
9. Stand your fire basket over an electric tealight and get those marshmallows ready for toasting!



Cooking

Ultimate Tuna Melt Sandwich

Cooking on the beach with fish and bread? I think we've just found Jesus' recipe!

Forget boring old tuna sandwiches, this tuna melt is store-cupboard cooking at its most tasty. Perfect for a weekend brunch, you could even cook it over a campfire if that is your style!

You will need:

- ½ red onion, grated
- 1 can of tuna (approx. 160g)
- 80g mature cheese, grated
- 1 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped
- 4 thick slices wholemeal bread
- butter for spreading

What to do:

1. Gently fry the onion in a little oil until softened.
2. While the onion is cooking, drain the tuna into a bowl and flake roughly.
3. Add the cheese, mayonnaise, lemon juice, spring onions and fried onions.
4. Season with salt and pepper, and mix well to form a sticky paste.
5. Butter the bread and place two slices in the frying pan *butter side down*.
6. Spread the fishy mixture thickly on top, and place the other slices on top, butter side up.
7. Put a small plate on top of each sandwich and a tin of beans (or whatever) on top to squash the sandwiches flat while they cook.
8. Fry over a low heat for 4-5 mins, until the bottom is golden and crispy, and the filling is starting to ooze out. Remove the plates and cook on the other side.



Doing and Being

Fire

Fire is a powerful symbol, and the Bible uses it a lot. What passages can you think of that talk about fire, and what does it represent?

Breakfast on the beach

If you have a barbeque, you could try cooking some fish on it and remembering Jesus making breakfast for his disciples on the beach. (If you don't have a barbeque, you could have grilled fish finger sandwiches as a picnic anyway.)

Marshmallows, anyone?

Perhaps you have an open fire in your home. Can you cook something over it? Otherwise, you can try toasting mini marshmallows over a candle (carefully!)

Found treasure picture

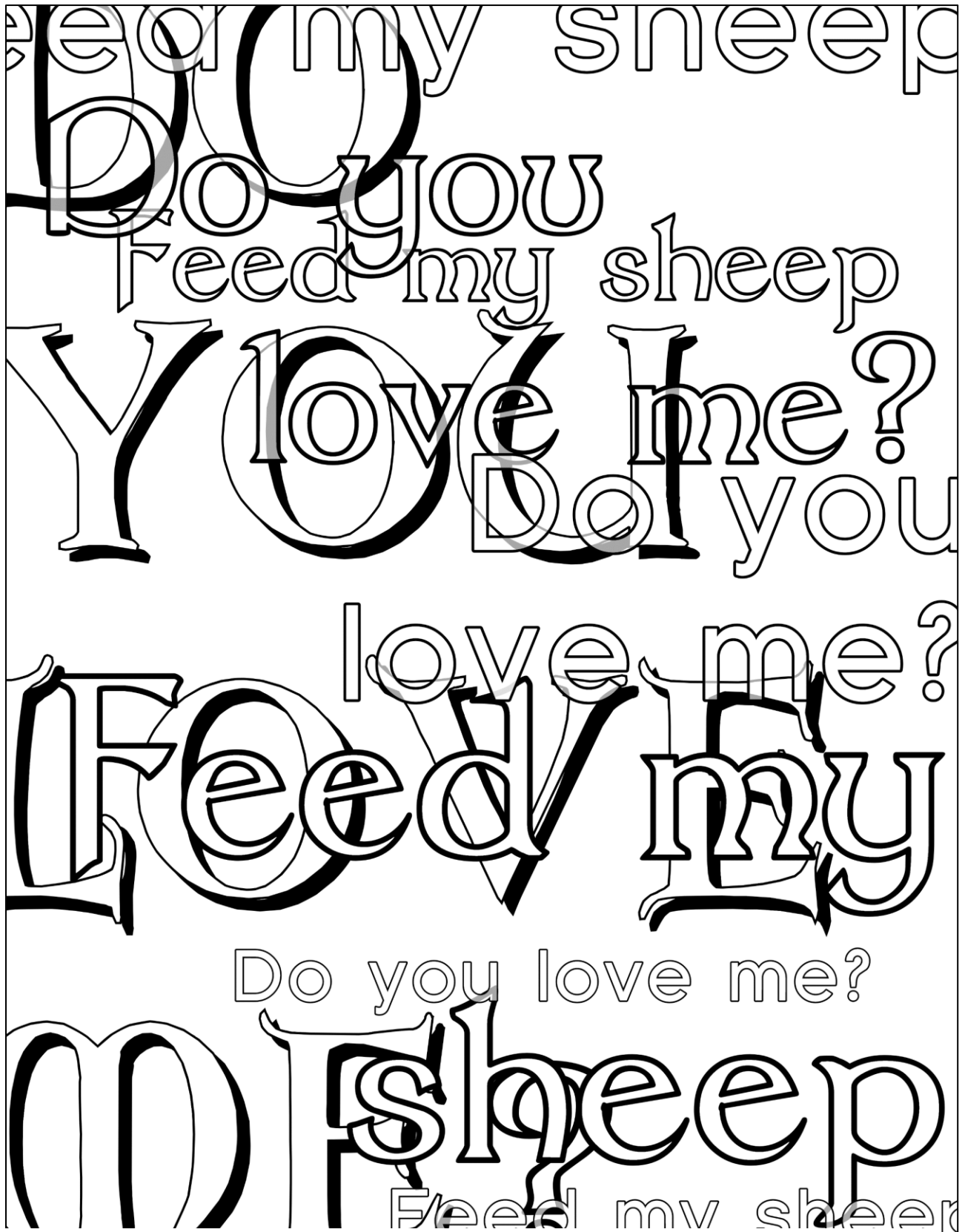
If you live near the sea, go for a walk, preferably early in the morning, and see what you can find. Use them to make a picture on the sand to represent the Easter story, or anything else that you think is important.

The hem of his robe

See if you can catch a good sunrise or sunset when the sky looks like fire. I like to imagine that the glory I am seeing is merely the dusty hem of God's robes. What must the rest of him be like?

Colouring

Praying with pencils. Give yourself a few minutes of peace in God's presence.



Notes