

What is Heart Change All About?

Preparing Your Heart to Teach Part 2

One of the enemies of clear thinking and right responses is frustration and anger. Anger can blur one's ability to stay calm and handle a problem carefully. What do you do when you start to get a little excited or upset? How do you get yourself back to a place where you have enough peace to handle life's challenges?

Your maturity in this area allows you to meet frustrations without resorting to meanness, sarcasm, disrespect, and unkindness. Most children have a difficult time in this area. They lack the skills necessary to respond graciously when they're corrected or given a no answer. Kids resort to all kinds of manipulations to express their disapproval.

But it's not just a kid problem is it? As adults, we often react out of our own selfishness when we get upset. The solution is to learn to handle our emotions in more constructive ways and not allow them to get us riled up. That solution is the topic of this lesson. As you help children learn to settle down, take a moment and apply the same truths to your own life. It's a challenge we all need.

What Children Learn in Part 2

In this lesson children will learn about a tool we call a Break. A Break is simply going to a quiet place to settle down before returning to debrief with a parent or teacher. Unlike Time Out, a Break focuses on the heart and puts the responsibility for change onto the child. When the child is ready to talk calmly about the problem, then he or she can initiate back.

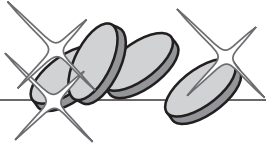
Theme: When I'm upset I can stop, settle down, and change my heart.

Kids will gain a greater understanding of why they need a Break and they'll even practice it. Using the story of Jonah along with several activities and a craft, kids will explore the value of taking a Break and learn how to implement it in family life.

Read Along in the Book, "Parenting is Heart Work"

Correction is foundational to any parenting strategy. In fact, God values correction as he works with his children. Over and over again, God corrected people in the scriptures. He wanted heart change and he called it repentance. Chapter 14 takes apart the biblical concept of repentance and defines it in practical terms. It then offers hands-on tools for helping children change their hearts, not just their behavior. Chapter 15 discusses how a Break can be an excellent parenting tool to touch the heart. In particular, the Break transfers the responsibility for change to the child, a welcome concept in most homes.

Part 2

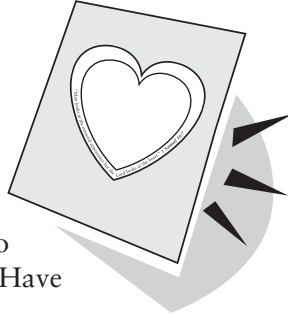


Theme

When I'm upset I can stop, settle down, and change my heart.

Welcome Activity Heart Mosaic

Preparation: Photocopy onto cardstock the heart template at the end of this lesson. Also photocopy the instructions page on regular paper. Cut sheets of construction paper into approximately 3x4 inch pieces. Have glue available.



Children can take the colored construction paper pieces, tear them into smaller pieces, and then glue them onto their base in the shape of a heart. This project uses color and texture to demonstrate creativity.

Tell the kids that this craft illustrates the fact that many things are in the heart. The heart is the place where we feel upset at times. When we don't like what happened or it's frustrating, we feel it in our hearts. The heart is also the place where we can be stubborn. I know that sometimes I want something that I can't have, and that's a challenge for my heart. But the heart is also the place where we feel at peace. Sometimes it takes some work to change our hearts from being upset to being more calm. Today we're going to talk about the heart, especially when parents correct you. Sometimes children get pretty upset when corrected by Mom or Dad. One of the things that helps kids be successful in those moments is to stop, settle down, and change your heart.

Have children place their Heart Mosaic along the wall or in a safe place before continuing. They'll add to this pile as the session unfolds.

For Younger Children

You may want to cut the construction paper into strips so they can easily tear pieces.



Transition

This next activity is a visual demonstration so everyone needs to be in a place where they can see. One of the ways that kids learn how to stop, settle down, and change the heart is through what we call a Break. This activity illustrates what happens in a child's heart when the child goes to take a Break.

Together Time

Use the ideas below along with your own thoughts and the Bible to dialogue with the children and help them see that having a calm heart is most important even when things around you are upsetting.

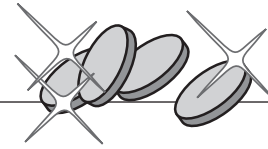
Object Lesson

Colored Water Turns Clear with a Break

Preparation: This activity works because of a chemical reaction, so be sure to follow the directions carefully and measure the amounts of the liquids accurately. Before class, put five drops of red food coloring on a spoon and blow it dry with a hair dryer. This usually takes about five minutes of hot air before it dries. Turn the spoon upside down and place it on the table so children can't see the food coloring. Have three glasses on the table. The first one contains four ounces of water. The second glass contains one tbsp of vinegar. In a third glass put two tbsps of bleach. Put a piece of colored construction paper on one side of the table.

Move the first glass to the front of the table and tell the children, "Let's imagine that this glass of water is your heart. A lot of things happen in the heart but one of the things we want to talk about is how we feel in our hearts. Sometimes when we get upset we don't handle problems very well."

Pick up the glass with vinegar in it and allow children to smell it. Say, "We'll pretend that this liquid represents problems we face in life. It doesn't look like a problem. It's clear like the water, but



smell it. Does it smell like water? Let's add these problems to the heart and see what happens." Build the excitement and anticipation and watch children's faces as you combine two liquids together and nothing happens. Of course, at first, nothing happens until you pick up the spoon and stir the liquids together and the food coloring turns the water red. Stir for only about one second and put the spoon down on the table to use again.

Continue by saying, "Parents sometimes give kids instructions that they'd rather not do. Or they say no to a child's request, or sometimes parents have to correct kids. When that happens kids can get pretty upset and the correction and limits create problems inside the heart in the same way that this water has turned red. Children then sometimes say mean things to parents or they are disrespectful or they just say no. The problem is in the heart.

"What the child needs to do is stop, settle down, and change the heart. We call that a Break. Kids sometimes need to take a Break in order to stop, settle down, and change the heart." So, I'm going to move the glass onto the piece of construction paper where the heart is now taking a Break. Amazing things happen when kids take a Break. The heart begins to change. A Break is a great place for adults too, so this isn't just a kid solution. When the heart gets upset, it needs to stop, settle down and change." Pour the bleach into the water and watch the color disappear gradually in about 10 seconds. The color slowly dissipates right before your eyes. The Break helped settle the heart. Now the glass isn't colored anymore. In the same way, children go take a Break and then they return ready to solve problems and do the right thing.

Move the glass back to the center of the table away from the Break place. Take the spoon and stir the water again and it will turn red. Quickly put the glass back onto the Break place and within 10 seconds it will turn back to clear.

"Sometimes children must go back to the Break a few times before they can really settle down." You can repeat this 3-4 times or until the food coloring is all gone off the spoon.

Bible Story

"Jonah, It's Break Time"

I'd like to tell you a Bible story. It's one I think you've heard, but I don't think you've heard it quite this way before. How many of you have heard the story of Jonah? Yes, I see that most of you have. Listen to me tell it and see if you can understand this idea of the Break.

Have you ever been in a grocery store, at the park, or even at church and you hear a mom call her little boy and instead of coming, he runs the other way? At first it looks funny but then you see the mom getting angry and you say to yourself "Uh oh, trouble is coming!" A story like that happened in the Bible.

Jonah ran the other way when God told him to go to Nineveh. Jonah was just like a three-year-old in a grocery store and he tried to run away from God. Now, God could have just picked up Jonah by the back of the collar and said, "You are going to Nineveh" and put him on the road. But God didn't do that. Do you know why?

God is interested in the heart. The heart is the place where we make choices. It's the place where we decide what's right to do, even if we don't feel like it. The heart is the place where our attitudes are developed and where we feel things. God

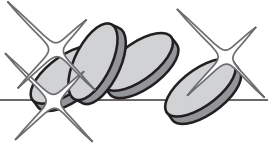
wanted Jonah to change his heart. You see, Jonah was being selfish. He didn't want to go and talk to the

people of Nineveh. His heart was just thinking about himself. So he ran away from God.

Now God said to himself, "I'm going to have to discipline this man. What



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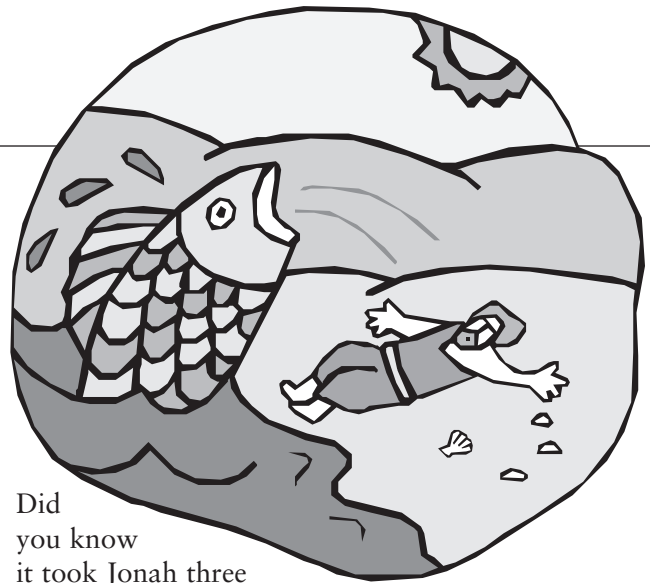
technique should I use? I want something that will help him change his heart.... I know! I'll use a Break."

Let me explain to you, boys and girls, what a Break is. The Break is a place where you sit for a bit and stop, settle down, and change your heart before you can continue in life. In fact, I want someone to demonstrate this for me.

Who would like to be my volunteer? (Have your volunteer stand up and come close to you.) Now the first thing we have to do is imagine that you did something wrong. Boys and girls, what do you think we could pretend that our volunteer did wrong? (Choose an offense like hitting or grabbing from a brother or sister, or complaining when a parent gives an instruction.) You hit your brother! (Express shock but not anger.) You need to go over near the table over there and sit on the floor and take a Break. Now while you're there, I want you to stop, settle down, and change your heart and then you come back to me when you're ready. (Allow the child to go and sit down and then you might have to coax him or her out of the Break.) When the child comes back, simply say, "Do you know what you did wrong? Okay let's try to do the right thing next time. Thank you."

Have a second volunteer demonstrate the Break. Remember that the Break works in part because the child initiates the return demonstrating a change of heart, so try to have the child return without prompting. Usually, clear instructions followed by silence motivate the child to return, but you may have to say to the other children, "Let's see Billy return to me with a changed heart."

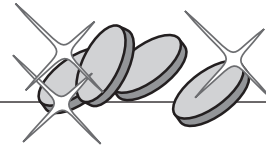
God said, "What technique should I use to discipline this guy? I know, I'll use a Break. Where should I have him sit? I know, I'll create a fish. So God had a great big fish come up along side of the boat and they threw Jonah overboard. Jonah got swallowed by that fish. Now, boys and girls, if you got swallowed by a big fish how long would it take you to change your heart? About one minute, or one second, right? I'd want to get out of that fish right away.



Did you know it took Jonah three days to change his heart? I hope it doesn't take you that long to change your heart. Sometimes kids go to the Break and they are angry and they say things like, "It's not fair. I can't believe I have to sit in this place. I don't like it when you tell me what to do. Why do I always get into trouble?" And on and on it goes for a while. Those kids need to stay in the Break for a longer time. They aren't ready to come out and if they come out too early then they just fight with their parents or with their friends or brothers and sisters. The Break is a place to stop, settle down, and change your heart.

God knew that Jonah had changed his heart and that he was ready to obey, so he commanded the fish to throw up, and the fish did! He threw up Jonah right onto the land. Jonah chapter 3 tells us that God told Jonah again to go to Nineveh, and then it says this: "And Jonah obeyed." I like that verse. What do you think God would have done if Jonah hadn't obeyed? You see, obeying is a sign of a heart that's right. God is interested in the heart. This time God used a big fish to help Jonah change his heart. If you were God and Jonah didn't obey this time, what other things could you make happen that might motivate Jonah to change his heart? (Talk about things like creepy bugs, violent storms, lightning, and tornados that God might use to get Jonah's attention.)

Boys and girls, your parents want to see your heart change too. They don't just want to see you change your behavior. Sometimes they may use a Break to help you stop, settle down, and change your heart. If that doesn't work, they have lots of other ideas for helping you change your heart. I don't think you want to see those things. It's best to just respond to a Break.



I like a Break because it's an adult way to respond to correction. Sometimes as an adult when I realize I've done the wrong thing, I just need to take a Break, stop, settle down, and change my heart so that I can work on doing the right thing. You might encourage your mom and dad to discipline you with a Break. It's a much better way to correct kids than what sometimes happens in families. And then you need to be able to respond to the Break so that it will work. If you do this you will grow much faster and be much more successful at handling problems, mistakes, and conflict in life.

We have a Bible verse that helps us remember this idea. The verse comes in 1 Samuel 16:7 and it tells us what's most important to God.

This Bible story was taken from Jonah 1-3.

Bible Verse

1 Samuel 16:7

“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

Transition

I want you to remember the story about Jonah. I'm sure you've heard it before. But I want you to remember how important a Break is in changing the heart, so we're going to have some fun making a big fish. Demonstrate to children the finished craft and how you suck Jonah right into the mouth.

Craft The Big Fish Catches Jonah

Preparation: From a party store, purchase the party favors that unroll when you blow into them and the “tongue” retracts when you stop blowing. These are typically called “blowouts.” Photocopy the little Jonah at the end of this lesson. You'll also need yarn, tape, markers or ball point pens, and one styrofoam cup for each child.

Don't distribute the party favors until the children have done the rest of the craft so that the kids

don't get distracted by blowing on them. Have each child break out the bottom of a Styrofoam cup. Using markers or ball point pens, have each child draw scales on the fish and put eyes on either side so that the smaller end of the cup is the mouth. Tape the party favor along the inside of the cup with the “tongue” ready to expand out the bottom of the cup.

Create the Jonah using the template at the end of this lesson. Tape or glue a piece of yarn about 12 long to the back of Jonah's head. After creating all the pieces, have children sit on the floor around the table, put a weight like a book or a piece of tape on the yarn to hold it on the table and dangle Jonah over the table as if cast into the sea. Have each child blow into his or her party favor so the tongue comes out of the fish's mouth and tries to grab Jonah and suck him right into the fish's mouth. After Jonah takes a Break, they can have the fish throw up Jonah onto the land on top of the table.



Kids will have fun with this craft and will never forget the story of Jonah and the big fish. Be sure to take pictures for your photo diary. Don't allow children to play with these toys too long because the blowouts aren't very sturdy and may break easily. After the craft time have the children put their Jonah and fish on their Heart Mosaic and then sit back down and get ready for the race.

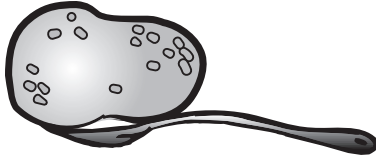
Transition

Who can tell me why someone would have to sit and take a Break? Yes, because they are upset and need to stop, settle down, and change the heart. Sometimes kids try to continue on and solve problems or they react because they're upset and they really need to just stop, settle down, and change the heart. We're now going to play a game that will help us remember that sometimes we need to start over. It's better to slow down sometimes in order to be more effective.

Part 2



Activity The Race



Preparation:

You'll need two teaspoons and two potatoes for older children. Use two teaspoons and two grapes for younger children.

Prepare an obstacle course using four or five chairs forcing children to go to the other end of the room and back, navigating around the chairs. For older children you may make the race interesting by having the children cross each other's path forcing them to navigate around each other. Give each older racer a teaspoon and a potato. By putting one hand behind the back, race through the course. If the child drops the potato or tries to hold it on, then have that child start all over again.

With young children you may want to use a grape in the spoon and not actually race but have each child go one at a time trying to accomplish the task.

Most children will struggle with this activity and have to return to the beginning several times. Life is like that. Frustrations often mean that we have to start over. You may even see that frustration in the game. If so, you might remove the competitive edge by having all the children sit down and let's see if anyone can make it through the whole course without dropping the potato. Usually a child, when settled down and careful, can complete the course without dropping the potato. Use this event to talk about how family life can get hectic sometimes. You want to get some things done or you just want to play a game or watch a movie but then Mom or Dad asks for something to be done. It's easy to get upset but important to remain calm. How do you do that? Maybe you can just take a deep breath, but sometimes you'll have to take a Break to settle down and be ready to be more successful.

can be a place where we get upset, angry, and even stubborn sometimes. The Break gives a child some time to settle down. Change is important. How long does it take for a person to change the heart? Sometimes it only takes a few seconds and a person is ready to return. Other times it may take 20 minutes or an hour, depending how upset a child is.

One of the signs that someone is growing up is that they can change more quickly. The person who isn't mature often has to take much longer to make the changes necessary to reenter family life. It's interesting how a person's heart can change from one thing one minute to something completely different the next. A Break often allows a person to change what's in the heart.

Snack Buried Treasure Mini Muffins

Preparation: Bake or buy mini-muffins.

Using a knife, gently insert the photocopied treasure slips at the end of this lesson. Leave a small tail hanging out.



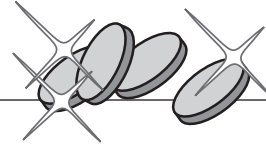
Serve the mini-muffins and have children take out the slips of paper and read what they say. Talk about the hidden treasure of settling down in a Break.

Transition

Who can tell me what happens when a child takes a Break? Stop, settle down, and change the heart. In fact, a Break is really a treasure in family life. It does some great things to help people stay calm and work out problems without getting upset and losing control. I want to show you that the Break is a treasure as we do this next activity.

Transition

What does a Break help someone do? Stop, settle down, and change the heart. Let's talk about what it means to change the heart a little bit. The heart



Activity Treasure Cave

Preparation: Create a Treasure Cave by placing three chairs next to each other in one row. Then create a second row of chairs behind the first, facing the opposite direction about three feet apart. Put a blanket over the chairs to form a cave that children will go into. Place a treat inside the cave. That treat may be some chocolate coins, candy, or stickers that children would enjoy.

Tell kids that this is a Break place and that taking a Break is like finding hidden treasure. You want to demonstrate this by having children enter the cave unhappy and exit the cave happy. Who would like to go first? Show me your pouting face going in and let's see a happy face when you come out. Have children enter the cave one at a time to get their treat. Instruct them to take one piece of hidden treasure when they take a Break.

Review and Close

The Break isn't an easy thing to learn in family life, but it's worth the work. It takes practice and self-control. Sometimes children get angry or upset and they need to take a Break so they can stop, settle down, and change their hearts.

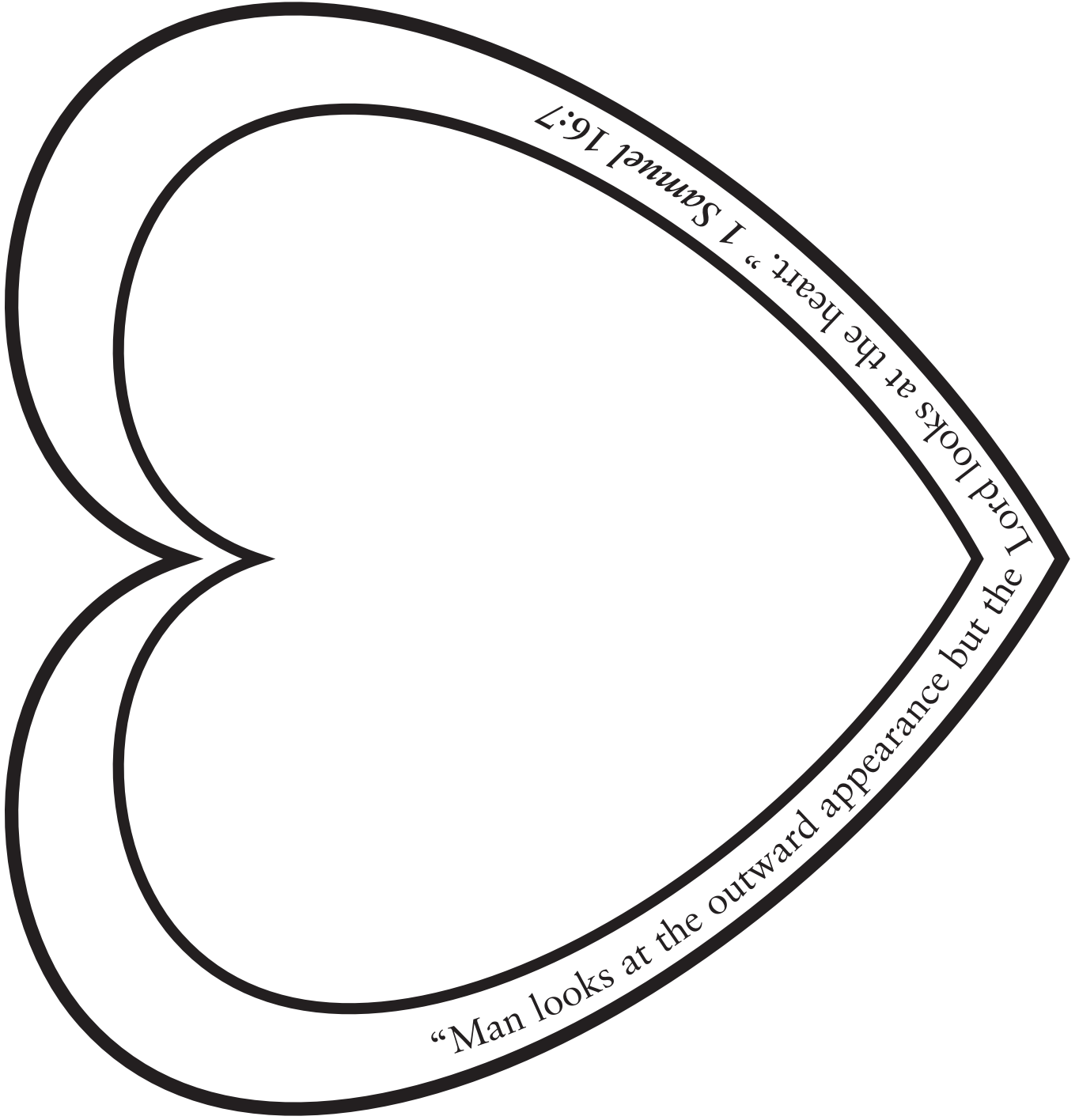
Let's talk about some times when kids tend to get upset. What are those times? Let children respond

with ideas. Kids get upset when they are corrected. For example, Jack was teasing his little sister. Mom said, "Jack please stop teasing your sister." Jack got angry and said, "She's just a tattler." Mom said, "Jack, I'd like you to take a Break and then come back and see me. When children are corrected they benefit from a Break.

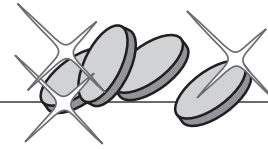
Chrissy wanted to go over to her friend's house but Mom said, "No, we're not going to do that this afternoon." Chrissy got mad and started stomping around and yelling. Mom said, "Chrissy, I want you to take a Break in the hall and come back and see me when you're ready." Boys and girls, how do you think Mom will know when Chrissy is ready? That's right, she'll be settled down and her heart will be changed. Everyone will be able to tell because she won't be pouting and angry. She'll be ready to talk about the problem.

When do you think it would be helpful for you to take a Break in family life? Allow children to share possible scenarios when a Break might be helpful. Help kids make the personal application to their own families. If children are reluctant to share or can't think of how to apply it, share another example or two about how a Break might be effective to help a child be ready to work on a problem.

Pray and thank the Lord for the heart. Ask God to help children this week to have hearts that are calm instead of upset.



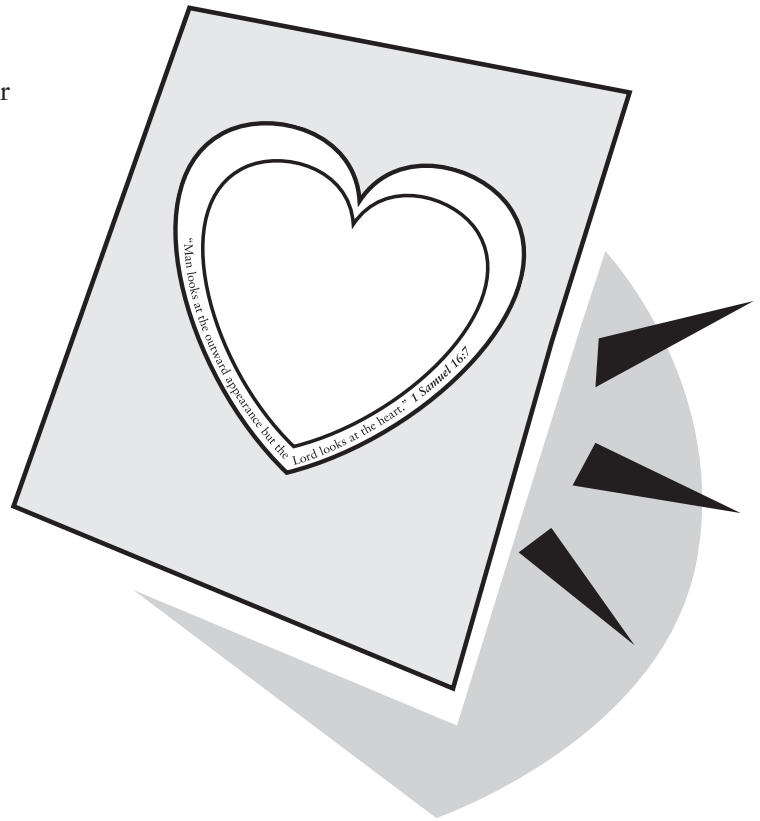
“Man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7



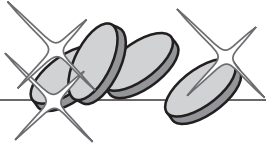
Heart Mosaic

Instructions for older children

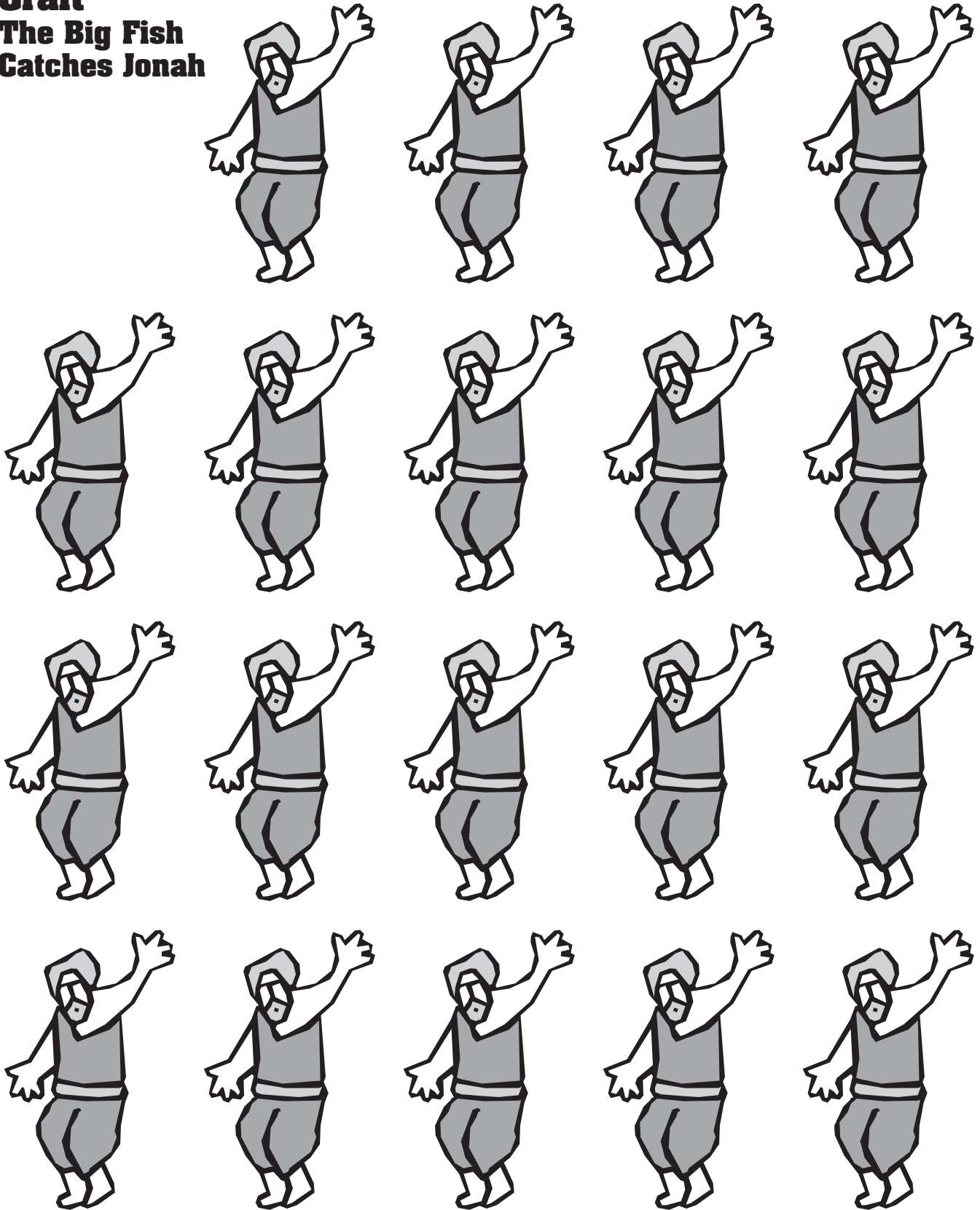
- 1** Choose a piece of colored construction paper as your base.
- 2** Choose smaller pieces of construction paper for your mosaic.
- 3** Rip the smaller pieces.
- 4** Glue the smaller pieces on your page in the shape of a heart.



Part 2



Craft The Big Fish Catches Jonah





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A Heart-Based Approach for Correcting Children

Dear Parent,

It would be nice if children always did what they're supposed to do but that doesn't happen. Children need correction and they need parents who can correct them in ways that touch the heart. Only when children change their hearts can lasting change take place.

Now it is true that you can't force a change of heart, but you *can* influence this deeper work. In today's lesson your child learned about a Break. The Break is a tool that parents can use to teach children how to stop, settle down, and be willing to work on the problem.

Theme: When I'm upset I can stop, settle down, and change my heart.

Using role-play, games, activities, and a Bible story, your child heard how important it is to change the heart. The story of Jonah illustrates the Break well. Jonah was doing the wrong thing. God chose to discipline him. What technique did God choose? It was a Break, having Jonah sit for a bit and consider his ways. The approach was successful because Jonah changed his heart and then obeyed.

We used the Bible verse, 1 Samuel 16:7 to talk about the importance of the heart and how God sees and values it. You might ask your child about the race with the spoon or the colored water that turned clear.

It takes time to develop a Break as a routine that you can use in correction, but the work you do now to develop a good pattern will go a long way. One of the advantages of the Break is that it shifts the responsibility for a change of heart to the child instead of the parent. Only when the child has settled down and is ready to work on the problem can he or she initiate and return to the parent for a discussion about the problem, and then re-enter family life.

The Break helps settle emotions before dialogue instead of watching the intensity escalate into an emotional battle. Most importantly though, over time kids learn how to discipline themselves. A Break is an adult skill and many parents would benefit from putting it into practice in their own lives.

Spend time this week talking about heart change when you correct your child. You want your child to think differently about the correction process and about ways he or she can learn from discipline instead of fighting against it.

Blessings,

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