

PRAYING *With* CHILDREN

SUNDAY LITURGY



24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

17 September 2023 - Year A

"I did not say to you to forgive seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Something to Think About

The parable in today's gospel story helps us reflect on the importance of compassion - of being able to walk in another's shoes in order to understand their feelings. Think about a time when you felt someone really listened to you and understood your feelings.

The Story

This gospel story is about forgiveness and it follows on from last week's gospel about community. To 'grow a community' people must be willing both to forgive and to seek forgiveness. Peter says to Jesus that forgiveness is fine - but surely there must be a limit! After all, surely Jesus couldn't expect his disciples (and us) to keep forgiving and forgiving and forgiving! The gospel message emphasises not only the need to forgive but the willingness to keep forgiving. $70 \times 7 = \text{always!}$

The Scriptures

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

18:21-35

Peter came up to the Lord and asked, "How many times should I forgive someone who does something wrong to me? Is seven times enough?"

Jesus answered: "Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times! This story will show you what the kingdom of heaven is like:

"One day a king decided to call in his officials and ask them to give an account of what they owed him. As he was doing this, one official was brought in who owed him fifty million silver coins. But he didn't have any money to pay what he owed. The king ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all he owned, in order to pay the debt.

The official got down on his knees and began begging, 'Have pity on me, and I will pay you every cent I owe!' The king felt sorry for him and let him go free. He even told the official that he did not have to pay back the money.

As the official was leaving, he happened to meet another official, who owed him a hundred silver coins. So he grabbed the man by the throat. He started choking him and said, 'Pay me what you owe!' The man got down on his knees and began begging, 'Have pity on me, and I will pay you back.' But the first official refused to have pity. Instead, he went and had the other official put in jail until he could pay what he owed.

When some other officials found out what had happened, they felt sorry for the man who had been put in jail. Then they told the king what had happened. The king called the first official back in and said, 'You're an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I said you did not have to pay back a cent. Don't you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?' "The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured until he could pay back everything he owed. That is how my Father in heaven will treat you, if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Video

Watch the video: [The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant](#)



Group Discussion

Assist children to identify some forgiving phrases - 'I made a mistake' / 'I understand' / 'That's okay' / 'Let's forget it' / 'It's okay'. Encourage them to practise them in the coming weeks (and years!). Children might like to share experiences of being forgiven by their parents, friends teachers or others.

Praying For Others

Leader: Let us pray now for the leaders of our Church, our world, for those in our community and for our own needs.

Reader 1: We pray that our leaders will lead with justice and compassion. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 2: We pray that we will trust in God's forgiveness. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 3: We pray that we will forgive others over and over. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 4: We pray that we will treat others with the same kindness that God treats us. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 5: We pray that our hearts will be full of praise for God. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Invite the children to pray for their own special intentions.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Leader: Loving God, listen to the prayers we make in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Prayer



Dear Jesus,
Help us to see things through other people's eyes so that we can understand their feelings. Give each of us a forgiving heart.
Amen.

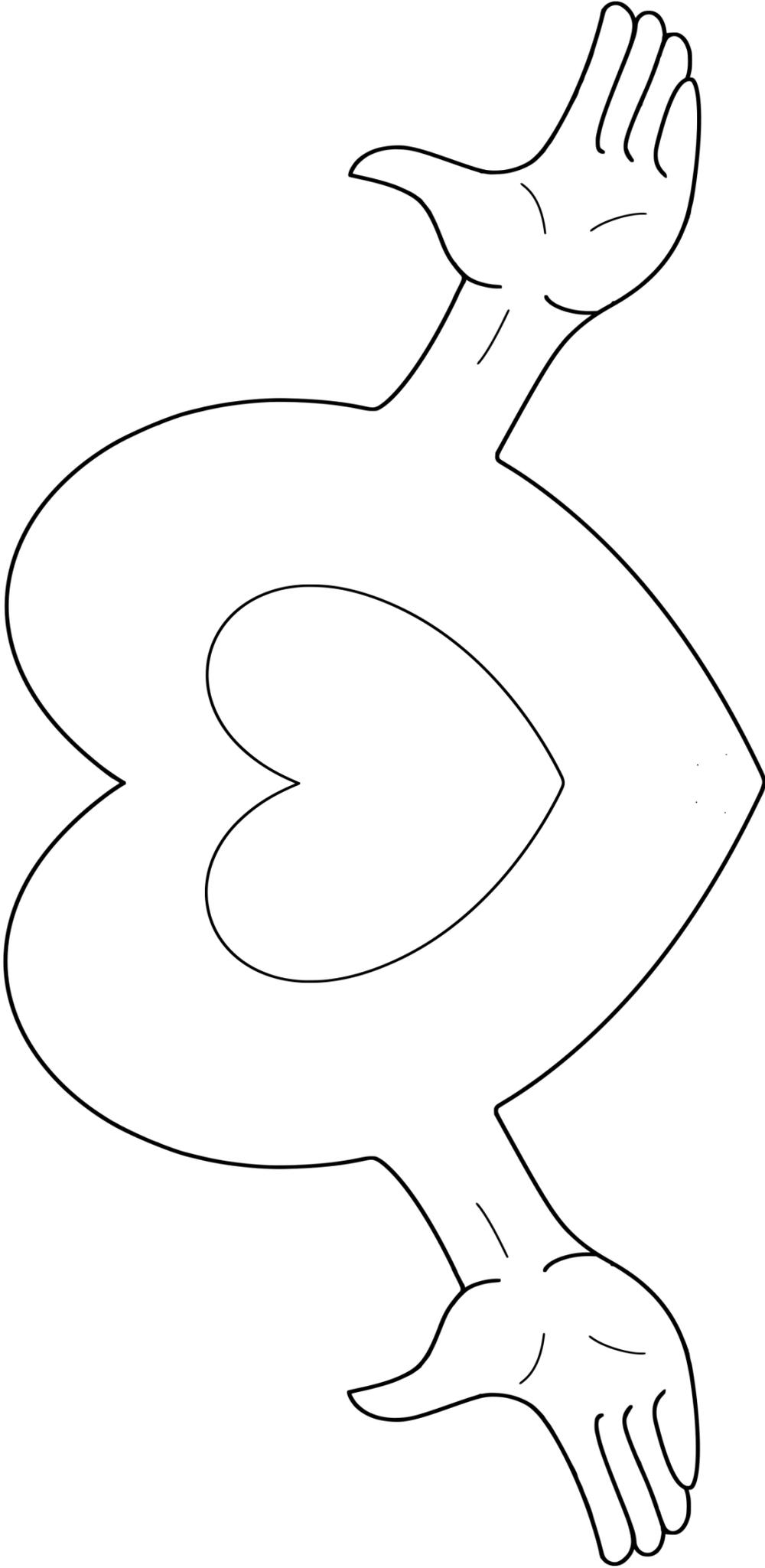
Group Activity

Forgive just as God forgives you

You will need: template for each child, crayons, scissors, glue and/or sticky tape for assembling.

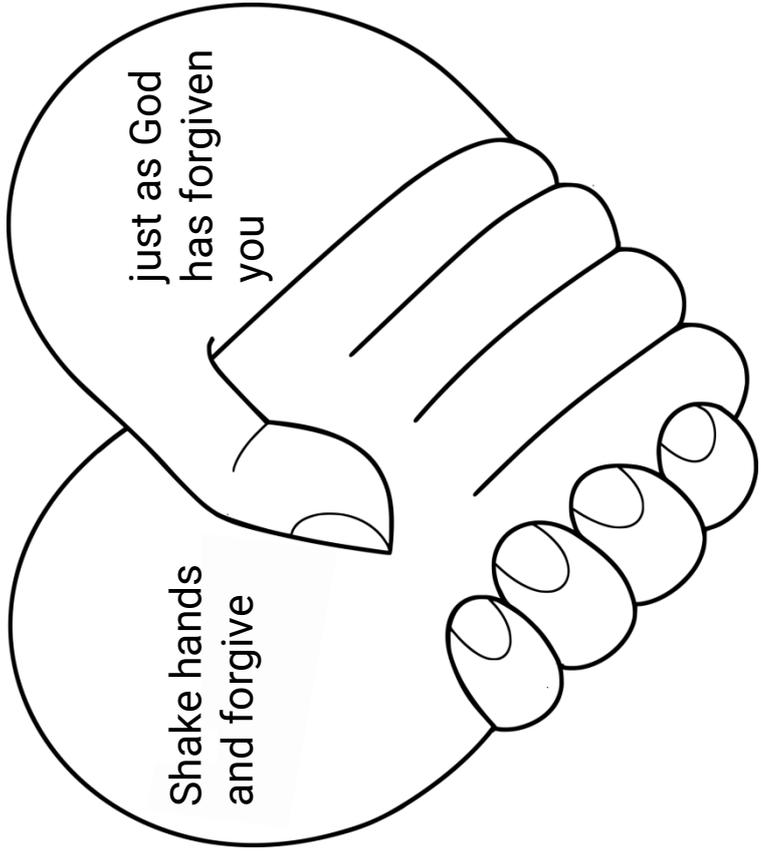
- 1) Invite children to colour the templates. Talk about what each of the words say, and what the connected hearts with the numbers represent.
- 2) Assist children to cut out and assemble the artwork, choosing the pieces they wish to add to their design.





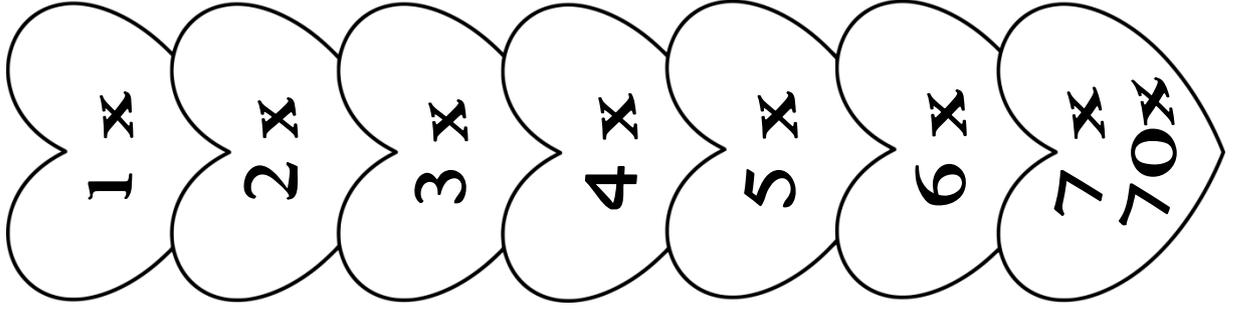
God has
a big and
forgiving
heart

In God's heart
there is room
for everyone



Shake hands
and forgive

just as God
has forgiven
you



1 x

2 x

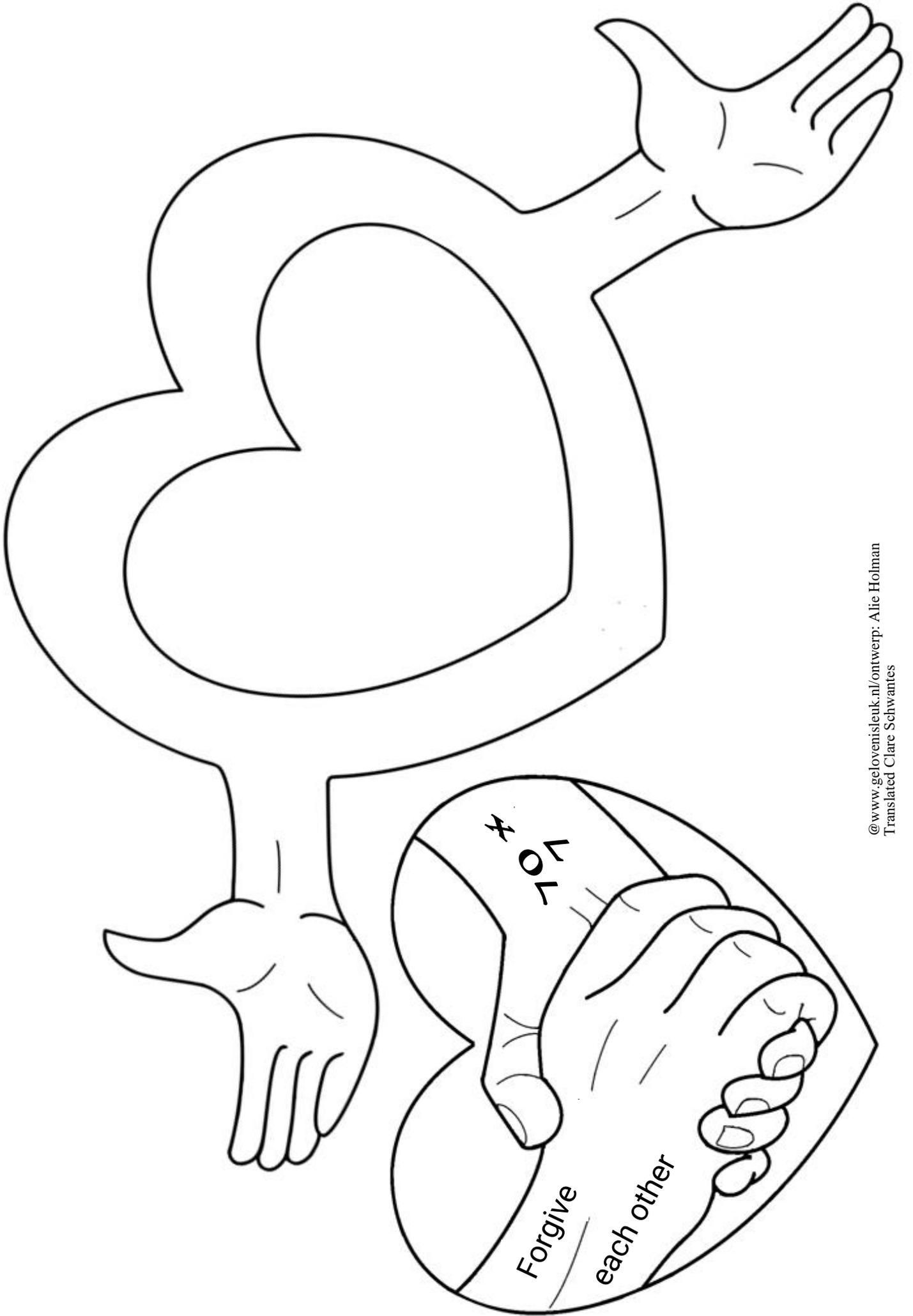
3 x

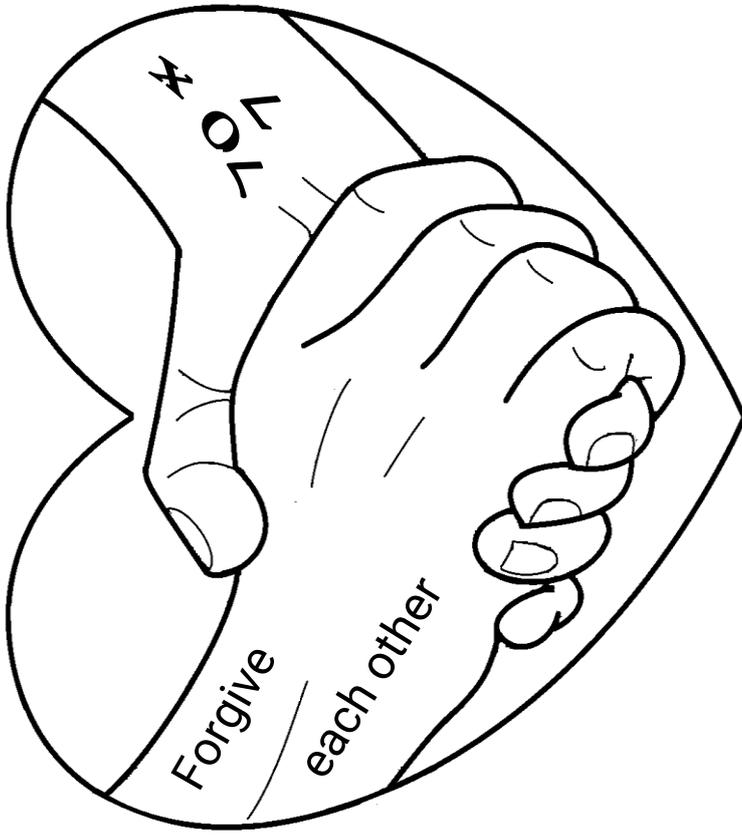
4 x

5 x

6 x

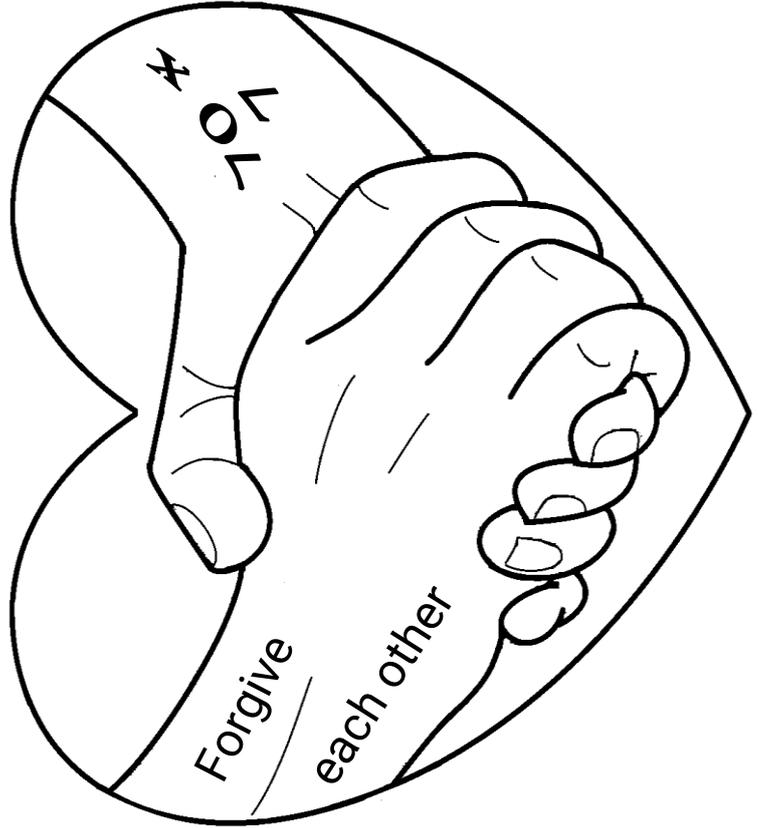
7 x
70x





God has a big and forgiving heart

In God's heart there is room for everyone



God has a big and forgiving heart

In God's heart there is room for everyone

**I'M
SORRY!**

**I FORGIVE
YOU!**



**OUR FATHER... FORGIVE US OUR SINS
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US.**

Think of a time when you found it hard to forgive someone.

Draw or write what happened on a piece of paper.

NOW, TO SHOW YOU HAVE FORGIVEN THAT PERSON...

bury the paper in the garden in a secret place or
rip it up into lots of tiny pieces and throw it in the bin.