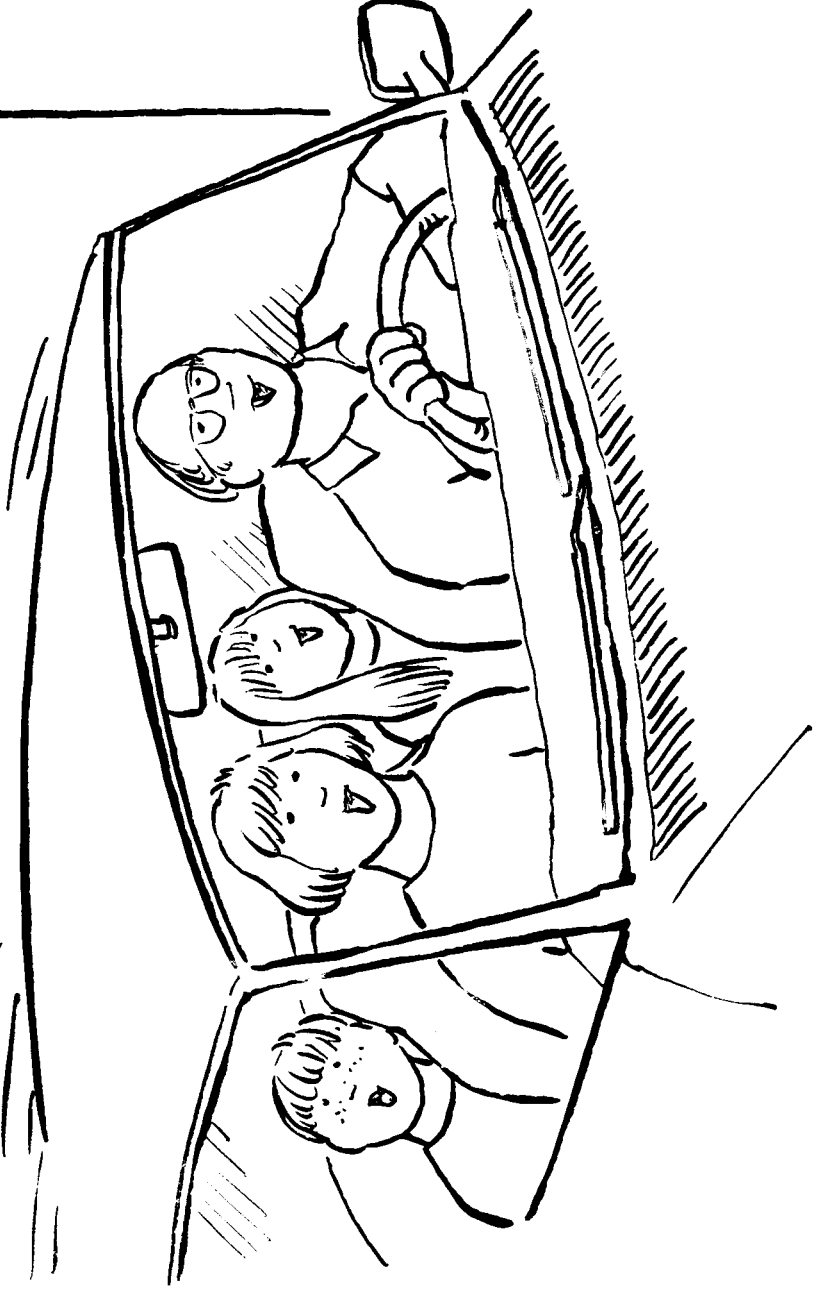
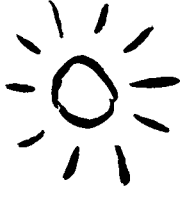


THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year B
PROPER 15
TRACKS 1 and 2

*"Sing together to God
with all your heart,
always giving thanks."*
EPHESIANS 5:19-20



A NOTE TO PARENTS

It may surprise us to realize what a robust and cheerful world-view the Epistles present. Paul can be arrogant, impatient, condescending to women and to rivals in the struggle for leadership in the young church; but when he leaves off being personal and controversial, and simply describes the Christian lifestyle, he is sensible, sunny, broad-minded, and wholesome. Christians are to honor and respect each other, share with each other, forgive each other ... and most of all, to use everything God gives them with joy and thanksgiving. There are to be no fussy rules or prohibitions, no condemnations of God's gifts, only a loving reverence for creation and the Creator, so that to use those gifts destructively becomes unthinkable. A key word is "freedom," another is "thanksgiving." It is too bad that this wonderful, liberating vision of a Christian lifestyle has often been obscured, so that even today we have a vague notion, lurking in the back of our minds, that fun or pleasure are somehow un-Christian—or, if not un-Christian, then somehow outside, separate, unrelated to our "religious life."

But for Paul, our enjoyment of God's gifts is an inseparable part of our love of God in Christ. Jesus, also, had a reputation as a "glutton and a winebibber" and was challenged by pious people not only for snacking on the Sabbath but for inadequate fasting. Neither Jesus nor Paul, of course, suggests that the Christian life is all fun and games. Both speak freely of the Cross, and of suffering and death for the Gospel. But, oddly, it is those who most love this life who are most willing to leave it for a good cause. It is the "hard-hearted" who do not love anything enough to suffer for it, who also do not love anything enough to enjoy it.

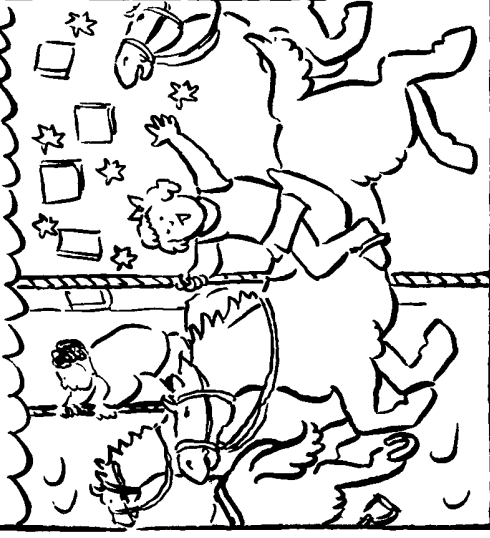
Our children, especially when they are little, can teach us a lot about enjoying God's gifts with an open heart. It is up to us to help them keep their eyes and hearts open, instead of turning to soul-numbing pastimes like television and video games, which too easily become the childhood equivalent of a drunken stupor. Paul seems to have been fond of music, for he mentions it often as *the way of building community* through joyful praise of God. Does your family sing together?

© 1988 by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard. All rights reserved.

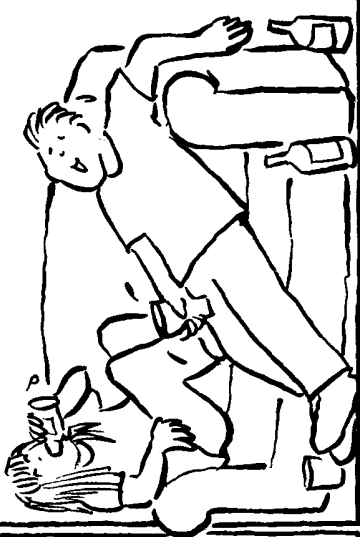
THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

203 - 624-2520 • www.the-sunday-paper.com

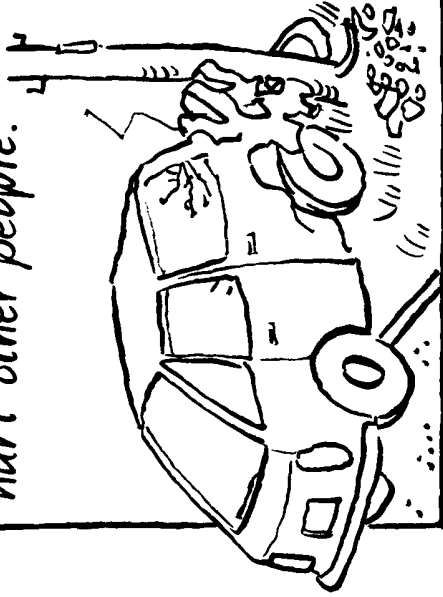
Everybody likes to be happy and feel good.



Some people do silly things in order to feel good. They get drunk, or use dangerous drugs.



But those things don't really make us happy. They hurt us, and they hurt other people.



The way to be happy is to love and thank God, and care for his world and each other.



God gives us lots and lots of ways to be happy and feel good. God's world is full of wonderful and beautiful things for us to enjoy. When we use them in ways that are good for us and other people, then we are thanking God.

Just having fun by ourselves or with people we love is a way of thanking God. Draw a picture of a way you like to have fun.