

MOTHER MELANIA'S MONTHLY MISSIVE - Jan 2023

A not entirely random mix of reflections on life, coloring pages, thoughts about kids' books & updates on Mother Melania's books

Today's Reflection -

Where do we find our worth?

A friend of ours had a disciplinary issue or two when she was young (like the rest of us!). Once, when her parents disciplined her after she had crossed their line, she said in a shocked voice, "Do you realize you're hurting my self-esteem?!"

Another friend of ours was a 6th-grade teacher. On the first day of classes one year, a very troubled (and troublesome) boy entered her class. She took one look at him and said to herself, "That boy is going to be my best friend." She immediately started asking him to help with various deeds, and he became both less troubled and less troublesome.

These anecdotes illustrate a major problem with our cultural emphasis on self-esteem - the way to be of true worth is not to esteem ourselves regardless of how we act, but to become a responsible human being in the context of loving and being loved. Our teacher friend knew this, which is why she gave that young boy many opportunities to serve others while making clear that she cared deeply about him.

And it worked!

My own experience - as a child and as an adult working with children - has taught me the same thing. So, I hope that my books in some small way help cultivate that spirit of responsible service in the context of love. Let me know how I'm doing!



Mother Melania's Book Update

We have been very blessed with three wonderful friends who have illustrated all of our kids' books so far. However, they do have actual lives that prevent them from illustrating every crazy book series I come up with. So, for a couple of years now, I have been taking classes on "How does a totally untalented person illustrate a children's book?" Finally, I have come up with a technique that (I think) works well enough to start with.

The first venture into this field is *Best Buddies: What's in a Name?* - the story of a homeless boy and the stray dog who befriends him. It's [available on Amazon](#) now, but I'm making some changes to the illustrations - for one thing, making sure the dog LOOKS like a dog!



Classic Kids' Books: Peter Rabbit

I recently purchased [Beatrix Potter The Complete Tales](#) and have read the first three so far. It's been years since I've read *Peter Rabbit*, and I was freshly impressed with the nuanced moral teaching and the advanced vocabulary. So, I put together some discussion questions, vocabulary helps, and coloring sheets that I thought you and your kids might find helpful. Tell me what you think!



What's in the Back Pages?

- *Peter the Rabbit* worksheets
- *Best Buddies* coloring page
- Scripture verse coloring page



PETER RABBIT – Discussion Questions

- Why did Peter's mother tell him not to go into Mr. McGregor's garden?
 - His father died there and Mrs. McGregor put him in a rabbit pie.
- Why do you think Peter disobeyed his mother?
 - Maybe the food was tempting. Maybe he wanted to prove he was brave. Maybe he wanted to impress his brothers & sisters
- Why did Peter start feeling sick?
 - He ate too much
- Whom did Peter meet in the garden? What did he try to do to Peter?
 - Mr. McGregor.
 - He tried to catch Peter and probably wanted to eat him.
- Who helped Peter escape when he was caught in the gooseberry net? How?
 - friendly sparrows
 - They implored him to exert himself (they begged him to work hard to get free from the gooseberry net)
- How did Peter lose his jacket and shoes? What happened to them?
 - He lost his shoes among the vegetables.
 - He got caught by his jacket buttons by the gooseberry net and had to leave it so that he could get free
 - Mr. McGregor picked them up and put them on a scarecrow
- What happened when Peter got home?
 - His mom sent him to bed and gave him some chamomile tea (to make him feel better)
 - Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail had bread, milk, and blackberries for supper
- What are some lessons Peter may have learned?
 - Listen to your mom!
 - Eating too much of things you like can make you sick
 - If you have self-control
 - you can avoid a lot of problems (like almost getting put in a rabbit pie!)
 - life is more pleasant later (like getting bread, milk, and blackberries for supper instead of being sent to bed early)
 - When you're in trouble
 - it helps to have encouraging friends
 - it's important to exert yourself (instead of just waiting for someone else to get you out of trouble)

PETER RABBIT - Vocabulary

Amongst - an old-fashioned way to say 'among'

Chamomile - a plant in the daisy family, helpful for certain sicknesses

Currant - a kind of berry that is like a grape

Dreadfully - very bad; very much of something bad

Exert - to make an effort

Fortnight - fourteen days and nights (two weeks)

Gooseberry - a round yellow-green or red berry

Implore - to beg someone to do something

Lane - a narrow road

Mischief - bad behavior that isn't too serious

Naughty - behaving badly, but usually not REALLY badly

Sand bank - a river bank made mostly of sand

Scutter - to move quickly with short steps

Trembling - shaking with fear, excitement, or weakness

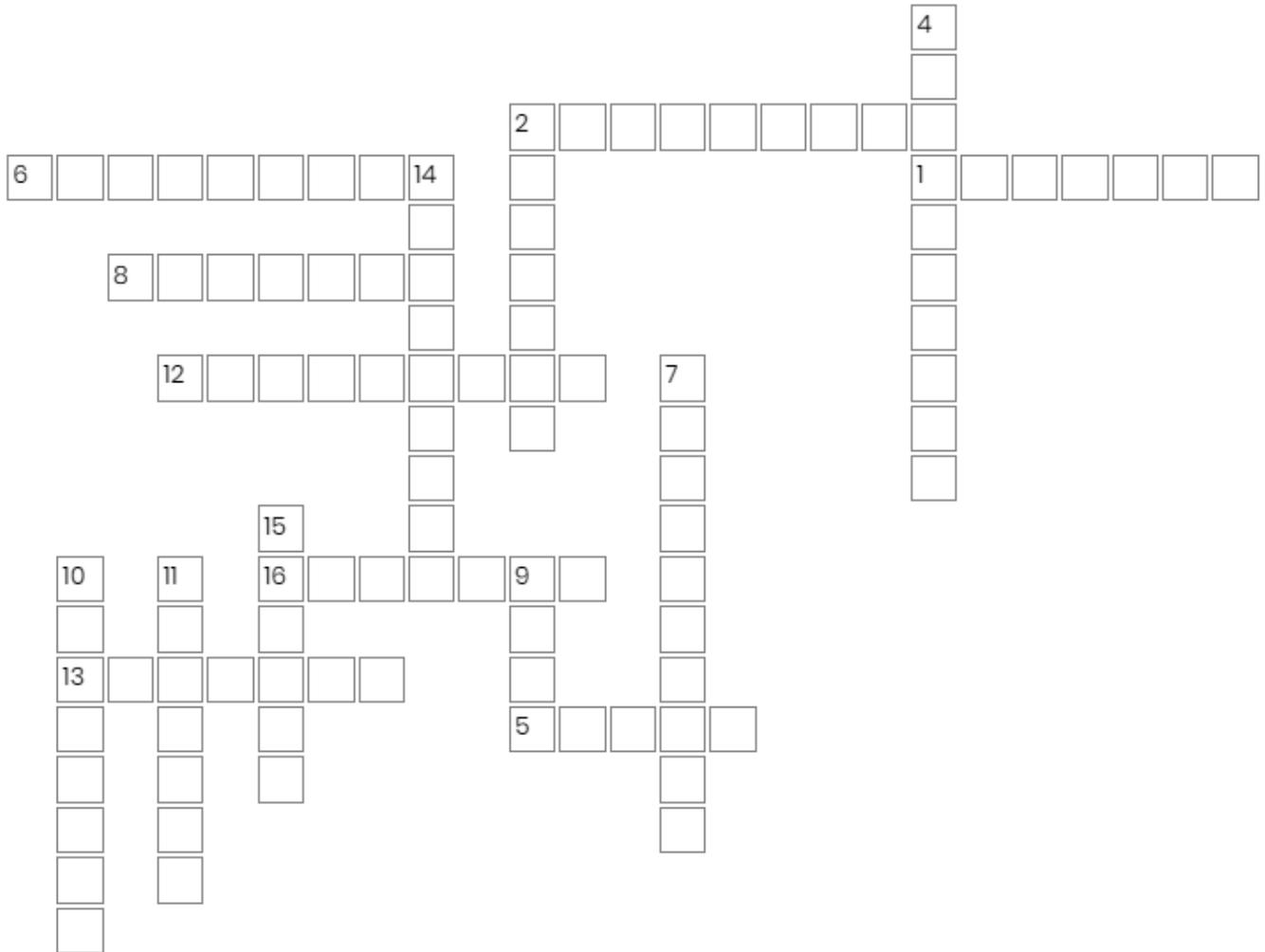
Twitch - to move in a short jerky way

Wriggle - to twist and turn very quickly

PETER RABBIT - Matching

1. Amongst a. very bad; very much of something bad
2. Chamomile b. a round yellow-green or red berry
3. Currant c. an old-fashioned way to say 'among'
4. Dreadful d. a narrow road
5. Exert e. a plant in the daisy family, helpful for certain sicknesses
6. Fortnight f. to move in a short jerky way
7. Gooseberry g. to beg someone to do something
8. Implore h. to make an effort
9. Lane i. a riverbank made mostly of sand
10. Mischief j. a kind of berry that is like a grape
11. Naughty k. to move quickly with short steps
12. Sand bank l. fourteen days and nights (two weeks)
13. Scutter m. shaking with fear, excitement, or weakness
14. Trembling n. behaving badly, but usually not REALLY badly
15. Twitch o. to twist and turn very quickly
16. Wriggle p. bad behavior that isn't too serious

PETER RABBIT - Crossword



Across

- [1]** an old-fashioned way to say 'among'
- [2]** a plant in the daisy family, helpful for certain sicknesses
- [5]** to make an effort
- [6]** fourteen days and nights (two weeks)
- [8]** to beg someone to do something
- [12]** a river bank made mostly of sand
- [13]** to move quickly with short steps
- [16]** to twist and turn very quickly

Down

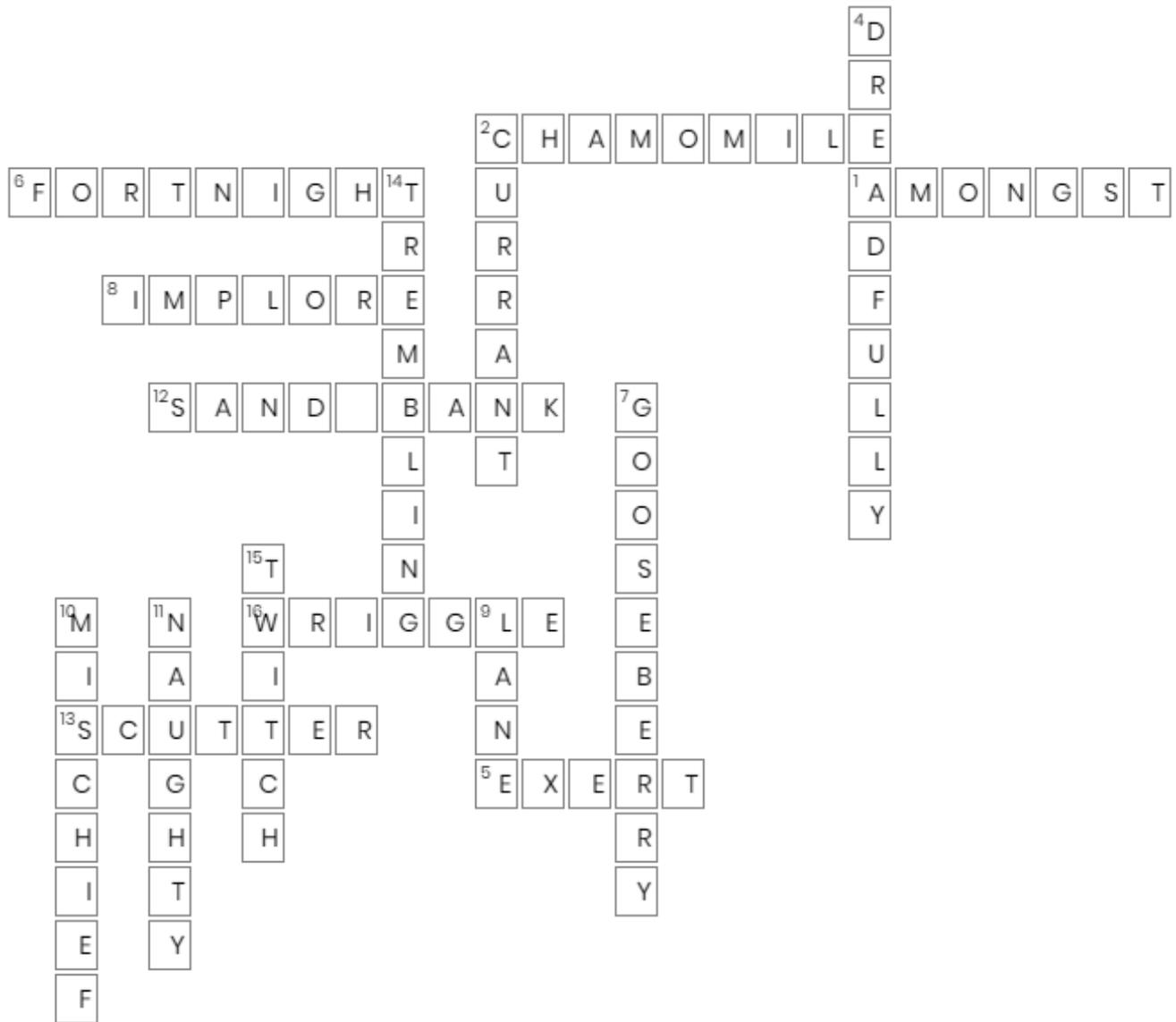
- [2]** a kind of berry that is like a grape
- [4]** very bad
- [7]** a round yellow-green or red berry
- [9]** a narrow road
- [10]** bad behavior that isn't too serious
- [11]** behaving badly, but usually not REALLY badly
- [14]** shaking with fear, excitement, or weakness
- [15]** to move in a short jerky way

PETER RABBIT - Solutions

Matching

1 c, 2 e, 3 j, 4 a, 5 h, 6 l, 7 b, 8 g, 9 d, 10 p, 11 n, 12 i, 13 k, 14 m, 15 f, 16 o

Crossword

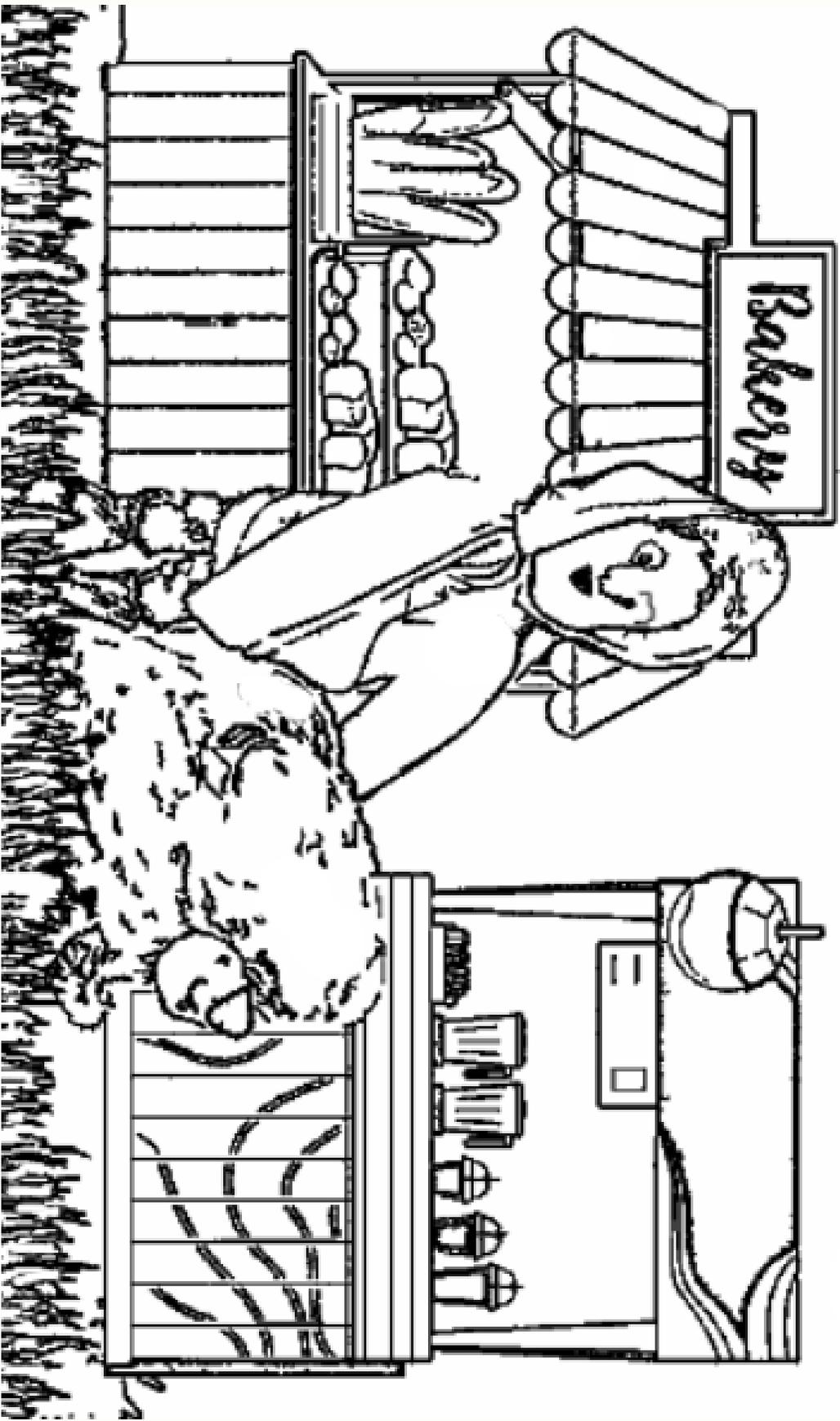


PETER RABBIT - Coloring Page



PETER RABBIT - Coloring Page





CHILDREN,
OBEY YOUR PARENTS
IN THE LORD,



FOR THIS IS RIGHT.

Ephesians 6:1

Can you think of a time that

- you didn't obey your parents and were sorry for it later?
- you obeyed your parents when you didn't want to and were glad about it (then or later)?
- What did you learn from that?