



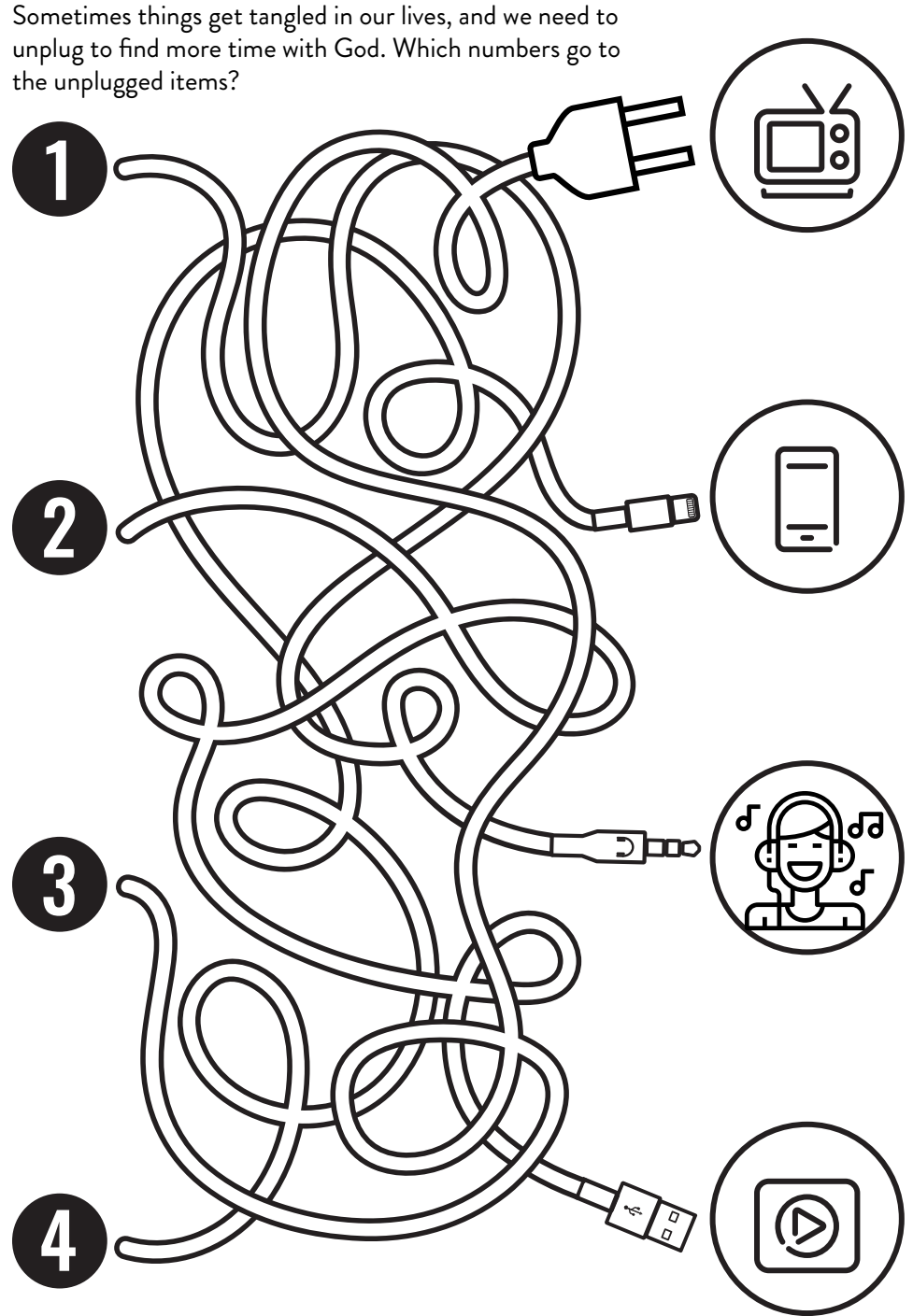
# 5 Unplug

Our world is connected 24/7 with entertainment, information, and access to just about anything at our fingertips. Our bodies, our minds, and our spirits need rest. Unplugging can be a spiritual discipline to disconnect for a period of time and reconnect with God and others in real-time, real-world activities.

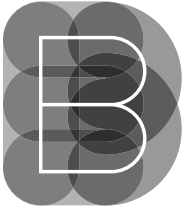
- Read *Babbit & Joan, a Rabbit and a Phone* by Denise Turu (Flyaway Books, 2020) or watch the YouTube video “Babbit and Joan, a rabbit and a phone read by Judy Gardner” ([bit.ly/FMBabbitAndJoan](https://bit.ly/FMBabbitAndJoan), 8:14). Stop at 6:53. Wonder what may happen when we unplug for a bit and how that might be a way to connect with God.
- Unplugging from devices is a healthy habit on its own, but spending time with God is the goal. Some ideas might be: have a conversation with a grandparent or neighbor, help someone or do a service project, read or listen to a Bible story, take a walk and see God’s world around you, or just be quiet.
- Set up some no-tech times as a family. Plan a meal (or all mealtimes) to put away devices and talk or play a game together. Choose one or more times a month to have a family outing, particularly in a place where you might sense God’s presence, such as:
  - Neighborhood park, forest preserve, mountain hike, beach walk, aquarium, zoo, or anywhere in nature
  - Sculpture garden, Japanese garden, and/or outdoor human-made meditative spaces, such as a labyrinth

Dear God, it isn’t easy to unplug. Using technology and screens is pretty much a way of life. But when we are plugged into devices, we aren’t connected with you or others. Help us unplug and spend time with you. Amen.

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



(1)headphones, (2)computer, (3)TV, (4)cell phone



## BIBLE STORY

Based on Mark 1:35–39

“Jesus! Jesus!” the voices shouted at sunrise. “Where are you?” Peter could not believe he lost Jesus. Jesus’ instructions had been clear. “Follow me.” That’s what Jesus had told Peter, his brother Andrew, and the brothers James and John. Ever since they left their fishing boats, they were having amazing adventures with Jesus.

When Jesus went to the synagogue, he taught and did the most marvelous things. Jesus comforted people who were frightened and healed people who were sick. He told people about God’s love for everyone. Neighbors started sharing the news that Jesus was staying at Peter and Andrew’s home. More and more people wanted to see Jesus and have him help them. People brought their sick friends and family members. Into the night Jesus healed the people. When the last neighbor left, Peter went to bed exhausted but happy. He wondered what adventures he would have with Jesus next.

When Peter woke up, Jesus was gone! How was Peter supposed to follow Jesus if he did not know where Jesus was? There was a knock at the

door. Perhaps it was Jesus returning from a morning walk. But when Peter answered the door, it was a crowd of people wanting to see Jesus. “Where is he?” the people demanded to know. “I don’t know,” answered Peter.

What Peter did not know was that early that morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and walked to a quiet place. He needed some alone time. He went away from the synagogue, away from the people who needed his help, even away from the people he had called to follow him. Once he was away from the people and busy places, Jesus did something very important. Jesus prayed.

Eventually, Peter and the other disciples found Jesus in that quiet place. They called out, “Jesus! Everyone is searching for you.” Jesus answered, “It’s time to visit other towns, so I can keep sharing the message, for that is what I came to do.” Jesus continued helping and teaching people wherever he traveled.

