

The Flat Jesus Project

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!

Thus begins Dr. Seuss' book, "Oh the Places You'll Go!" Originally published in 1990, the book is a simple poem about all the places and possibilities each day holds. It is an invitation to embrace the potential with anticipation and excitement.

Welcome to Summer (finally!) As we go about our Summer business, we are more active. Sometimes the activity takes us to far-off lands...sometimes it's just different locations around home that aren't so hospitable in the colder weather. Even the mundane tasks must continue through Summer. Oh, the Places You'll Go!

As you move about your Summer, I'd like to ask for your help with a project. For those of us who have kids (or maybe even grandkids) under 18, you've likely heard of Flat Stanley. Early in his school years, Isaiah was sent home with an odd little guy...just a cartoon person he'd colored and cutout. He announced, "This is Flat Stanley! For a school project, we were supposed to mail Flat Stanley to a friend or relative in a far-off place, and ask them to take a picture with him and send him back with the photo. Then, they had to tell a little bit about the location. We approached the project a little differently. We were planning a trip to North Carolina for Thanksgiving, so rather than mailing Flat Stanley...we just took him along with us. Then, Isaiah's grandparents, his family and even he could be in his Flat Stanley pictures.

Well, that idea has spurred an idea that I'd like your help with. Somewhere in this Newsletter is a "Flat Jesus". (He'll also be available on the website at stmarksumchurch.org.) Please cut out and color Flat Jesus and start taking pictures of him wherever you may go. Sure, include Summer locations (pool, parks, lake, vacations) ... but occasionally, please take pictures of Flat Jesus with you doing everyday stuff (Flat Jesus washing dishes; Flat Jesus mowing the lawn; Flat Jesus at your desk; Flat Jesus watching TV with the family; you get the idea). Don't let the mundane stop you from taking and capturing Flat Jesus with you.

You can post your photos on Facebook (St. Mark's page is facebook.com/stmarksumchurch/), or email them to pastor@stmarksumchurch.org, or you can mail your photos to the church at:

Flat Jesus • c/o St. Mark's • 546 W US Highway 224 • Decatur, IN 46733-7547

If you post on social media, please use the hashtag **#FlatJesus**.

I'd like for this to be a Summer-long project! When Summer winds down, I'll be using some of your pictures on a Sunday morning...and we may even have a lunch that day to tell each other our Flat Jesus stories.

This may sound like a silly "project." That's because it is.☺ But just because it's silly doesn't mean it doesn't have a potential impact. Let me explain:

1. We talk often of Jesus being "there" regardless of where you are. He's with you while you're driving. He's with you at home. He's with you at work. He's with you on a trip. He's with you at the grocery or at a ballgame. But we don't always act like he's there. It's easy to slip into patterns of behavior that might be embarrassing if we thought about Christ being

with us while we ... yelled at that umpire ... shot an angry look at the guy who cut into my lane ... walked by an older person who could use help carrying something ... growled under our breath at that obnoxious co-worker...you get the idea. Having some symbol of Jesus with you in these places may just help you remember that he is *actually with you* in those situations.

2. Especially if you're on a trip of some sort, people who may be familiar with Flat Stanley may approach you to make a connection, "Hey! My kids did Flat Stanley last year. That's a fun project." This gives you the opportunity to explain that this is Flat Jesus, and that it's a church project to help us all remember that Jesus really is with us everywhere we go! BOOM! They opened the door to you sharing your faith in Christ, and all you had to do was take a picture of a piece of paper you cut out and colored (or your grandkids colored).
3. You can 'lament' the project to someone (particularly if you think this is stupid). "Excuse me. Can you take a picture of me with this goofy thing in front of this statue/sign/building/ship? My church is doing a project to show that Jesus is always with us, so I need to get a picture of 'Flat Jesus' while I'm here." If they ask about it, you have the opportunity to explain that you really do believe Jesus is always with us (you do, right?), but that this project thing seems really goofy to you. That opens an opportunity to have a faith conversation with a person you just met, and you didn't have to sling the Bible at their noggin.
4. Posting on Social Media will likely garner some responses. "Is this like Flat Stanley?" "What is this FlatJesus thing, anyway?" These are great opportunities to tell people you're trying to remind yourself and others that Jesus is always with us...even in the boring times...or the exciting...or the scary...

I hope you'll take this opportunity to take Jesus with you as you trek off to *Oh the Places You'll Go!* Fill your social media feed (and help us fill ours) with #FlatJesus this Summer.

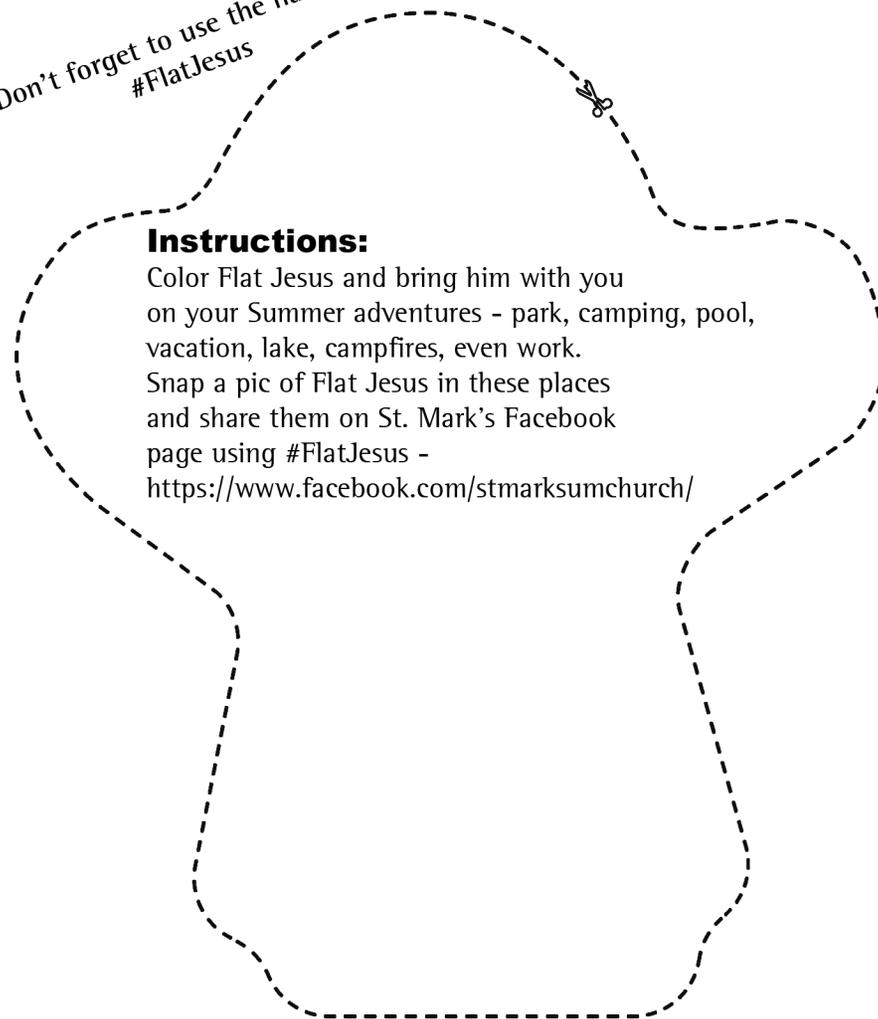
Pastor Chris

The Flat Jesus Project



- How to use Flat Jesus:**
1. Print cutout and color Flat Jesus.
 2. Take pics of him on your adventures.
 3. Post pics on Facebook using #FlatJesus.

Don't forget to use the hashtag
#FlatJesus



Instructions:

Color Flat Jesus and bring him with you on your Summer adventures - park, camping, pool, vacation, lake, campfires, even work. Snap a pic of Flat Jesus in these places and share them on St. Mark's Facebook page using #FlatJesus - <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksumchurch/>

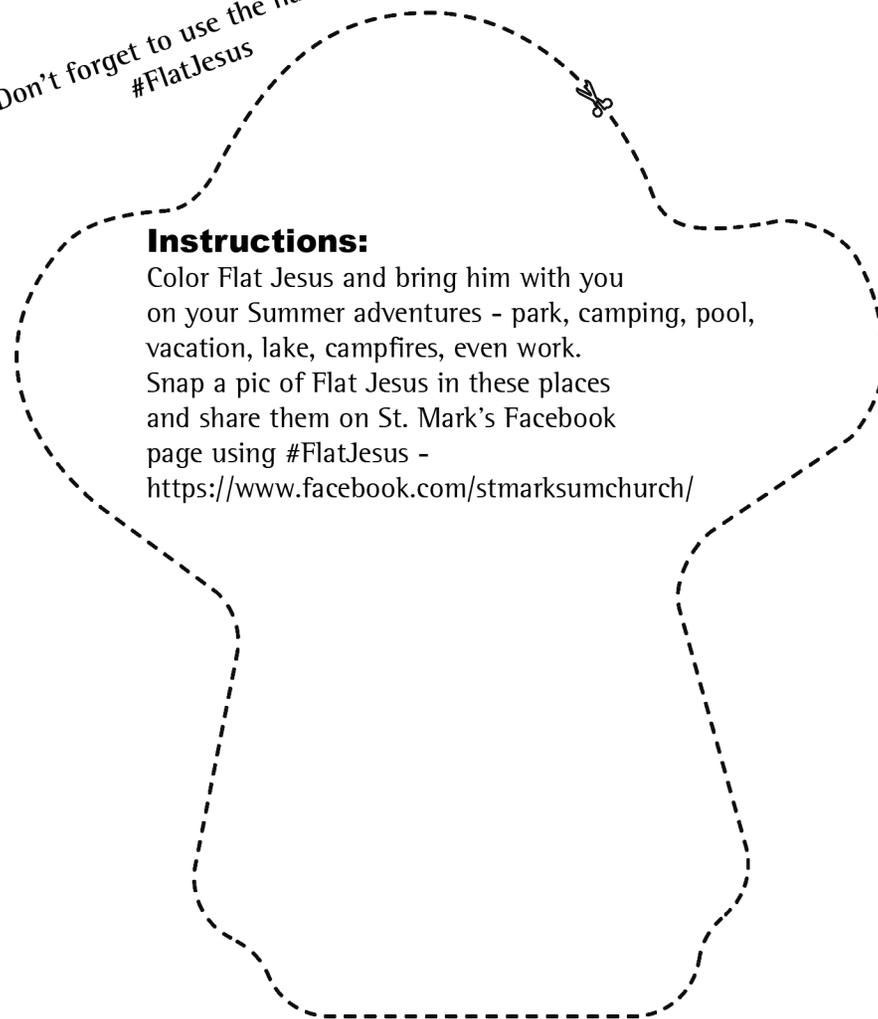
WE RECOMMEND PRINTING ON CARDSTOCK IF AVAILABLE.

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