



# The Missing Piece!

By Deborah Wassenberg

## Introduction:

Here's a lesson that explains what is missing in children's lives! Everyone is to follow Jesus if they want to be 'complete'. A special guest adds to the fun while teaching this important lesson about loving God with all you have.

Bible Lesson: The Rich Young Ruler

Bible References: Matthew 19:21-30; 2 Corinthians 13:11-14

## Warm Up Activity:

Set a variety of jigsaw puzzles on tabletops and large puzzles on the floor.

## Character: Dr Decipher

Introducing Dr Decipher, a renowned enigmatologist who loves jigsaw puzzles in particular and knows everything about them. Dr Decipher wears a bowtie and vest made from 'jigsaw' fabric and has a jigsaw fabric handkerchief in a pocket.

## Set the Scene:

Hang a length of 'jigsaw' printed fabric as a backdrop to your teaching space or as an image on your screen.

## Visuals You Will Need for the Bible Story:

1. Rich young ruler approaching Jesus
2. Jesus
3. Rich young ruler asking another question
4. Jesus answers and the commandments
5. Rich young ruler, proud of himself
6. Jesus sharing the truth
7. Rich young ruler sad

## Words:

**Leader:** How many jigsaw puzzles do you think you have completed?  
Think back to kindergarten or pre-school.  
Parents and teachers love jigsaws because while you're having fun completing one, you're problem solving, developing hand-eye coordination, and learning numbers, colours or the alphabet, without even knowing.  
Parents and teachers are sneaky like that!

**Dr Decipher:**  
(*Dr Decipher enters*)  
Absolutely!  
The benefits of jigsaw puzzles are numerous and ongoing.  
And I should know.  
I am an enigmatologist.

**Leader:** A what?

**Dr Decipher:**  
I can see you're puzzled, and I'm here to help.  
I'm an enigmatologist.  
My name is Dr Decipher, and I am an expert in puzzles.  
My speciality is dissectology – jigsaw puzzles.  
Jigsaws were once called 'dissected puzzles' because the earliest jigsaws were actually 'dissected' maps painted on wood and used to teach rich children geography.  
Thankfully, technological advancements in the 1800s enabled images to be printed onto cardboard, making jigsaws affordable to everyone.

**Leader:** It's great to meet you, Dr Decipher, but why are you here?

**Dr Decipher:**  
Your Pastor invited me today because he heard about your lesson and thought it would be something I'd enjoy.  
I taught Pastor (*insert name*) how to complete jigsaw puzzles when he was in Preschool.  
He was so proud.  
He said, 'I finished a puzzle all by myself. It only took me a few days, even though the box said 4-5 years!'  
(*Laughs at his joke*)  
Seriously, jigsaw puzzles take organisation, attention to detail and patience.

**Leader:** They sure do!  
(Address the children)  
What's the largest puzzle anyone here has completed?  
Who has completed a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle?  
What about a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle?  
(Discuss any other puzzles, e.g. all one colour, with the children)

**Dr Decipher:**  
There is only one terrible, horrid, appalling thing that can stop a jigsaw puzzle from bringing you happiness.  
A MISSING PIECE!  
All that time and effort wasted because a puzzle piece is missing.  
The jigsaw will never be complete.  
It's a tragedy.  
(Blows nose loudly with jigsaw fabric handkerchief)

**Leader:** Oh-oh, Dr Decipher.  
I was about to share a Bible story with the children, but it might be too tragic for you.

**Dr Decipher:**  
Your story sounds puzzling, but Pastor (insert name) did invite me, so I can't leave now.

**Leader:** **Visual 1**  
A rich young man came to Jesus, knelt, and asked, 'Teacher, what good work must I do to have life that lasts forever?'

**Visual 2**  
Jesus answered, 'If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.'

**Visual 3**  
'Which ones?' the young man asked.

**Visual 4**  
Jesus replied, 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and your mother, and love your neighbour as yourself.'

**Visual 5**  
'I have kept all these,' the young man said.  
'What do I still lack?'

### Visual 6

Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be **complete**, go and sell your possessions and give to them to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.'

### Visual 7

But when the young man heard this, he went away very sad, because he was very rich.

**Leader:** The rich young man thought he had everything perfect.  
He thought he was mature in the ways of God and that he was fulfilling all that God required.  
He thought that there was nothing wrong with his life.  
Jesus had to reveal the truth to him.  
And the truth was that his riches meant everything to him.  
Even more than Jesus.

### Dr Decipher:

You have a sad life if you are incomplete or unfulfilled.  
(Blows nose loudly with jigsaw fabric handkerchief)

**Leader:** Money was the rich young ruler's most loved thing.  
It can be different things for different people.  
Whatever is more important to you than following Jesus is the thing that will keep you from fulfilling God's will for your life.

### Dr Decipher:

You will have a missing piece, and you will never be complete.

**Leader:** The only way to become complete is to commit to loving God with **all** your heart, and with **all** your soul, and with **all** your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5)  
How do you do that?

### Dr Decipher:

I know the answer!  
With your heart: love God and dedicate your life to Him.  
With your soul: spend time with Him, pray and read your Bible.  
With your strength: serve Him faithfully with everything you have.

## Ministry to the Children: 2 Options to Share

God loved you first, and He loves you completely! (1John 4:19) Like looking for a missing puzzle piece, God searches and searches for people even if they are not looking for Him! He searches and knows you from before you were born. (Psalm 139)  
You are valuable to Him. That's why He sent Jesus to die on the Cross for your sin.  
When you believe in Jesus and ask Him to take away your sin, it's someone lost being

found and everyone in Heaven, Father God, Jesus and the angels, are so happy! (*Luke 15:10*)

Many people are unhappy despite fame or fortune because they feel incomplete. They are missing an important piece in their lives. There is a hole in their heart, and they search for things to fill the hole, but the hole is in the shape of Jesus. He is the only one who can fill it. You must ask Jesus into your heart! To receive Jesus, you must turn from your sin and trust Him completely. The moment you do, God will immediately forgive you and give you eternal life. 'If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.'  
(*Romans 10:9*)

## Memory Verse Option 1: Jigsaw Puzzle Relay Race

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Deuteronomy 6:5

Ask Dr Decipher to stay and help the children learn the Memory Verse!

### What to do:

- Set up challenges (bean bag toss/tunnel/slide/stepping stones, etc.)
- Make a jigsaw piece for every word of the Memory Verse and the Bible reference, and place the words at the end of the challenges
- Children take turns to complete a challenge and retrieve a jigsaw piece
- Once all the jigsaw pieces are collected, the children complete the Memory Verse puzzle and recite it aloud

## Memory Verse Option 2: Hide the Puzzle Pieces

Another option for the Memory Verse is to make a giant floor jigsaw puzzle and write the words of the scripture on it. Then cut up the puzzle pieces (lamine them for longevity) and hide them around your teaching space. The children search for the missing jigsaw pieces, bring them to Dr Decipher, and he will help them complete the puzzle to learn the Memory Verse!

## Game: Link Tag!

Have the children pair up with a partner. Partners then need to link arms at the elbows and have both hands on their hips. The leader asks for two volunteers and assigns one of them to be 'it' and the other to be the 'runner'. The player who is 'it' must try to tag the 'runner'. The 'runner' must find a pair of partners and link arms at the elbow. The person on the other side of that pair detaches and is now being chased by the person who is 'it'. The new 'runner' must then find another pair to link up with, in turn detaching another person. If the 'runner' gets tagged before they can find someone to

link elbows with, the 'runner' then becomes 'it' and chases the other person. The 'runner' must link to another pair within 5 seconds!

## Craft: Jigsaw Piece Photo Frame

You will need:

- Cardboard photo frames
- Jigsaw puzzle pieces (buy 2<sup>nd</sup> hand puzzles from charity shops!)
- A sign that reads: Love you to pieces!
- Glue
- Optional: Felt pens and collage items: glitter, jewels, etc.

What to do:

- Glue the jigsaw pieces to the frame
- Glue the sign inside the frame
- Optional: add the collage items