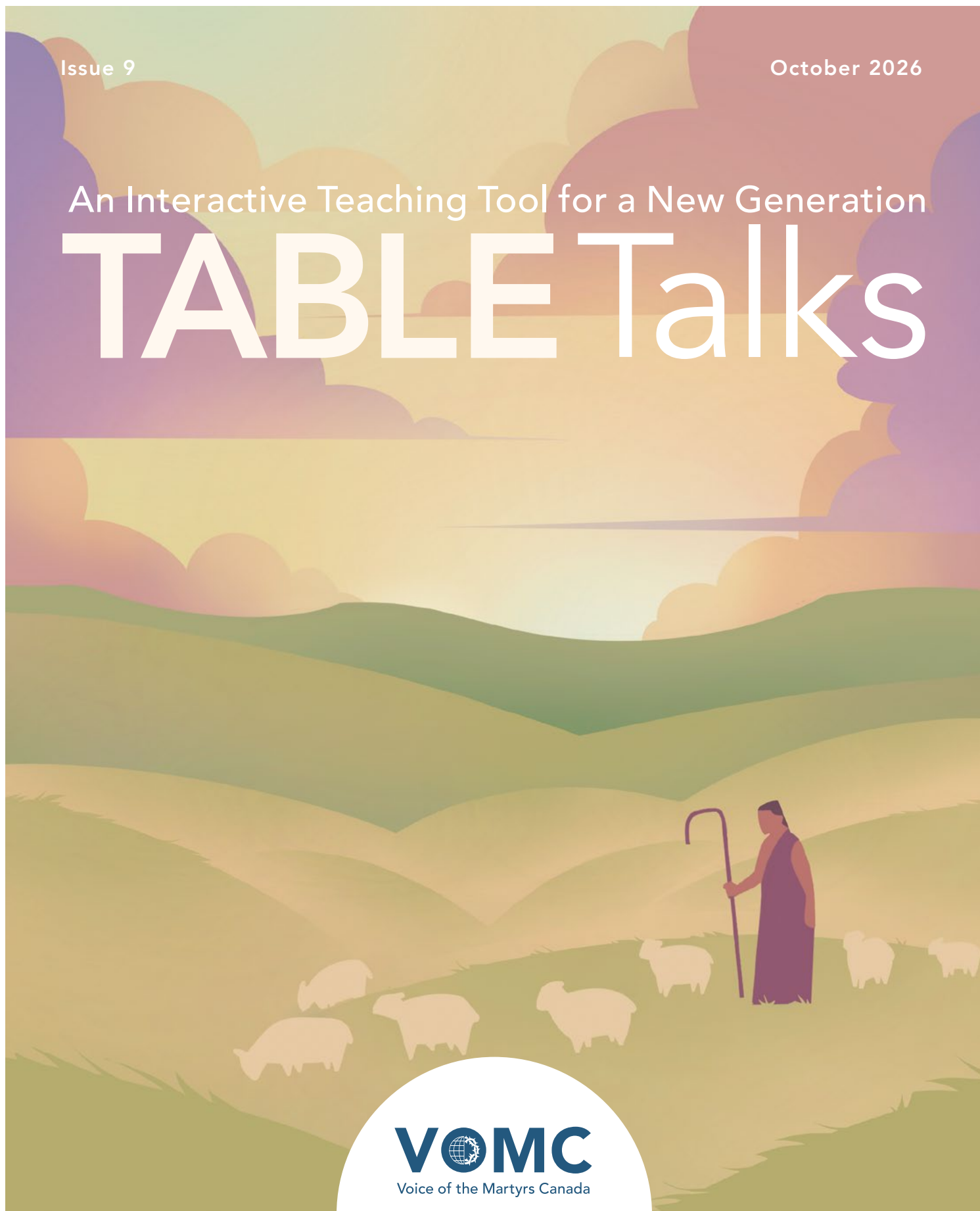


Issue 9

October 2026

An Interactive Teaching Tool for a New Generation

TABLE Talks



VOMC
Voice of the Martyrs Canada

ALONG THE WAY • FOCUS ON PASTORS • A WAY OUT

Along the Way

By Charlene Ramstead

Adapted from the VOM Radio recording, "Imprisoned in Sudan: It's a Privilege to Be Persecuted." Certain dialogue has been created for a younger audience.

Quietly, from within their secret meeting place, a voice whispered: "Do you hear something?"

In an instant, chaos erupted as uniformed men burst through the locked door of the church gathering. Terrified and trembling, the believers watched in shock as officers suddenly grabbed Pastor Hassan. The church leader's thoughts raced as he struggled against their grip. "What's happening?" he wondered.

"Come with us!" the men shouted. Without warning, they forced the pastor's wrists into handcuffs, whisking him away from his church and family.

Months earlier, young Pastor Hassan Taour felt an urgent need to prepare his small church in Sudan for persecution. Now he understood why. The persecution had come – threatening not only their faith, but their very lives.

In a moment of clarity, Pastor Hassan realized that God had been preparing him for the trials ahead. "Lord, give me strength for what I will face," he prayed. What Pastor Hassan did not yet know was that the Lord had a special mission waiting for him.

In prison, days turned into weeks with no news from the outside world. Yet, even behind the cold prison walls, Pastor Hassan discovered opportunities to serve. He began sharing about Jesus with frightened inmates and even prison guards.

At night, in the darkness of his crowded cell, tears of joy fell as he reflected on God's goodness in sending him there. Though separated from his family and church, Pastor Hassan felt a deep sense of purpose in sharing the Gospel with the hurting and lonely. In that moment, he resolved to return after his release and continue bringing the hope of Jesus to inmates – who longed for a nourishment only Christ can provide.

Why would anyone do what Pastor Hassan did? Pastors like Hassan resemble shepherds.

Jesus called Himself the “Good Shepherd,” the One who laid down His life for the sheep. In the same way, pastors follow Christ’s example, serving others with humility, love and sacrifice. Serving is a daily way of laying down one’s life. And through these selfless actions, God’s love – which fuels a pastor’s heart in all they are called to do – is made visible to others.

A good shepherd protects and provides for the flock, even at great personal cost. Pastor Hassan did just that. In a place where hope seemed absent, the Lord used him in surprising ways – reaching the lost behind cold prison walls and preparing him for even greater ministry.

Do you think the Lord could be preparing your heart to serve others one day – perhaps even as a pastor?

Reading Between the Lines

Comprehension Questions

1. Remembering Details

Who was taken away by the uniformed men?

Where was Pastor Hassan taken?

What did Pastor Hassan do while he was in prison?

2. Understanding the Story

Why did Pastor Hassan believe God was preparing him?

How did Pastor Hassan help others while he was in prison?

Vocabulary Matching

Match each word to its meaning.

1. Whispered

a) A spiritual leader who teaches and guides a church

2. Pastor

b) People who watch something happen

3. Detained

c) Spoke very quietly

4. Persecution

d) The act of treating someone badly because of their beliefs

5. Bystanders

e) Held or kept by force

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Do you think the Lord could be preparing your heart to serve others one day – perhaps even as a pastor?

Reading Between the Lines

Comprehension Questions

1. Remembering Details

Who was taken away by the uniformed men?

Pastor Hassan Taour

Where was Pastor Hassan taken?

He was taken to prison

What did Pastor Hassan do while he was in prison?

He helped the other prisoners

2. Understanding the Story

Why did Pastor Hassan believe God was preparing him?

He saw persecution happening around him

How did Pastor Hassan help others while he was in prison?

He shared the Word of God with them

Vocabulary Matching

Match each word to its meaning.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. Whispered | a) A spiritual leader who teaches and guides a church |
| 2. Pastor | b) People who watch something happen |
| 3. Detained | c) Spoke very quietly |
| 4. Persecution | d) The act of treating someone badly because of their beliefs |
| 5. Bystanders | e) Held or kept by force |

Word Hunt

For this activity, you will need to decode 10 different messages (all pertaining to pastors). Use the legend to reveal the hidden words within the activity table.

For example, the first clue in the activity is . Using the legend, the answer for this clue is the letter "S" because it is found in the blue row and the  column.

								
	:	9	V	K	7	R	4	S
	G	T	B	1	(SPACE)	C	-	L
	X	Q	O	N	A	8	Z	P
	H	D	6	Y	W	M	5	J
	F	O	I	E	1	U	3	(SPACE)

1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												

Word Hunt

Answer Key

1. Shepherd

2. Dedication

3. Inspiring

4. Hebrews 13:17

5. Leadership
6. Instruction

7. 1 Timothy 5:17

8. Prayerful

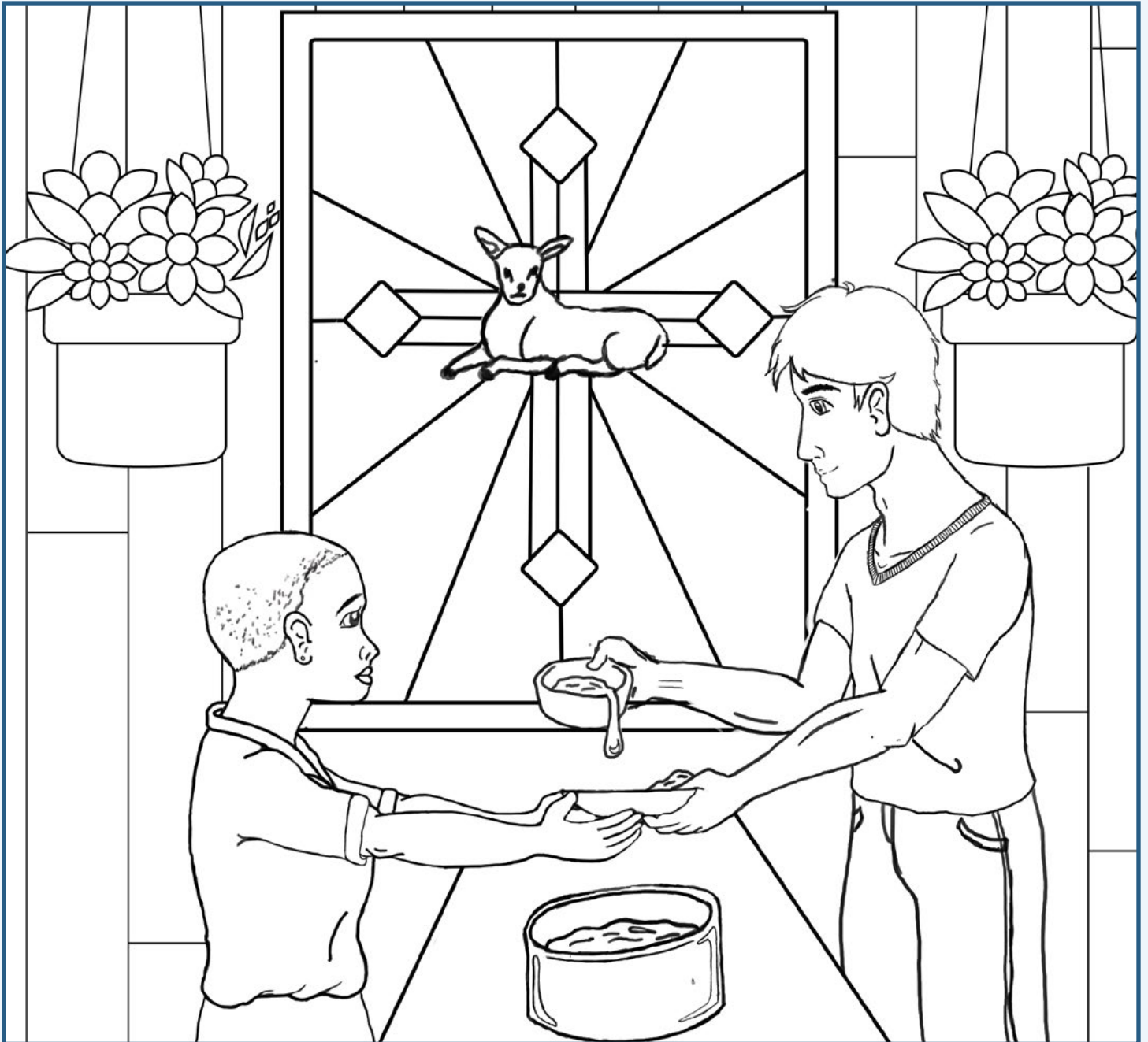
9. Titus 2:7-8

10. Anointed

								
	:	9	V	K	7	R	4	S
	G	T	B	1	(SPACE)	C	-	L
	X	Q	O	N	A	8	Z	P
	H	D	6	Y	W	M	5	J
	F	O	I	E	1	U	3	(SPACE)

1										(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)
2													(SPACE)
3										(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)
4													
5													(SPACE)
6													(SPACE)
7													
8										(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)
9													(SPACE)
10										(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)	(SPACE)

Colouring Connection!



"Dear brothers and sisters, honour those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance."
~ 1 Thessalonians 5:12 NLT

Weigh In

Weighing the facts
about Pastors

1.

Pastors in many countries endure danger because of their calling, often sacrificing comfort as they navigate stress, poverty, threats, persecution, isolation, pressure and constant risk.

2.

Pastors in persecuted nations serve as God's shepherds, quietly teaching, guiding and strengthening believers while facing surveillance, restricted gatherings, limited resources and dangerous opposition.

3.

Watchman Nee, a Chinese house church pioneer, exemplified faithful endurance under persecution. Arrested in 1952 for his faith, he remained in prison for 20 years until his death.

4.

Across history and into the present day, well-known pastors have faithfully modelled Biblical leadership, witness, courage and care. Figures like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King Jr., Richard Wurmbrand, Andrew Brunson, Wang Yi and Polycarp inspire deeper study.

Corresponding Question Points:

1. Read Luke 9:23-26. As you consider the heavy cost pastors bear, does this perspective reshape your view of what is "hard" in your own walk with Jesus? How might this move you to better care for pastors while also surrendering more fully in your own life?

2. How does knowing the challenges that pastors face – such as surveillance and restricted gatherings – change the way you value their role? In light of Hebrews 13:3, how might this prompt you to respond through faithful prayer, practical support and deeper care for those who shepherd God's people?

3. In Watchman Nee's "wordless sermon," he smashed a glass of water, crushed it into shards and silently scattered the pieces – illustrating how persecution does not destroy the church but instead multiplies its reach. What might this mean for pastors today if what appears to break the church is actually the very thing God uses to grow it?

4. As we recognize Pastor Appreciation Month in October and reflect on the weight of pastoral responsibility, how might these examples from history inspire us to intentionally pray for, encourage and bless the pastors serving among us today?

One Way

Cultural Skepticism Towards Pastors

This month, we're celebrating pastors – past and present – who go all in for Jesus. In Canada today, trust in pastors is slowly starting to...fade. When we look at other countries around the world, it's clear that this shift in trust

doesn't happen overnight. People don't go from supporting pastors to cancelling them in a single day. Instead, this loss of trust creeps in bit by bit, like a slow-changing mood that takes over a room.

The Shift

Take a look below to see how attitudes toward pastors can slowly change.

Indifference: *"Meh, I don't really care."*

At first, people aren't angry, they just tune pastors out. It's like ignoring a teacher because they think the class isn't important. They're not upset; they simply choose to not listen or engage.

Restrictions: *"Let's make rules about what pastors can say."*

As doubt and skepticism grow, people may push for new rules to control what pastors can teach or say. In Canada, bills have been introduced in government that could restrict certain Bible teachings.

This reminds us of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God gave them a clear boundary: they were not to eat the fruit (Genesis 2:16-17). However, Eve added an extra rule to His command: "We can't even touch it!" (Genesis 3:3).

Skepticism: *"Hmm...I'm not sure I trust this."*

Next, people start questioning their pastor's motives or honesty. They might think, "I can learn from anywhere," and start listening to many voices online instead of one trusted church leader. The problem with this approach is that people online are at a distance. The actions and lifestyles of online pastors are not visible, meaning their true character can't be verified. Real trust can only be established through real relationships.

Pushback: *"Pastors are a problem, let's do something about it!"*

Here, people move from caution to action – criticizing, protesting and trying to limit pastors' influence. It's like when students move beyond disliking a teacher and start to organize complaints and speak out...until suddenly, they're launching a "We need a new teacher!" campaign.

Cancel Mode: *"Shut it down."*

At the most extreme level, some people try to silence pastors completely. Yet many church leaders keep following Jesus no matter what – even when it leads to serious consequences. It's like being the only one who stands up for what's right, knowing it could cost friendships, reputation, or even personal safety. In some cases, the surrounding culture responds by trying to "cancel" them.



DIY Photo Coasters

What You'll Need

- Small foam paint brushes
- Ceramic tiles (inexpensively found at a local building supply)
- Mod Podge
- 4 × 4 Coaster print outs
- Waterproof acrylic sealer spray (Note: if you are using different brands of products, the results may vary.)
- White acrylic craft paint
- Felt, fleece or cork scraps for backing, plus hot glue to attach the backing



Instructions

1. Paint the rough, unfinished sides of the coasters. Once the tile has dried, grab your photos.
2. Trim each photo into a square shape to fit your tile.
3. Apply Mod Podge to backside of trimmed photo. Then place photo on tile and press down. Allow to dry completely.
4. Once dry, apply a layer of Mod Podge to the top of the photo. Use even left-to-right strokes. (As always with Mod Podge, lines will show.)
5. Allow to dry completely. Repeat with two more layers of Mod Podge (allowing each layer to dry completely before applying the next).
6. Apply acrylic sealer spray to front side of coaster. Apply one to three layers of spray, allowing it to dry. This step, depending on your choice of product, creates a smooth surface finish.
7. Cut felt of your choice and glue to the back of the coaster. This step is important to prevent wooded or glass surfaces from being scratched by the tile.

Find the coaster design below!



