

Stories, Colors & More

for Ages 5-7





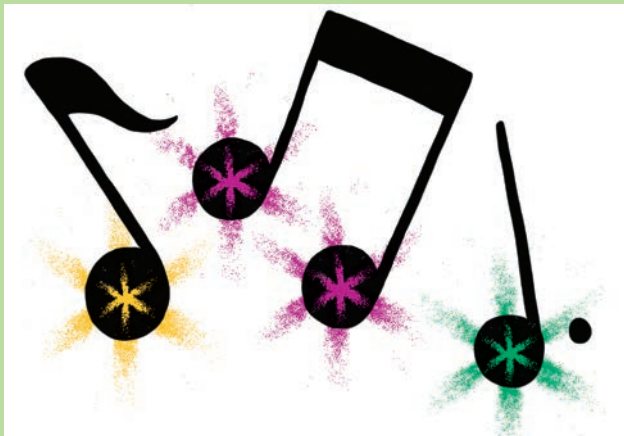
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Your Visual Schedule



Welcoming
and
Preparing



Singing
and
Praying



Hearing
the
Story



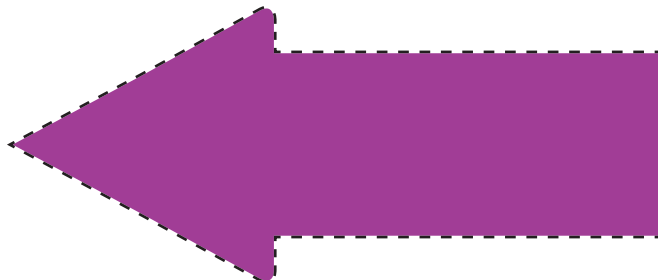
Reflecting
on God's
Grace



Activity
Choices



Loving and
Serving
God



Children with Disabilities and Special Needs

Support Map

M Movement

Some children need to move more than others. Setting boundaries for appropriate movement can allow the leader to meet the needs of the group while also meeting the needs of the child. Mark a place on the floor with tape, a mat, or a pillow. Be clear that the child can move within this space. Sometimes having two spots (chairs and pillows or mats) can be helpful.

T Transitions

Transition times provide a challenge to children. Clear expectations, follow-through, and routine help with those times, but they may not be enough for some children. For children who struggle with transitions, consider quick physical activities—such as doing chair push-ups, squeezing your hands together, and stretching—before or after the transition.

TD Tactile Defensiveness

Sometimes children struggle with textured objects such as glue, clay, finger paint, and chalk. For some children, textures create real anxiety. Allow and encourage children to explore textures without pressure, and provide opportunities to wash or wipe their hands right away. For children who struggle with texture, find a way to participate in the activity without getting their hands dirty, such as being a timekeeper.

A Adapting Activities

You can adapt an activity by process, product, or environment—the way that something is done, what is done, or the setting in which it is done. Giving extra support in the completion of a task is an example of changing the process; having children make something different is an example of changing the product. Instead of thinking, “This child can’t do this,” think, “How can I change this activity so that this child can do it?”

B Behavior

Children’s behavior can challenge us, disrupt the group, and lead to unsafe situations. Be clear about what you expect before you do the activity. If you don’t want children to touch one another while they are in a circle, tell them that before they touch one another. Clear expectations let children know what the rules are. Using the included visual schedule is a great way to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for children to remember.

C Supporting Children Who Have Difficulty Communicating

Reach out to parents and caregivers about alternative forms of communication used by children. Learning a few words in American Sign Language, becoming familiar with the Picture Exchange Communication System, or exploring how to support with other assistive technologies are examples of showing hospitality to the children. In addition, give children time to respond and to share; for some children, listening and speaking may take longer.

FA Food and Other Allergies

Remove all food and other products containing allergens. Post signs to help people remember the allergy. Have all children wash their hands and faces to avoid triggering a reaction.

L Listening

Attending to a story or comprehending instructions can be a challenge for children who struggle with attention. Supporting these children requires consistency, clear expectations, and organization. Some hints that may help include clearly communicating expectations before the activity, checking for understanding, providing visual support as well as verbal instructions, building movement into activities, and supporting transitions.

Children with Disabilities and Special Needs

Support Map

LG Leadership and Generosity

Focus on the strengths of the children, and learn to see them as gifted members of your community. Look for opportunities for them to express generosity. Offer them ways to practice leadership, such as passing out items, holding visual aids, helping other children, or serving as the example in games and activities.

LD Supporting Children Who Have Difficulty with Reading and Writing

Whenever children read aloud, ask for volunteers. Calling on a child who does not read at grade level may make him or her feel embarrassed and unwelcome. Always encourage children to write or draw pictures as part of their responses. Children then can share their drawings.

MS Supporting Children with Mobility Supports

As you set up, think about ample space between furniture to maneuver a wheelchair or walker. Think about materials and how they are positioned. Doing a roll-through in a wheelchair or walker can be a helpful way to make sure that your room setup is accessible. Think about including your children who use assistive devices. For example, seating all children on chairs or placing materials for a game on a table instead of on the floor are simple ways to create a more welcoming community.

VI Visual Impairment/Blindness

Talk with parents, caregivers, and children about the strengths and abilities of the child, as well as the best ways to offer support. Large print or special lighting may allow full access to the materials. Talk with parents or caregivers about the use of the copy machine or scanned images and a computer or tablet to enlarge print. Encourage children to describe their pictures and other creations in words as they share them.

D Deaf/Hard of Hearing

To create a welcoming environment for children who are deaf or have difficulty hearing, provide visual supports, such as written instructions and copies of the stories told. Employ an interpreter, and encourage children and adults in the community to learn to communicate through American Sign Language. Limit background noise. Face a person before speaking. Become familiar with children who use assistive technology. Be sure to check with parents or caregivers of children who use cochlear implants or hearing aids about any special considerations.

F Fairness

To make every child feel welcome and successful, think about fairness in a different light. Fairness is not every child getting the same thing; it is every child getting what she or he needs.

SD Sensory Defensive

Some children have strong reactions to different stimuli. Help them feel more comfortable by putting them in charge of the challenging sensations, allowing them to take actions such as turning the lights on or off.

Ask for Help

A team approach to including people with disabilities in your congregation helps build understanding and knowledge in the congregation, provides support for the child and family, and makes including all of God's children in church school an attainable goal.

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

(based on Matthew 6:9-15)

Jesus had some special friends called disciples. The disciples tried really hard to do the things that Jesus did. They wanted to learn more about following in God's way.

I wonder, "How did the disciples try to do the things Jesus did?"

One day, Jesus talked to his friends about prayer.

"When you pray," Jesus said, "remember that God is like a loving parent and really wants to talk with you."

"But what should we say?" asked Peter.

I wonder, "What would you say to God?"

"Keep it simple," replied Jesus. "You don't need fancy words or long prayers."

"So what words should we use?" asked John.

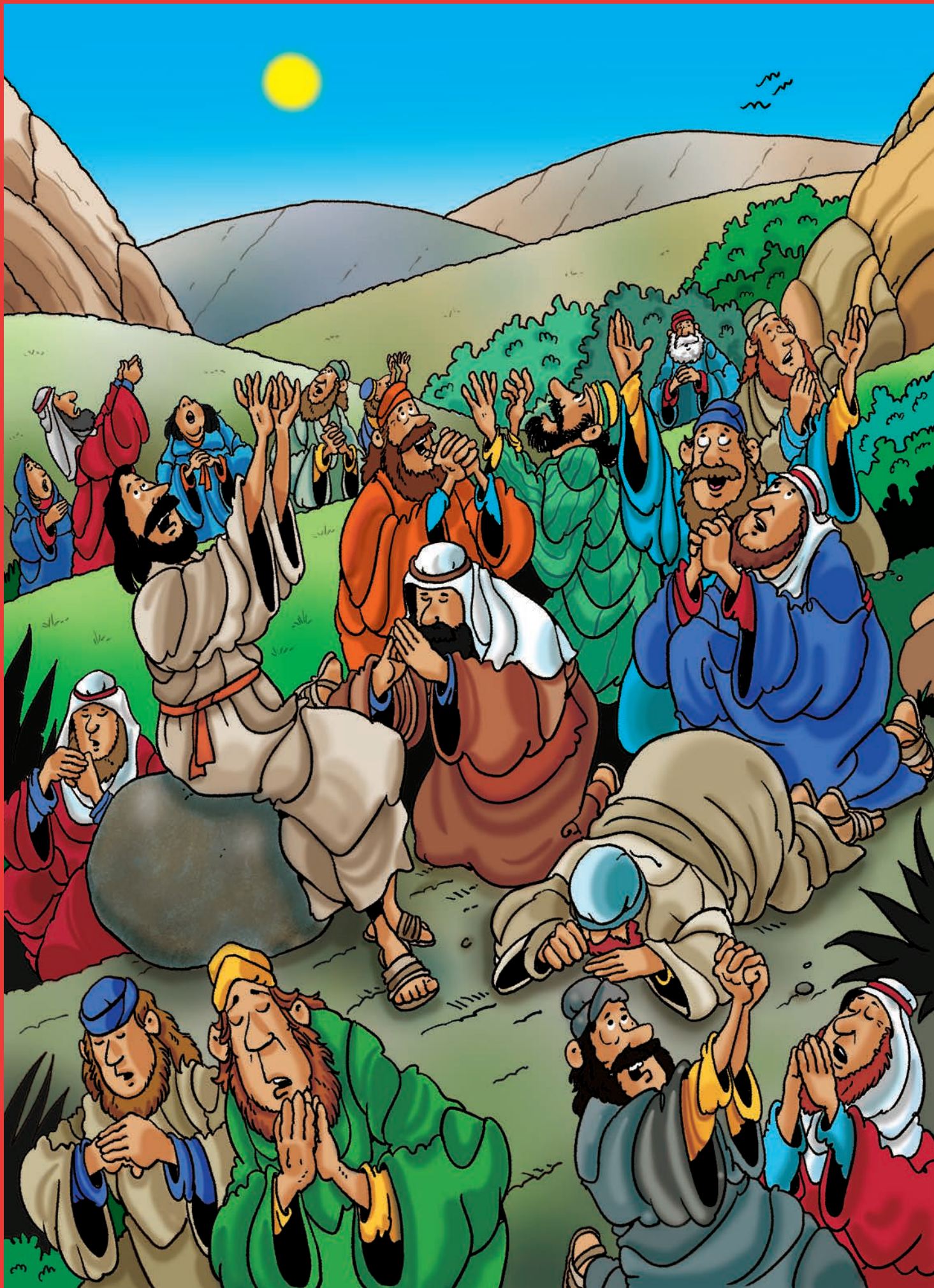
Jesus thought carefully. "Here are some words you could say," he said.

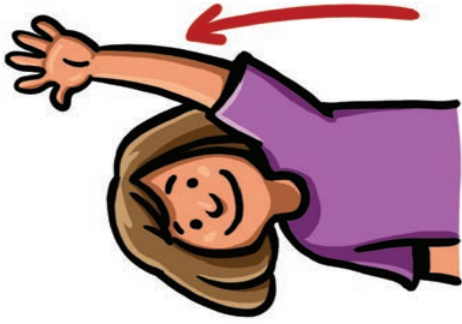
"Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."*

I wonder, "How did Jesus know what words to say?"

The disciples learned the simple prayer that Jesus taught them. They passed on the prayer to their friends and family. Eventually it was written down, so it would never be forgotten. Now we can say Jesus' special prayer whenever we want to pray to God.

*Substitute the version of the Lord's Prayer your congregation uses if it differs from this.

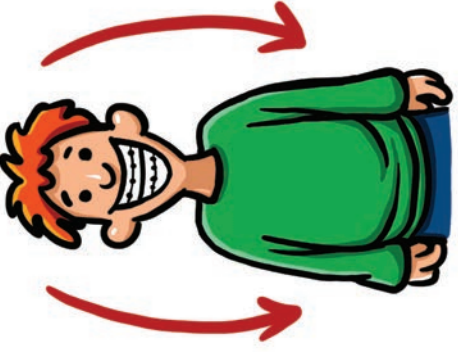




"Our Father in heaven,
(Lift one arm over head,
fingers pointing up, and hold.)



Your name is holy.
(Lift other arm over head,
fingers pointing up.)



Let your kingdom come.
(Slowly lower both arms
to sides.)



Let everyone learn to follow
your ways,
(Sweep one arm across body.)



Give us enough to eat each day.
(Cup hands in front of body as
if holding something.)



Forgive us for the mistakes we
have made
(Move fist to chest.)



As we forgive the bad things
others have done to us.
(Bow head and fold hands as if
praying.)



Do not let us go through times
(Hold hands in front of face,
palms toward face.)



that are too hard.
(Arms down, angled out from
body, hands open, fingers
pointing down.)



And save us
(Make fists with hands; cross
arms at chest height by
touching wrists.)



from evil.
(Open arms and hands; lift
arms over head.)



Amen."
(Bring hands together and fold
as if in prayer.)

Sow a Seed

(based on Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23)

One day, Jesus told a story.

“A farmer went out to sow some seeds. He put all his seeds into a sack and went out to the field. He walked all through that field, scattering seeds everywhere. Finally, there were none left in his bag, so he came home and waited for the seeds to grow.

I wonder, “What kinds of seeds were they?”

“Now some of those seeds fell on the pathways, but they didn’t have a chance to grow. The birds came and ate them up.

“Some seeds fell on rocky ground. The seeds started to grow. Then the sun came out, and the plants dried up and died because they could not put down deep roots.

“Some seeds fell among the weeds. The seeds started to grow, but the weeds grew faster. The seeds were too crowded and couldn’t develop properly.

“Some seeds fell on the good soil. The seeds put down deep roots and began to grow. Soon they grew into hardy plants. They grew and grew and grew until they produced lots of grain.”

I wonder, “Why did the farmer throw seeds in all of these places?”

The disciples were puzzled. “What does this story mean?” they asked Jesus.

“The seed is the message of God’s love,” Jesus explained. “God joyfully plants the seeds of love everywhere. You are like the soil.

“Sometimes you are like the hard ground. God’s message of love doesn’t make sense. You are not ready to hear it yet. Don’t worry, God still loves you. God keeps on planting.

“Other times you are like the rocky soil. God’s message of love starts growing in you. Maybe some bad things happen to you, and God’s love seems far away. Don’t worry, God still loves you. God keeps on planting.

“Sometimes you will be like the weedy soil. At first, God’s message of love starts growing in you. Then all kinds of worries come along and confuse you. When that happens, God’s love seems to disappear. Don’t worry, God still loves you. God keeps on planting.

“And sometimes you are ready to hear about God’s love. The message of love grows deep down inside of you. It grows and grows and grows. Other people see God’s love in you too. When that happens, God rejoices and keeps on planting.”

I wonder, “Are there seeds in each of us?”



You Are the Messiah!

(based on Matthew 16:13–20)

Jesus and his disciples had been around the countryside of Galilee. Jesus had been healing people, feeding them, and teaching them about God. The religious leaders and scholars had questioned him and tested him, trying to figure out who he was and what he was doing.

I wonder, “Why were the religious leaders and scholars questioning Jesus?”

Jesus asked the disciples, “What are people saying about me? Who do people say that I am?”

James said, “Some people say you are John the Baptist . . .”

Andrew jumped in, saying, “. . . but others say you are Elijah . . .”

And Thomas continued, “. . . and still others think you are Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

While all the disciples started telling what they had heard, Jesus thought to himself, “Interesting that everyone thinks I’m a dead person! But I suppose they are hoping I’m here to announce the coming of the Messiah, like John and Elijah, or that I speak God’s words like the prophets.” Then Jesus paused and said, “But who do you say that I am? What do you tell people?”

I wonder, “What would the disciples say about Jesus?”

There was some hemming and hawing, and then Simon Peter spoke loudly and confidently, “Jesus, you are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.”

The rest of the disciples looked at Simon Peter, stunned. He said it. Could it be?

Jesus looked directly at Peter and said, “Blessed are you, Simon! No one has told you this. Only God could have let you know who I am.” Jesus placed his hand on Simon Peter’s shoulder and continued, “I tell you now, you are Peter and you are like your name, rock solid. On you, my rock, I will build my church. It will be a new community of believers and followers of God’s way. And, nothing, not even all that’s bad in the world, will overcome it. Peter, I’m giving you the keys to the kingdom—that means you’ll be in charge.”

I wonder, “How did Peter feel when Jesus said all that?”

As happy as Jesus was to hear Peter’s declaration and the confidence in his voice, Jesus knew Peter and the others were a long way from understanding what it meant that he was the Messiah, the Savior. Jesus could see in Peter’s gaze that he was already thinking of what it meant to have authority, to be able to make things happen.

So Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. He knew people were not ready to hear that news yet. The disciples, and even Peter himself, would wrestle with, and fail to understand, what they had just heard. It would take them a while to understand what it meant that Jesus was the Messiah.





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Jesus Calls Us to Forgive

(based on Matthew 18:21–35)

Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive someone?” Peter wanted to know if he should forgive someone seven times. Jesus replied, “Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

I wonder, “Why might Jesus call us to forgive so many times?”

Jesus told Peter a story to help him think about the answer to his question:

Once a servant owed a king some money.

It wasn’t a small amount of money (*hold hands slightly apart*).

It wasn’t a medium amount of money (*move hands farther apart*).

It was an ENORMOUS sum of money (*hold your arms out as wide as you can*).

The king asked the servant to give back all the money he owed, but the servant had no money.

The man fell to his knees. “Please, sir!” he begged the king. “Give me a few days. I’ll pay everything back, I promise.”

The king felt sorry for the man. He knew the servant couldn’t pay back the enormous sum of money, so he let him go free.

“You don’t owe me anything,” he told the servant.

I wonder, “How did the servant feel?”

As the servant was leaving the palace, he saw a man who owed him some money.

It wasn’t an enormous sum of money (*hold your arms out as wide as you can*).

It wasn’t a medium amount of money (*move hands closer*).

It was a tiny amount of money (*hold your thumb and forefinger slightly apart*).

The servant marched over to the man. “You owe me some money!” he yelled. “Pay up now!”

The man fell to his knees. “Please, sir!” he begged. “Give me a few days. I’ll pay everything back, I promise.”

But the first servant refused to listen. Instead, he sent the man to jail.

When the other servants in the palace heard about the man being thrown into jail, they were very upset. They told the king what had happened. The king was furious. He called the first servant back in to see him.

“You owed me an enormous amount of money (*hold your arms out as wide as you can*),” the king exclaimed. “When you begged for more time, I felt sorry for you. I even said you did not have to pay back a single penny. Don’t you think you should show the same kindness to your fellow servant, who owed you only a tiny amount of money?”

Then the king had the first servant thrown into jail until he could pay back what he owed.



When Did We See You, Lord?

(based on Matthew 25:31–46)

Jesus was talking with his disciples. He knew he needed to help them remember how to follow God's way. So he told them a story.

One day at the end of all time, I will appear as a king. I will sit on a throne, and everyone in the world will stand before me. On that day, I will separate the people into two groups.

I wonder, "What kind of king will Jesus look like?"

I will say to the first group, "I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me water to drink. I didn't know anyone, and you offered to be my friend. I didn't have much to wear, and you gave me some clothes. I was sick, and you took care of me, and when I was in prison, you visited me."

The people will shake their heads and say, "What are you talking about? When did we feed you or give you a drink? When did we welcome you or give you clothes to wear? When did we take care of you and visit you in prison?"

Then I will answer, "Every time you helped another person, no matter who it was, you were actually helping me."

I wonder, "How can we help Jesus?"

How happy the people in the first group will feel. I needed their help, and they showed me love and care.

Then I will turn to the second group and say, "I was hungry, and you did not give me any food. I was thirsty, and you did not give me water to drink. I didn't know anyone and was very lonely, and you didn't even notice. I had no clothes, and you did not give me anything to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you never came to help me."

The people will shake their heads and reply, "What are you talking about? When did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or without clothes? When were you sick or in prison and we did nothing to help you?"

Then I will answer, "Every time you turned away from someone and did not help them, no matter who it was, you were actually turning away from me."

I wonder, "When has Jesus seen us turn away from helping others?"

How sad the people in the second group will feel. I needed their help and they turned away and did nothing.

The disciples remembered Jesus' story and passed it on. Eventually, it was written down so it would never be forgotten. Jesus wanted his followers to remember that when they did something kind for someone else, they were showing their love for him.



A Palm Sunday Parade

(based on Matthew 21:1–11)

The donkey was waiting for them.

“Look,” said Jesus’ disciples. “This must be the donkey we are looking for.”

Jesus had sent two of his friends to a village to find a particular donkey. Now they had found it. The disciples untied the animal and brought it back to Jesus. They laid some clothes over its back.

I wonder, “How did the disciples know it was the right donkey?”

Jesus climbed onto the donkey and started down the road to Jerusalem. *Clip-clop, clip-clop, clip-clop* went the donkey’s hooves. Jesus’ friends walked behind.

As Jesus rode toward Jerusalem, a crowd began to gather. As he got closer and closer to the city gate, more people joined them.

I wonder, “What did people think when they saw Jesus?”

There were mothers and fathers, girls and boys. Grandmothers and grandfathers who were there remembered reading about the prophet Zechariah, who had written that one day a humble king would come who would ride on a donkey. When they saw Jesus, they remembered Zechariah’s words.

“Jesus is coming!” some of them yelled.

“Look, he is on a donkey,” others cried.

“Hosanna! Hosanna! Hooray for Jesus!” they shouted.

Soon, lots of people were following Jesus. Some people spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and laid them down to make a path for the donkey to walk on.

I wonder, “Why were the people so glad to see Jesus?”

Crowds ran ahead. Crowds marched behind. It was quite a parade.

“Hosanna! Hosanna! Hooray for Jesus!” the people shouted again and again.

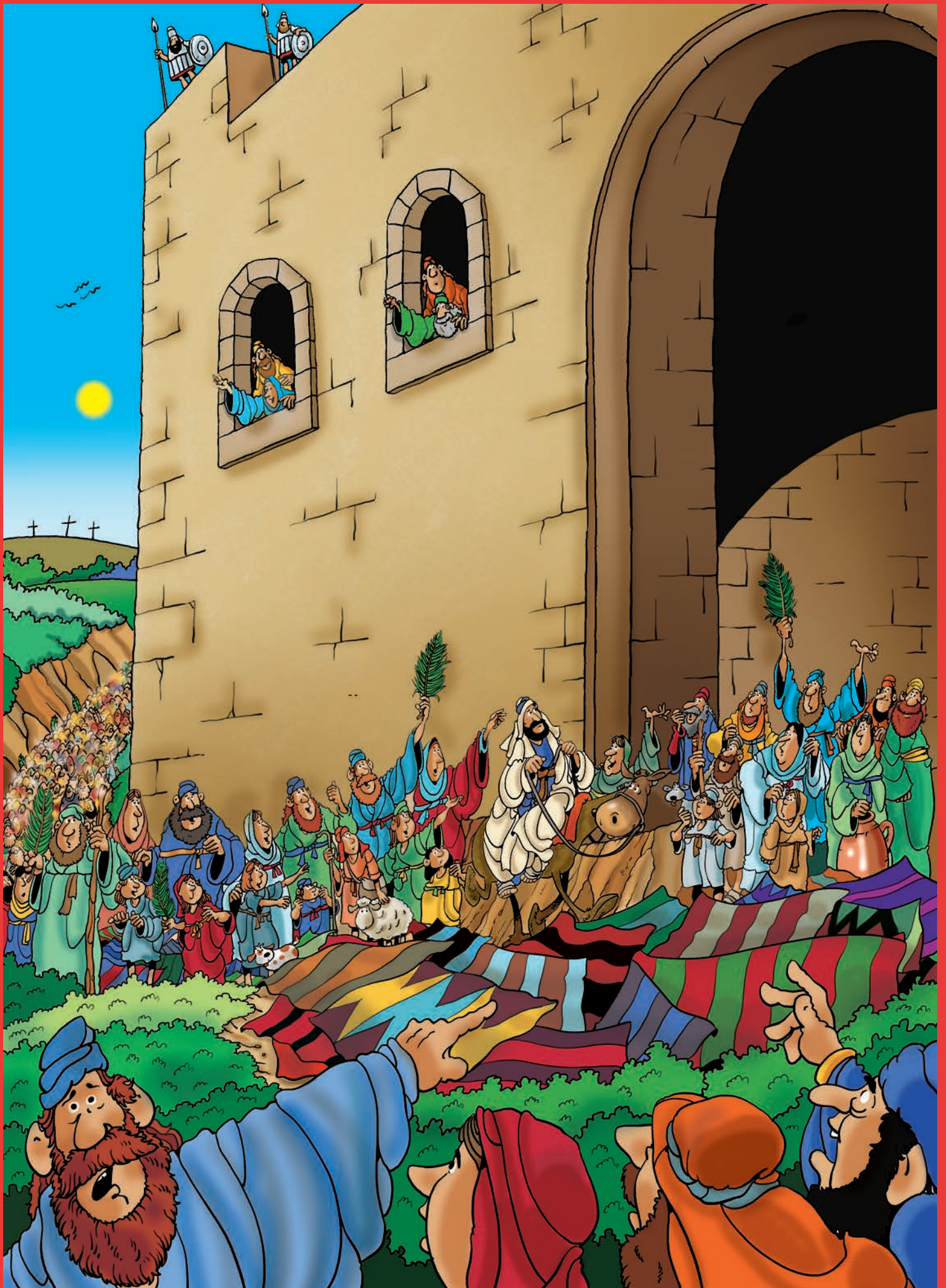
When Jesus came in through the gate, the whole city could hear the crowd shouting.

“Hosanna! Hosanna! Hooray for Jesus!”

“What’s going on? Who is this man?” some people asked.

“It’s Jesus,” the crowd replied. “Hosanna! Hosanna!”

Then Jesus rode up to the temple, and the crowd followed him.





He Is Risen!

(based on Matthew 28:1-10)

It was very early in the morning. The sun was just coming up at the start of a brand-new week in Jerusalem. Two women walked down the road. They were sad.

I wonder, "Why were the two women sad?"

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, were friends of Jesus. They had been there on that awful day when Jesus died on the cross. They had watched and cried as Jesus' body was buried. Now they wanted to go to the tomb to be close to their friend.

The two women walked down the road together. In the distance, they could see the garden where Jesus had been buried. They knew that soldiers were standing guard in front of Jesus' tomb.

I wonder, "Why were there guards by the tomb?"

As they stepped into the garden, the most surprising thing happened. There was an earthquake, and a shining angel came from heaven. He smiled at the two women, rolled the big stone away from Jesus' tomb, and sat on top of it.

The two guards in front of the tomb were so scared that they fainted on the spot. *Bam!* Just like that!

"Do not be afraid," the angel called to the women. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who died on the cross. He isn't here anymore. God has raised him to new life. Come, look in the tomb."

Hearts pounding, the two women looked inside the tomb. It was empty, just as the angel had said.

"Hurry!" the angel said. "Go tell the other disciples that Jesus is alive. He is on his way to Galilee. Go there and you will see him. I was sent to tell you this."

The two friends didn't waste any time. They didn't know what to think. They were scared, amazed, and excited all at once. Could Jesus really be alive? They ran off to tell the other disciples.

Suddenly, they saw Jesus. He was standing in the road waiting for them. He was alive! The two women ran to hug him. They were so happy that they didn't want to let him go.

I wonder, "How did it feel to hug Jesus?"

"Don't be afraid," Jesus laughed. "Go tell my friends the good news. Tell them to go to Galilee. I will meet you all there."

The two women got up and ran to the house where Jesus' friends were staying.

"You'll never guess what happened," they shouted. "We have seen Jesus. He is alive! We must go to Galilee right now. Jesus will meet us there."







Jesus Will Always Be with Us

(based on Matthew 28:16–20)

After Jesus died, his friends were sad. Then they heard some incredible news. God had raised Jesus to life. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had seen him. Jesus was alive!

Jesus had told the two women that he would meet them in Galilee. The disciples didn't waste any time. They hurried to put on their sandals and cloaks. They grabbed some food and started the long walk to Galilee. Jesus was going to meet them there.

High on a mountain, the disciples gathered just as Jesus had told them. They walked up the mountain side by side. Some of them were bursting with joy and excitement, because some of the women had seen Jesus risen and alive. They had heard the stories, and something inside them leapt for joy. Others were still so sad they could hardly breathe. They had watched Jesus die, and still couldn't believe it had really happened. They didn't know what to think or what to believe.

I wonder, "What would it be like not to know what to believe?"

Jesus met them on the mountain in Galilee just as he promised. Was it really Jesus? How could he be alive? Yet he was. They weren't sure what to think. Everyone started to talk at once.

Jesus looked at his disciples.

"I have a special job for you," Jesus explained. "Go into the whole world and tell everyone about me. Ask them to be my followers too. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Tell them everything I have taught you."

Then, smiling at each one in turn, Jesus said, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of all time."

I wonder, "How long is it until the end of time?"

Some of the disciples wondered about the important job they had been given. They were excited and afraid all at once.

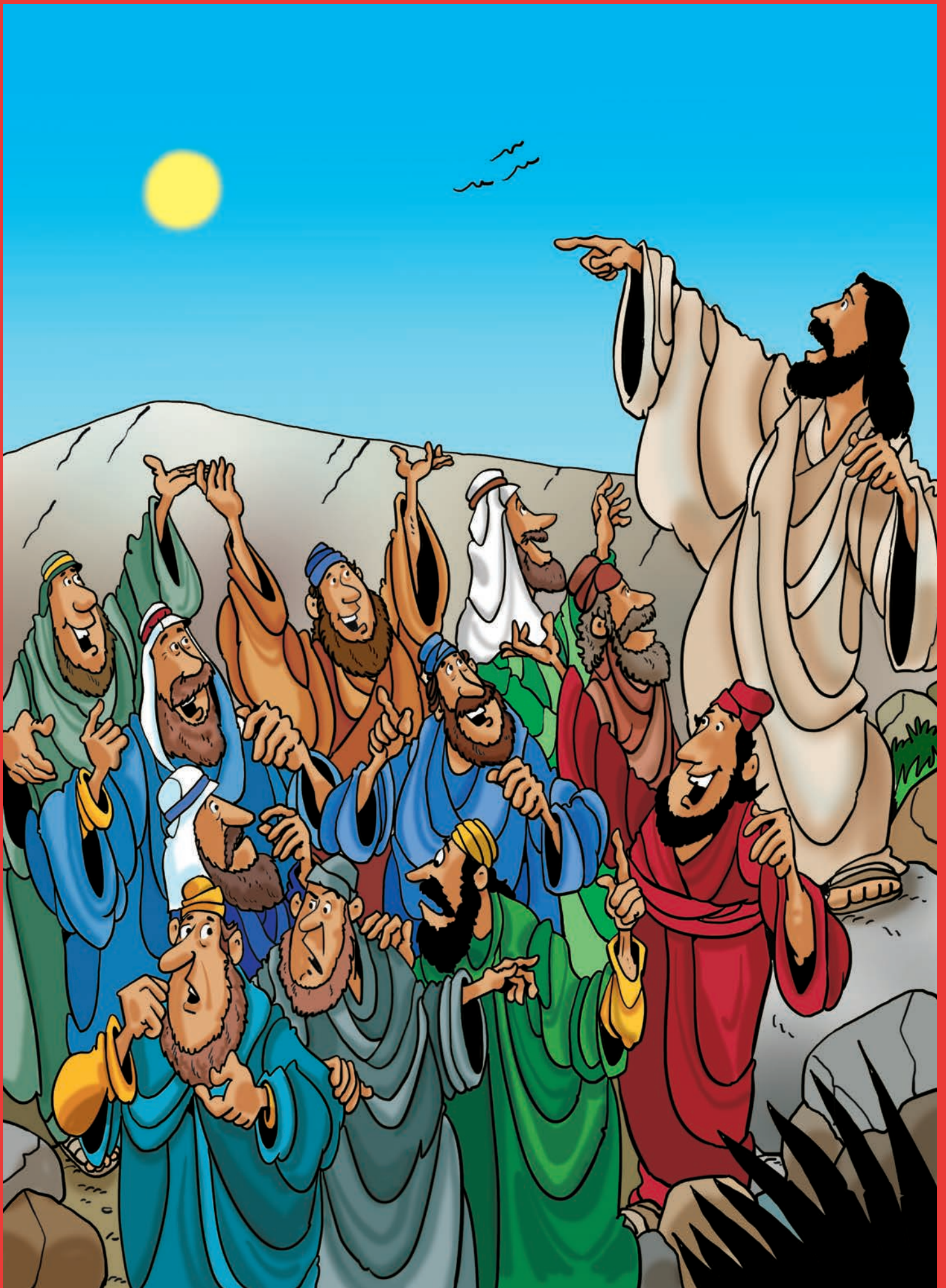
"We're going to tell the whole world about Jesus!" they exclaimed to each other.

"Can we go out into the whole world?" they wondered.

"Are we brave enough to tell everyone about Jesus? Do you think we can live like Jesus wants us to live?" they asked.

"Can we remember everything Jesus taught us?" they worried.

Then the disciples remembered that Jesus had promised to be with them wherever they went. They had to take the good news of Jesus to the whole world. It was a huge job, but they were not alone. Jesus would be with them every step of the way.



Speak Only the Word

(based on Matthew 8:5-10, 13)

For several days, Jesus had been on the mountainside teaching people about God's ways. When he came down from the mountain, he entered a town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Even though Jesus spent time in this town, and would have been known around the town for his teaching and healings, it was a surprise when a centurion approached him.

I wonder, "What is a centurion?"

The disciples stiffened. What did a commander of the Roman guard want with Jesus? The sun glinted off the centurion's sword hanging at his side, a reminder of his power and position. But Jesus saw the man was clearly worried.

"Lord, my servant is lying at home and he can't move. He is in a lot of pain," the centurion said to Jesus.

Without another word, Jesus said, "I will come and cure him."

Now the disciples were stunned. A centurion was asking for Jesus' help! He must have heard what was being said about Jesus, seen the men and women he had healed; but this man was puzzling. He had the power of the Roman army, yet he came to Jesus. He could have other servants, yet he cared so deeply for this servant that he asked for help.

The centurion lowered his head and replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof."

I wonder, "Why did the centurion think he was not worthy?"

The disciples were confused. What was this man, who certainly had position and power, saying? Did this commander of the Roman guard really truly understand who Jesus was?

I wonder, "Who does the centurion think Jesus is?"

The centurion stood straight again and said, "Only say the word, and my servant will be healed. I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and the servant does it."

Jesus was amazed. This man recognized that Jesus was from God and had God's power and authority. "Only say the word . . ." Jesus thought to himself and smiled.

Jesus turned to those around him and said, "I've never seen this kind of faith in all I've met, and yet you are the very people who are supposed to know all about God and how God works."

Then Jesus turned to the centurion. He wanted to embrace him, but he knew that would be too much for the soldier. So, with tenderness in his voice, Jesus said, "What you believed could happen has happened. Go and see." At that moment, the centurion's servant became well.





Jesus Walks on Water

(based on Matthew 14:22–33)

Jesus and his disciples were beside the Lake of Galilee. Jesus had been teaching and healing all day. When evening came, Jesus blessed the people and sent them home. Then he turned to the disciples and told them to go ahead without him.

“Take the boat to the other side of the lake,” he instructed. “I’ll catch up with you later.”

I wonder, “Why did Jesus send the disciples to the other side of the lake?”

So the disciples left, and Jesus climbed the hillside so he could have some time alone to pray. He stayed there for a long time.

Meanwhile, out on the lake, the disciples were facing a storm. The wind was blowing hard against their boat, and they couldn’t reach the shore.

I wonder, “What did the storm feel like?”

Suddenly, one of the disciples happened to look back across the water.

“What’s that?” He screamed. The disciples peered into the dark. They saw something scary. A man was coming toward them. He was walking on top of the water.

“It’s a ghost,” yelled the disciples. They were frightened.

Suddenly they heard a voice. “Do not be afraid,” the man shouted. “It’s me. It’s Jesus.”

Peter tried to see through the spray. “Jesus?” he cried. “Is that you? If it’s you, call me to come out on the water.”

“Come to me, Peter,” replied Jesus.

So Peter jumped out of the boat and began to walk on the water to Jesus.

I wonder, “What might it feel like to walk on water?”

“Wow!” Exclaimed all the disciples. Peter was walking on top of the water, and he wasn’t sinking.

At that very moment, Peter looked down and saw the waves moving under his feet. Yikes! Suddenly he felt terrified and began to sink. He was going down.

“Help me, Jesus!” Peter cried.

Straight away, Jesus reached out, grabbed Peter, and helped him back to the boat. At that very moment, the wind died down.

The disciples were amazed. “Now we know for sure,” they exclaimed. “You are the Son of God.”



The Generous Landowner

(based on Matthew 20:1-16)

Once, a farmer owned a vineyard. One day, the farmer needed to hire some people to help him look after his vines. So he went out to the market very early to find some workers.

When the farmer arrived at the market, he quickly found some people who were looking for work.

“Come with me,” the farmer said. “I will give you one silver coin to work in my fields.”

The workers were glad to find work and went with the farmer right away.

I wonder, “What did they do in the vineyard?”

Later that morning, the farmer saw some other workers standing in the market. They were waiting to find jobs too. The farmer hired them to help in his vineyard.

Later in the afternoon, the farmer saw that other workers were waiting in the market, so he invited them to help in his vineyard as well.

Finally, when there were only a few hours left to work, the farmer noticed that there were still people waiting in the market.

“Why are you still standing here?” the farmer asked.

“Because no one has given us any work to do,” they answered.

“Come with me,” the farmer said. “I will give you some work to do.”

Even though it was the end of the day, the people were glad to have a few hours of work. They went to the vineyard right away.

When all the work was finished, the farmer called everyone together. It was time to pay the workers. The farmer gave each worker one silver coin.

The workers who had been hired at the start of the day were very upset.

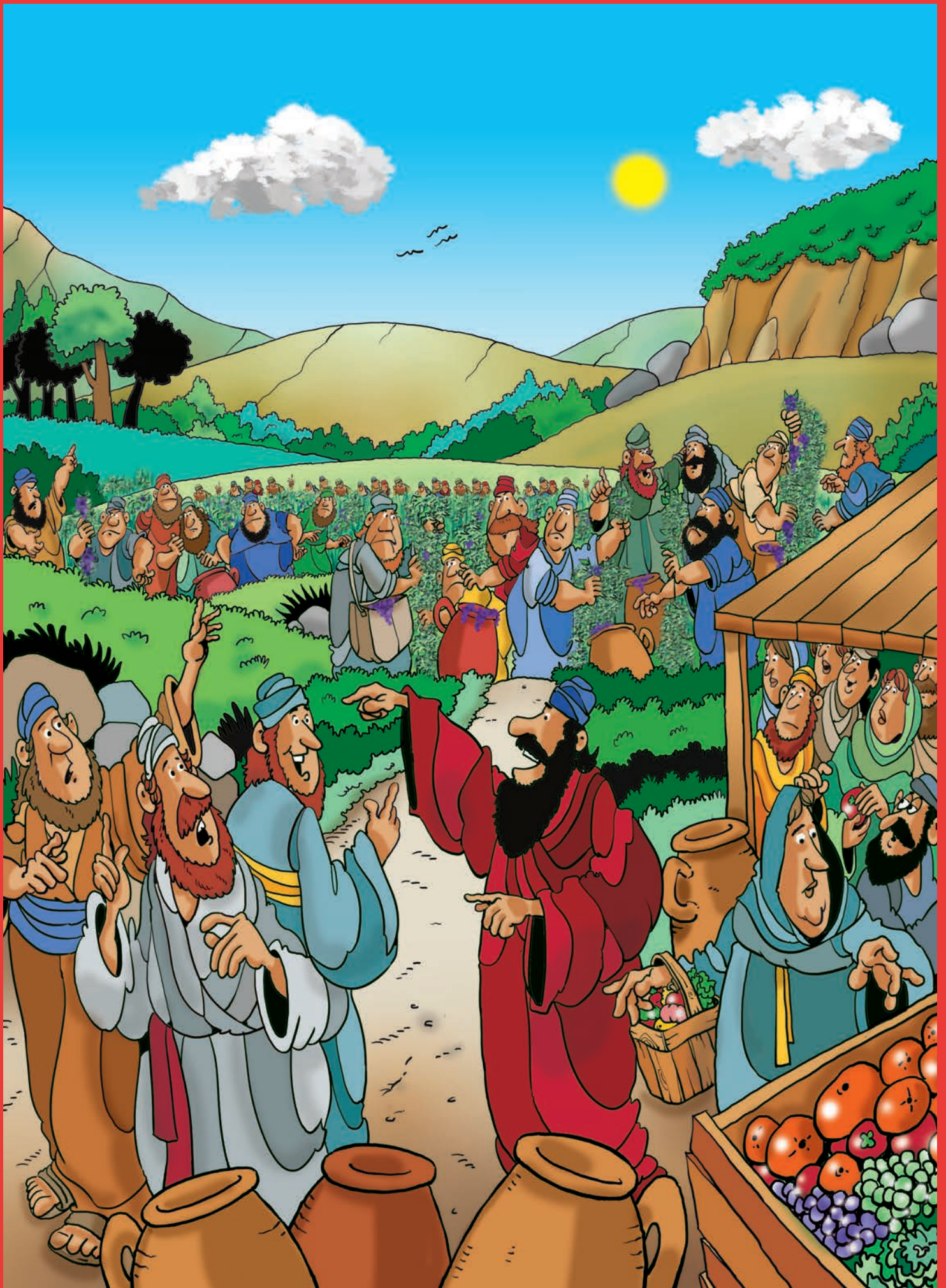
I wonder, “Why were the workers who were hired at the start of the day upset?”

“It’s not fair!” they complained. “We worked hard all day. These others only worked for a few hours. We should get more money.”

The farmer shook his head. “My friends,” he explained, “I have not cheated you. You agreed to work for one silver coin, and that is what I paid you. It is my money and I want to pay these other workers as much as I paid you. They need the money as much as you do. Now everyone will have enough.”

I wonder, “How did each of the workers feel after listening to the farmer?”

All the workers looked at the money the farmer had given them. They took their money and went home. The farmer had been very generous.





Lead by Serving

(based on Matthew 20:20–28)

The disciples traveled with Jesus as he went from town to town. Jesus was their teacher. The disciples were learning how to follow God's loving ways like Jesus did.

Two of the disciples were brothers. Their names were James and John.

One day, the mother of James and John came to see Jesus with her two sons.

I wonder, "Why did James and John's mother go to see Jesus?"

"When you are made the ruler of the world," she said, "please let my two sons rule with you. One of them can sit on your right and the other can sit on your left."

"It isn't my job to decide who will sit in those places," replied Jesus. "God has already decided who will rule the world. God will tell us when the time is right."

The other disciples were furious with James and John.

I wonder, "Why were the disciples so mad at James and John?"

"It's not fair!" they exclaimed. "Why should you be given the choice places next to Jesus? Why should you rule? We are Jesus' friends too. We have just as much right to rule the world as you do."

Jesus called them all together.

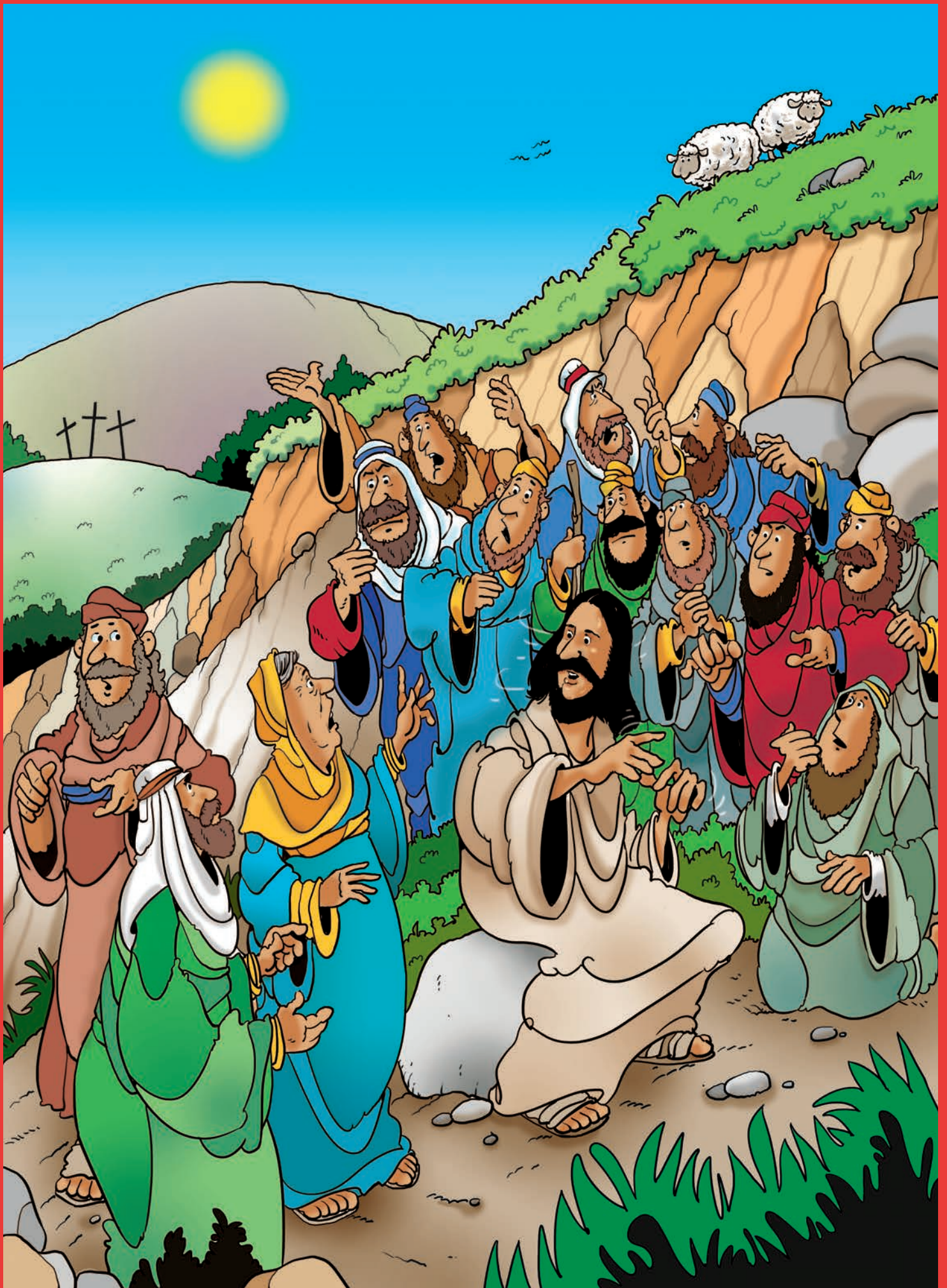
"You know how great leaders in the world like to boss everyone around?" Jesus asked. "They want everyone to bow down to them. They want everyone to do as they are told."

The disciples nodded.

"Don't act like them," continued Jesus. "If you want to be a great leader, you must help others. If you wish to be a ruler, then you must look after everyone. Look at me! I did not come to boss people around. I came to give my life in order to give life and freedom to many people."

I wonder, "How would Jesus lead without bossing people around?"

The disciples were beginning to understand that Jesus was a different kind of leader. They realized that they had to be like Jesus. So they went out with him every day and learned how to be good leaders by being good helpers.



FOLLOW ME!



Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

(based on Matthew 20:29–34)

Once, two blind men lived in a busy town called Jericho. Every day they would make their way out of the town and sit by the side of the road. They hoped that people would notice them and give them a few coins. Then they could buy food to eat.

I wonder, “How many coins would they need to buy food?”

It was a good place to sit, because the road was always busy. Many people traveled to and from Jericho. One day, the two men heard many footsteps walking down the road. They could tell that a huge crowd was coming.

I wonder, “Who was in the crowd?”

The men listened carefully to the voices in the crowd. They started to hear people talking about Jesus. Suddenly they realized that Jesus was in the crowd.

“I’ve heard about Jesus!” cried the first man. “They say he can heal the blind. Maybe he can help us to see.”

“Let’s call out to him,” replied the other man.

So the two men began to call out, “Jesus, Son of David, look at us. Help us!”

The people in the crowd tried to stop the men. “Be quiet!” they scolded. “Don’t bother Jesus! Stop yelling!” But the two men called out over and over again.

Suddenly, they heard someone talking to them. It was Jesus. He stopped right in front of them and asked, “What do you want me to do for you?”

The two men could hardly believe their ears.

“Lord, we want to see,” they stammered.

Both men felt gentle fingertips touch their eyelids. Slowly they began to see some light. They blinked their eyes in astonishment. Colors started to swirl all around them. Then, all at once, they could see everything.

I wonder, “What was the first thing the two men saw?”

The men looked up at the blue sky above their heads, the beautiful sunshine, and the faces of the crowd. They couldn’t believe their eyes. Everything looked fantastic. Then they looked at Jesus and cried out their thanks. Some people in the crowd helped them to stand. The two men knew they would follow Jesus for the rest of their lives.





Filled with the Holy Spirit

(based on Acts 2:1-4, 38-39)

Jesus' friends were waiting. Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would come. But when would it happen? They prayed and waited. They wondered and waited. They waited and prayed and wondered.

I wonder, "How long did they wait?"

Soon it was time for the festival of Pentecost. People came to Jerusalem to celebrate and give thanks to God for the first harvest of grain in the season. Jesus' friends met too. They sang songs, and they said thank you to God.

Suddenly, something amazing happened. The disciples heard the sound of a mighty wind rushing through the room. The whole house was filled with the wind. It howled and roared and bellowed. The sound was deafening.

I wonder, "What did the wind do to the room?"

After the wind, came the fire. It touched the disciples. It looked like fire but did not burn. It was the Holy Spirit. Jesus' friends were filled to overflowing with God's love and power. It was incredible!

People in the streets heard the noise of the wind and flames.

"What's happening?" they cried.

Peter came out and told them the story of Jesus.

I wonder, "What did Peter tell them about Jesus?"

"What should we do?" the people asked.

"Change the way you live!" Peter told the crowd. "Follow God's way of love like Jesus did. Then the Holy Spirit will fill you as well."

It was a very exciting day. Lots of people heard the good news and became followers of Jesus too. Jesus' friends never forgot that exciting day. They told the story over and over. No one would forget the day that the Holy Spirit came.









Sometimes we do bad things,
sometimes we do good.

God forgives the bad things
and helps us do the good.

We know that God will be there
to help us on our way.

God will love us always,
each and every day.

Sometimes friends do bad things,
sometimes friends do good.

We forgive the bad things
and help them do the good.

We know that God will be there
to help us on our way.

God will love us always,
each and every day.

Ho, Hosanna praises sing,
unto Jesus Christ the King.
(Repeat four times)

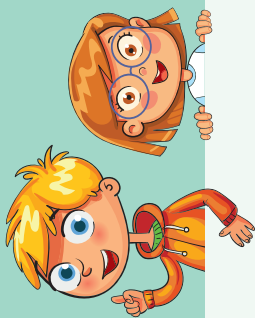


Hal - le - lu, hal - le - lu,
hal - le - lu, hal - le - lu - jah!
Praise ye the Lord!
(Repeat)

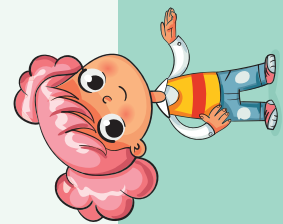
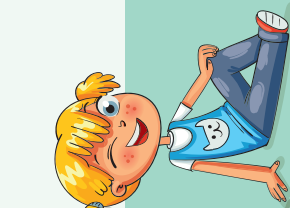


Praise ye the Lord! Hallelujah!
(Repeat two times)
Praise ye the Lord!





Every time I feel the Spirit
moving in my heart, I will pray.
Every time I feel the Spirit
moving in my heart, I will pray.



We are blessed to be a blessing;
we are blessed to be a blessing.
We are blessed to be a blessing,
growing in the grace of God.

Refrain:

*Growing in the grace of God,
growing in the grace of God,
we are blessed to be a blessing,
growing in the grace of God.*

Just like Jesus helping others, . . .

Just like Jesus healing others, . . .

Just like Jesus feeding others, . . .

Just like Jesus teaching others, . . .

Just like Jesus loving others, . . .





Why should I feel discouraged?
Why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart be lonely
and long for heaven and home,
when Jesus is my portion?
My constant friend is he:
his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me;
his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me.

Refrain:

*I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free,
for his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me.*



Jesus, Jesus,
Jesus in the morning,
Jesus in the noontime;
Jesus, Jesus,
Jesus when the sun goes down!

Praise him, praise him,
praise him in the morning,
praise him in the noontime;
praise him, praise him,
praise him when the sun goes down!




Love him, love him,
love him in the morning,
love him in the noontime;
love him, love him,

love him when the sun goes down!



Serve him, serve him,
serve him in the morning,
serve him in the noontime;
serve him, serve him,
serve him when the sun goes down!





Let us give praise to God,
praise all you nations, all you peoples, all together,
for God's mercy is everlasting,
and covers us with love, grace, and compassion.
And the goodness of God
it lasts forever. Alleluia! Amen! . . .

Alabad al Señor,
naciones todas, pueblos todos, alabadle,
porque ha engrandecido
sobre nosotros su misericordia;
la bondad del Señor,
es para siempre, ¡aleluya, amén! . . .

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
hallowed be thy name.

As in heaven, so on the earth,
hallowed be thy name.

Give us this day our daily bread,
hallowed be thy name.

And forgive us, God, all our debts,
hallowed be thy name.

As we forgive all our debtors,
hallowed be thy name.

And lead us not into temptation,
hallowed be thy name.

But deliver us from all evil
hallowed be thy name.

For thine is the kingdom, power, and glory,
hallowed be thy name.

Forever and forever and ever,
hallowed be thy name.



Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light,
Like a little candle burning in the night;
In this world is darkness, so let us shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, first of all for him;
Because he knows and loves us if our lights grow dim;
Jesus walks beside us to help us shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, then, for all around,
Many forms of darkness in the world are found;
Sin and want and sorrows so we must shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine.



Refrain:
Thank you, Jesus.
(Repeat two times)
for giving us your grace.

Live in grace and gratitude, gratitude, gratitude.
Live in grace and gratitude,
growing every day.
(Refrain)

You shall love the Lord your God,
Lord your God, Lord your God.
You shall love the Lord your God,
growing every day.
(Refrain)

Love your neighbor as yourself, as yourself, as yourself.
Love your neighbor as yourself,
growing every day.
(Refrain)



