

Stories, Colors & More

for Ages 5-7



Year 2, Fall





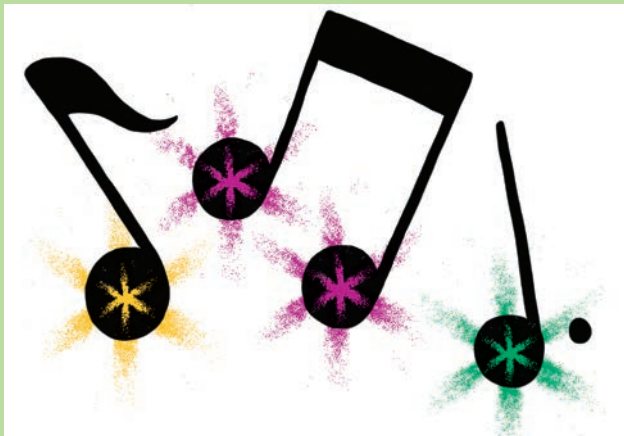
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Your Visual Schedule



Welcoming
and
Preparing



Singing
and
Praying



Hearing
the
Story



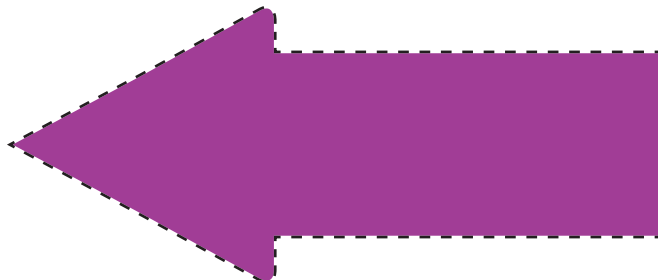
Reflecting
on God's
Grace



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.

God Saw How Good It Was

(based on Genesis 1:1-2:3)

In the beginning of everything, there was nothing. Just God. Nothing else. Just God.

God decided to create the world and began to sing a beautiful song of creation.

I wonder, "Why did God decide to create the world?"

God said, "Let there be light!" And light burst forth, separating the darkness. God saw that the light was good. (Day 1)

Then the universe started to unfold. There was the vast space, stretching on and on. There were the skies below surrounding the world, giving it room to breathe. It was beautiful! (Day 2)

God formed the valleys with their rivers, the oceans, the wide plains, the dry deserts, and the tall, tall mountains. God was enjoying this. It was fun to make something out of nothing. So God continued by filling the world with plants. Trees grew strong and tall, and the flowers covered the land with their beauty. The earth produced grain, fruit, and many good things to eat. God looked at everything and saw good. (Day 3)

God put the sun and moon and stars and every planet into the right place. There would be light even in the dark of night, and there would be seasons for the earth. And God saw that it was good. (Day 4)

Then it was time for the creatures of the waters and skies—fish and birds. Great and small, they swam. Great and small, they flew. And God smiled at all that was good. (Day 5)

"More," God thought. So God made all kinds of creatures. Creeping, crawling, buzzing, slithering, running, scuttling animals filled the land. God looked at all the beautiful animals and saw how good they were. "Something else?" God wondered. God thought. "Let there be people on the earth! They will be like me. They will look after this good world I have created."

I wonder, "How will the people look after this world God created?"

With joy and love, God created people. Some were tall, and some were small. Some were boys, and some were girls. Some had curly hair, and others had straight. The people were all shapes, sizes, and shades. They all had different gifts and abilities. They all were different, but they all were made to be like God, so they were full of love, joy, and grace. God blessed each one.

"Go into my beautiful world," God said. "You are free to go where you wish; settle down and make families. Bring joy and love to the land."

"Take care of all I have made on earth," God said. "I have made all kinds of good fruit and grain for you to eat. Take care of my world. It is fine and beautiful."

"Look at that!" God declared. "This world and everything in it is good. It is very, very good." (Day 6)

God was so very happy, and satisfied, and a bit tired from all the work of creating, so God rested. God said, "This is a holy time, a time to rest." (Day 7)



Praising God

(based on Psalm 8)

It was a clear, beautiful night. The stars blinked and winked and seemed to smile on the earth below. Matthias and Abigail, along with their children—Myriam, Beni, and Yakov—and Abigail's mother—Esther—were walking through the hills outside their village. They stopped and laid down on the grass.

“Look up!” Abigail exclaimed. “The skies are magnificent tonight.”

Yakov whispered, “Awesome!”

Myriam nodded. “Thank you, God,” she prayed.

Esther breathed, “Amazing!” She thought of a psalm, a prayer of gratitude to God. It was sung and prayed long ago and recited by the Jewish people throughout the years.

She started to pray, “O God, you are . . .”

Everyone said, “Amazing!”

She said, “How wonderful is your name. You made everything.”

Abigail chimed in, “You made the moon and the sun. And millions of stars that twinkle in the night sky.”

Matthias said, “O God, you are . . .”

Everyone said, “Amazing!”

Esther continued, “How wonderful is your name. Why do you care so much for us and all people? When we are so small compared to the heavens?”

Abigail said, “But you love all people. You crown us all with glory.”

This time Beni said, “O God, you are . . .”

And they all said, “Amazing!”

Esther exclaimed once again, “How wonderful is your name! Everything that is alive praises you.”

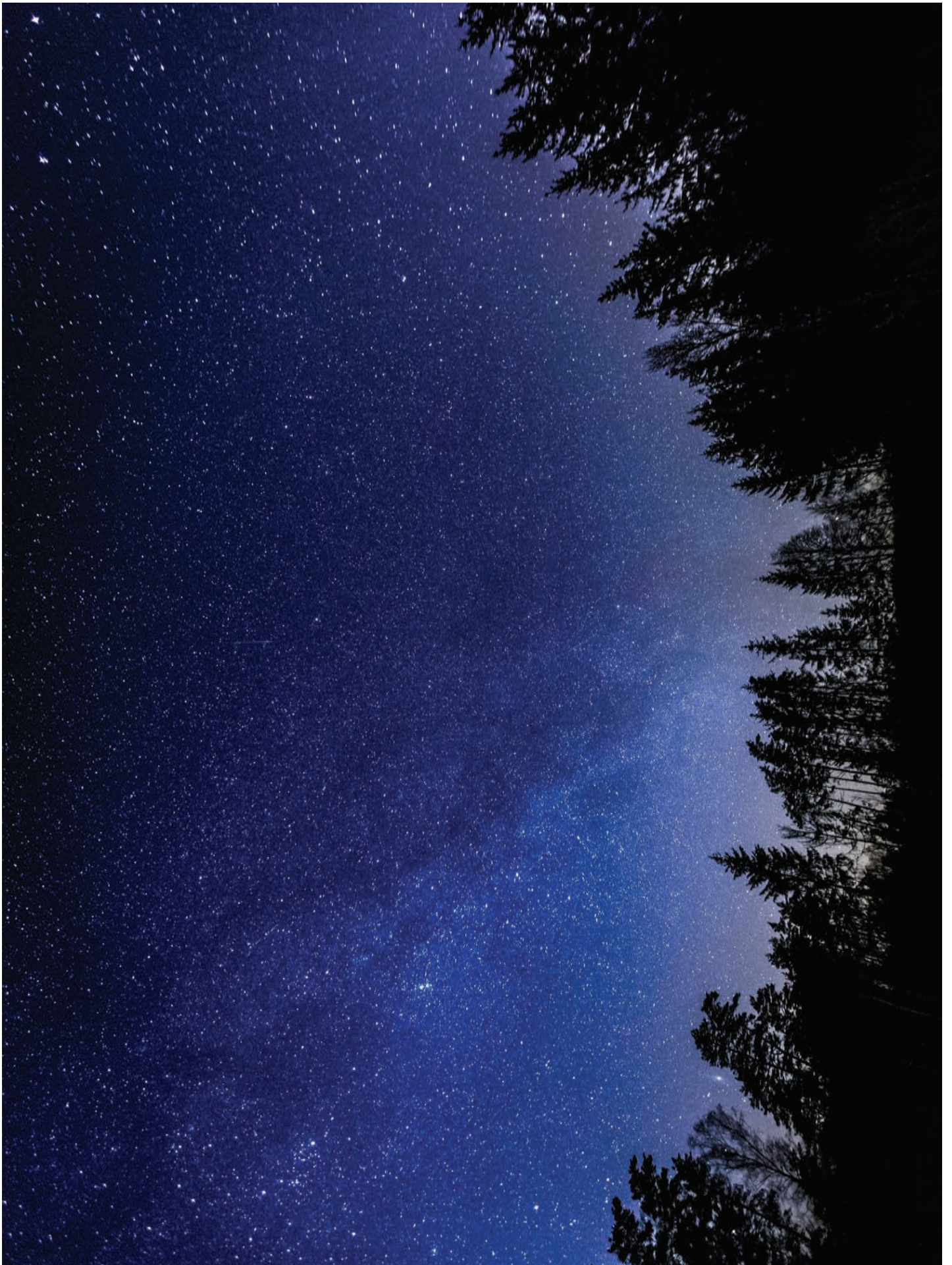
Matthias prayed, “Help us care for the world as you have cared for us.”

The whole family said, “O God, you are . . .”

All of the children said, “Amazing!”

I wonder, “How can we give thanks to God for all of creation?”





Moses and the Burning Bush

(based on Exodus 3:1–15)

When Moses was born, Pharaoh was killing all the Hebrew baby boys. To save Moses, his mother and sister put him in a basket that floated on the river. Pharaoh's daughter found him and raised Moses as her own son.

When Moses grew up, he stopped an Egyptian guard who was beating a Hebrew slave. Moses knew Pharaoh wouldn't like that, so he left Egypt and traveled to another country.

Moses married a woman named Zipporah (zip-POR-uh) and settled down as a shepherd.

One day he decided to take the sheep up the mountain.

I wonder, "How tall was the mountain?"

On the mountain, Moses saw something incredible—a bush. A bush on fire! A bush on fire that did not burn up!

The flames crackled. The leaves roasted. But the bush just kept on burning and burning. Moses stared in awe. What could it mean? Then he heard a voice:

"Moses, Moses!"

"Here I am," Moses answered.

"Take off your shoes, for you are standing in a holy place."

Moses took off his shoes right away.

I wonder, "Why did the voice ask Moses to remove his shoes?"

"Moses," the voice said. "I have seen how badly Pharaoh is treating my people. I have come to rescue them. I will send you to lead my people out of Egypt and take them to a new home. Go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let my people go."

"How can I tell Pharaoh what to do?" Moses asked. "How can I lead the people out of Egypt?"

The voice said, "I will be with you."

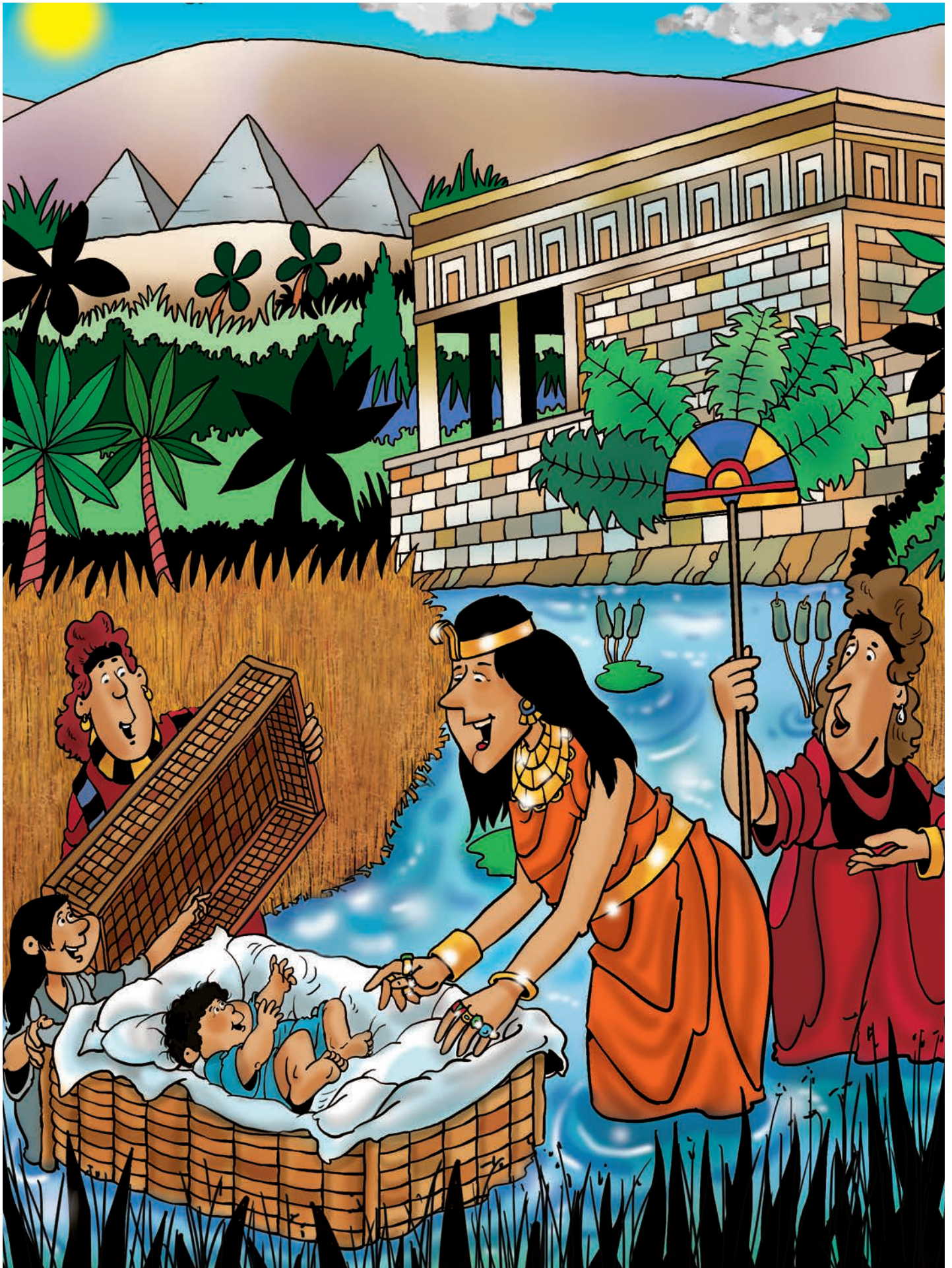
"But," Moses stuttered, "who are you?"

In that quiet moment, Moses heard, "I AM WHO I AM. I am the Lord, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Tell the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

I wonder, "What did Moses think when he heard God's name—'I AM'?"

Moses heard the call to save his people. So he started the long journey back to Egypt to lead his people to freedom.





Loving God

(based on Exodus 20:1–11)

After God led the Hebrew people out of slavery, they camped near a mountain. God called Moses to climb the mountain. Moses told all the people that God had a message for them. A thick cloud of smoke came down and rested on the top of the mountain. Thunder boomed and lightning flashed. God was on the mountain, waiting for Moses.

God spoke to Moses in the thunder. “Climb the mountain, Moses.”

The people saw Moses climb into the cloud of smoke. He disappeared from view.

I wonder, “How did Moses feel as he climbed the mountain?”

Inside the cloud, Moses met God. The LORD God, the great I Am, gave Moses ten important rules called *commandments* to help the people live together in peace and grace.

The first four rules were about how people ought to love God:

1. There is only one God.
2. Remember I am your God. Worship only me.
3. When you say my name, I Am Who I Am, speak with love and respect.
4. Remember the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Work on the other six days and rest on the seventh. Make the Sabbath a special day of worship and rest.

Moses thought about how these rules would help the people stay connected to the LORD God, the great I Am. He knew that they had come from a land, and would soon be in a land, where people had many different gods, making statues of them and worshiping them. Moses knew that it would be important to say, “There is only one God,” remembering to worship only God.

Moses believed the third rule was a good one too. God had shared God’s name—I Am Who I Am—with Moses and the people. God wanted them to love and respect that name because that meant the people were loving and respecting God.

Finally, Moses thought it was a really good idea to take time each week, especially when daily life could get so busy, just to worship God. That would always give the people a chance to stop, remember, and thank God for all God’s goodness.

These four rules would help the people love God with all their hearts, minds, and souls.

I wonder, “How many other rules did Moses hear from God?”



1. There is only one God.
2. Remember I am your God.
Worship only me.
3. When you say my name,
I AM WHO I AM, speak with
love and respect.
4. Remember the Sabbath,
the seventh day of the
week. Work on the other
six days and rest on the
seventh. Make Sabbath a
special day of worship
and rest.

Loving Others

(based on Exodus 20:12–17)

Remember that God had led the Hebrew people out of slavery, and they were camped, waiting for Moses. He had climbed the mountain to receive a message from God for the people. God had a set of rules, Ten Commandments that God wanted the people to follow. God knew that these rules would help them, and their children, and their children's children, and so on for generations. These rules would help them remember who God is—first and most important in their lives—and these rules would help them live together in peace and grace.

The first four rules were about how the people ought to love God.

I wonder, “What were the first four rules?”

The other six rules were about how people ought to love one another:

5. Treat your father and your mother with respect. Look after them.
6. Don't kill anyone. Respect all people.
7. Be true to your husband or wife.
8. Don't steal things that belong to others.
9. Don't lie about anyone. Always tell the truth about others.
10. Be happy with what you have.

Moses thought about these rules too. They were perfect. They were all about treating others as you would want to be treated.

Rule 5 would remind children to honor their parents, especially when children think they know everything. God figured out that children need their parents, and parents need their children.

Rule 6 seemed like a pretty obvious one, but as Moses thought about it, he realized that it went beyond just killing someone. It had to do with respecting the life of all people. Harming another person, with force or words, is also wrong.

God knew that to build a new nation in a new land, families needed to stick together. So God made a rule to help people keep their promises in marriage. Moses thought that it was a good rule to keep all the promises we make to others.

Moses thought Rules 8 and 9 just made sense when people were living in community together. People shouldn't take things that aren't theirs, and they shouldn't lie about others.

Moses fully agreed with Rule 10; we all should be happy with what we have. “After all, everything is a gift from God,” Moses said to himself.

The Ten Commandments were just what the people needed to hear. Following God's rules would help them love God and love one another. Now they knew how to serve God gratefully and live in peace. Once again, God had taken care of the people.

I wonder, “Why did God give Moses commandments for the people?”



5. Treat your father and your mother with respect. Look after them.
6. Don't kill anyone. Respect all people.
7. Be true to your husband or wife.
8. Don't steal things that belong to others.
9. Don't lie about anyone. Always tell the truth about others.
10. Be happy with what you have.

The People Give God Thanks

(based on Exodus 35:20–29)

The Hebrew people had left slavery behind and were headed to a new home. They walked and walked through the desert for many years. On their journey, they lived in tents. But God had no tent. Moses prepared the people to build a special tent for God. It would be called a tabernacle.

The tabernacle would be exquisite. The Ark of the Covenant could be put inside. Whenever the people set out for another part of their long journey, the tabernacle could be packed up and carried with them.

I wonder, “Who packed up and carried the tabernacle?”

God told Moses to ask the people for gifts to make the tabernacle a beautiful place. So Moses went to the people and asked them to help make the tabernacle.

“We need to make it beautiful for God,” he said.

The people remembered what God had done for them. They wanted to say thank you.

I wonder, “How did would people thank God?”

One by one people brought their gifts to help make the tent special for God. Some gave gold and silver. Others brought shining gems. The tabernacle would look magnificent.

Some brought their best yarn. Others wove beautiful materials to make the tent. Still others bought acacia wood for building. They also bought spices and oil for the lamps and sweet-smelling incense.

As the materials arrived, Moses told the workers to begin. All kinds of craftspeople were needed. Lots of people volunteered to help.

The people kept bringing more and more gifts. In the end, Moses had to ask them to stop, because they had everything they needed to make the tabernacle.

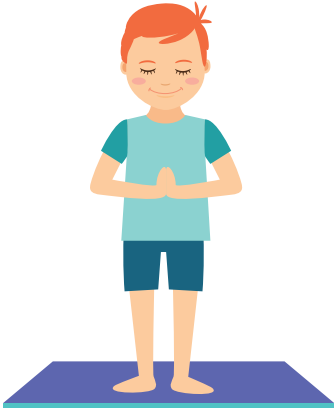
The special tent was finished. It was ready to use.

Moses and his helpers set up the tabernacle in the middle of the camp. Everyone could see it. It was gorgeous.

I wonder, “Why did they set the tabernacle in the center of the camp?”

The people were jubilant. They brought their gifts to thank God for God’s grace. Now the people’s gifts had been made into a beautiful tent for God. The tabernacle was another reminder that God was always with them.





I am thankful for ...



the sun and moon



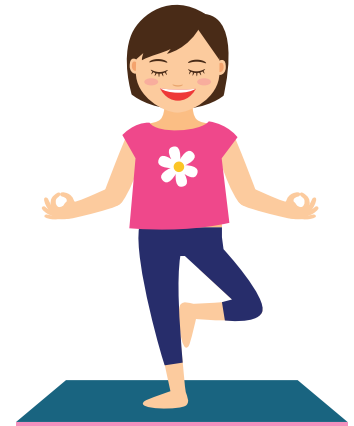
the earth



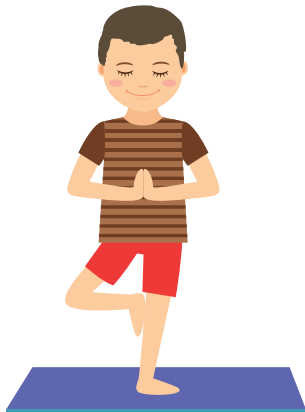
my pet



birds we see



my friends



my family



food we eat



silly times



a place to rest



a time to play



Thank you, God,
for everything!

What Do the Stones Mean?

(based on Joshua 3:14–17; 4:1–8, 19–24)

Finally! After the long journey through the wilderness, it was time for the Hebrew people to enter the land that God had promised them. Everyone was excited. The people couldn't wait to see their new home.

There was one problem, though. The people walked right up to the Jordan River and stopped. The Hebrew people had walked and walked to reach the Promised Land, only to be stopped by a river.

The people cried out, "There's no way to cross."

Still others complained. "If only Moses were with us still."

The people remembered how Moses had stretched out his staff and the sea parted so they could get across. But Moses had died.

I wonder, "Who could the people turn to for help?"

God had appointed a new leader named Joshua.

Joshua, walking among the crowd, said, "Camp here for the night. Pray and prepare. In the morning, God will do wonders."

Joshua was confident in God's grace.

The people camped. In the morning, Joshua told them to follow the Ark of the Covenant across the Jordan River. The ark was a very special box that reminded the people that God was always with them. The priests went ahead of the people, carrying the Ark of the Covenant.

The priests came to the river and walked in. Just as the priests' feet touched the rushing water, the river stopped. The priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the river, and all the people walked across on dry land! It was incredible!

Joshua called twelve people to go back and pick up a large stone from the middle of the river.

When twelve stones had been collected, the priests carrying the ark came out of the river. There was a big splash! The water started flowing again.

I wonder, "What were the twelve stones for?"

Joshua instructed the people to pile the huge stones high so they could be seen for miles around. "These are our remembering stones," Joshua said.

"Whenever our children ask about the stones, say, 'These are our memory stones' and tell the children the story of all God has done."

So whenever the children asked about the stones, someone would say, "These are our memory stones," and the people would remember that they belonged to a God of grace.



Your God Shall Be My God

(based on Ruth 1:1-22)

Naomi's life had been bitter.

I wonder, "What does bitter mean?"

Many years before, Naomi and her husband and sons had moved from Bethlehem to the country of Moab (MOH-ab). There was a famine in Bethlehem, which meant that there was very little food to eat. But there was food in Moab. So Naomi's family left the home they loved and moved far away.

While they lived in Moab, Naomi's husband died. Her sons took care of her. Both of her sons married women from Moab. Their names were Ruth and Orpah (OR-puh). Sad times came again, however, when both of the sons died!

One day, Naomi had news from her family in Bethlehem. The rain had come back, and the food was growing again. Naomi decided to make the long journey back. Ruth and Orpah went with her.

As they traveled, Naomi began to worry: "Would Ruth and Orpah be happy in Bethlehem? Would it be hard for them to be so far away from their families?" Ruth and Orpah were Moabites, enemies of the people of Israel. Naomi loved Ruth and Orpah. She did not want them to be sad and lonely. She worried that they might not be accepted in her home in Bethlehem.

"My dear daughters," Naomi said. "You don't have to come with me. Why don't you return to your families? If you go with me, your lives will be bitter. You should go back to your families where you belong."

Ruth and Orpah thought carefully about what Naomi had said. They loved Naomi, but they missed their homes. What to do? Orpah decided that it would be best for her to go back home as Naomi had suggested. She said a sad goodbye to Naomi and Ruth, and went back home. But Ruth decided to go with Naomi to Bethlehem.

I wonder, "Why did Ruth decide to go with Naomi?"

"Do not try to send me home," Ruth explained. "I really want to stay with you. I promise I will never leave you. I will go wherever you go. I want to live with you, wherever you live. I will love the people you love. And I will love your God."

When Naomi heard that Ruth was determined to go with her, she was glad. The two women continued on their way. It was a long journey. After many days they reached Bethlehem. The people of the city welcomed Naomi and Ruth. Everyone was excited to see Naomi again.





Do three
jumping jacks.

Trade places
with the
person
behind you.

Touch head,
shoulders,
knees, and
toes three
times.

We welcome
others. Shake
hands with
three people.

We pray.
Pray a sentence
prayer giving
thanks.

We sing.
Sing a song
from church.

**Hop like
a frog and
move ahead
two spaces.**

**High five
everyone
in line.**

**Touch toes
three times.**

**We help others.
Get the last
person in line
and have them
join you.**

**We listen.
Sit down to
listen and
count to ten.**

**We are sent
forth. Run to
the back of
the line.**

David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

(based on 2 Samuel 6:12b–15, 17–19)

The Ark of the Covenant was important to the people of God. It reminded them that God was always with them.

The Ark, the covenant box, had been stolen by the Philistines and carried away. After many years the people got it back. David took it to a town near Jerusalem for safekeeping.

I wonder, “Why did the Philistines steal the box?”

Now it was time to bring the covenant box back to Jerusalem. King David set up a special tent called a tabernacle. The tabernacle would hold the ark. It was made of the finest materials and put up with care.

Soon the time came to get the covenant box. They placed it carefully on a brand new cart and brought it out of its hiding place.

Then the celebration began. King David and all the leaders formed a procession. They went ahead of the Ark of the Covenant rejoicing and singing.

It was a grand parade. The people shouted and blew horns as the Ark went by. Many of them followed the procession all the way to Jerusalem.

I wonder, “How did the people know that the Ark of the Covenant was important?”

King David was so full of joy that he couldn't walk quietly. He leaped. He jumped. He twirled. He sang and danced before God.

When they came to Jerusalem, crowds of people were waiting for them. Everyone wanted to see the covenant box. The crowd shouted and blew their horns.

The new cart carried the covenant box to the tabernacle. David gave thanks to God and blessed the people. There was a huge party. David gave gifts of bread, meat, and raisins to everyone in Jerusalem so they could celebrate.

Once again, the people had the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. It was a wonderful reminder that God was with them. It was a day to celebrate. It was a day to remember.



Let Us Worship

(based on Psalm 122)

My name is David. I am now a king, but when I was a boy, I took care of the sheep on the hillsides around my village, Bethlehem. As I wandered to the north, I could see the city that sat on the hill between two valleys. That city never left my mind.

Years later, when I became king, and the tribes of Israel united as a kingdom, I knew the perfect place for my palace, the city on the hill, Jerusalem.

The people rejoiced as I brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. The Ark held God's words to us and was God's presence with us. I led the procession, dancing, as the Ark was carried down through the valley and up the hill to Jerusalem. This is where the house of the Lord would be.

Throughout each year, people came to Jerusalem to celebrate the mighty acts of our God with festivals and holy days. I remember the feelings of happiness and anticipation as we prepared to worship our God.

I wonder, "What were the festivals and holy days that people celebrated?"

One day, I wrote a song, a prayer to God, to express my joy:

I was glad when they said to me,
 "Let us go the house of the Lord!"
 And now we're here, O Jerusalem,
 inside your gates.

Jerusalem is a well-built city,
 built for all to come together in unity
 to worship!

This city is where all God's people
 come to worship,

to give thanks to God!

This is the place where justice rules
 for David's throne is there.

Pray that Jerusalem has peace:

"Let those who love you have rest.

Let there be peace on your walls
 and within your gates."

For the good of my family and friends,

I say, "Live in peace!"

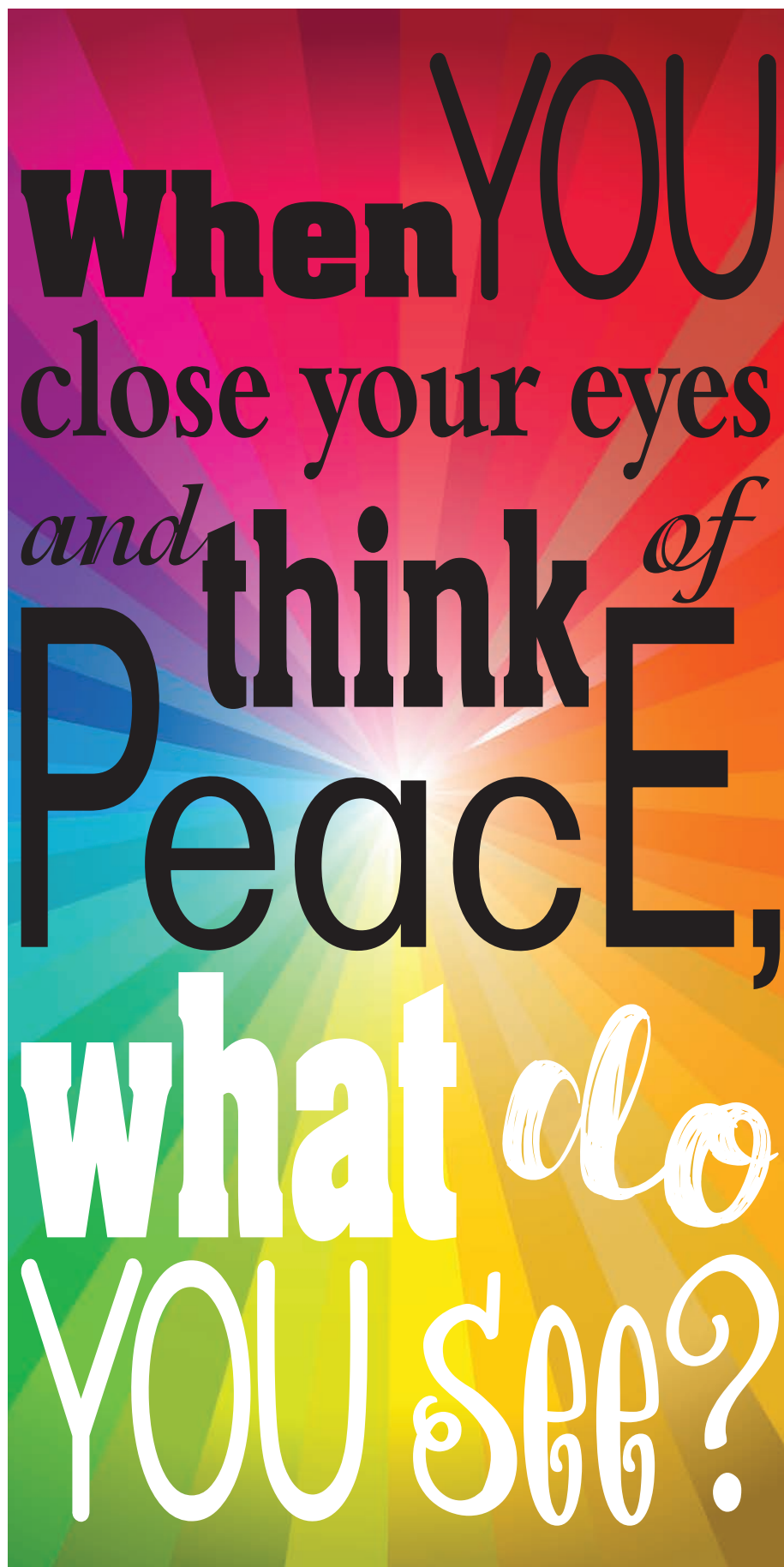
For you, O God, I will do my very best.

I wonder, "Why was praying for peace so important?"

As each festival or a holy day approached and preparations for worship began, I would hear folks say, with expectation and eagerness, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" I knew they felt what I always felt—delight! We were going to praise our God, give thanks, and offer our prayers. We were being called to worship our God!

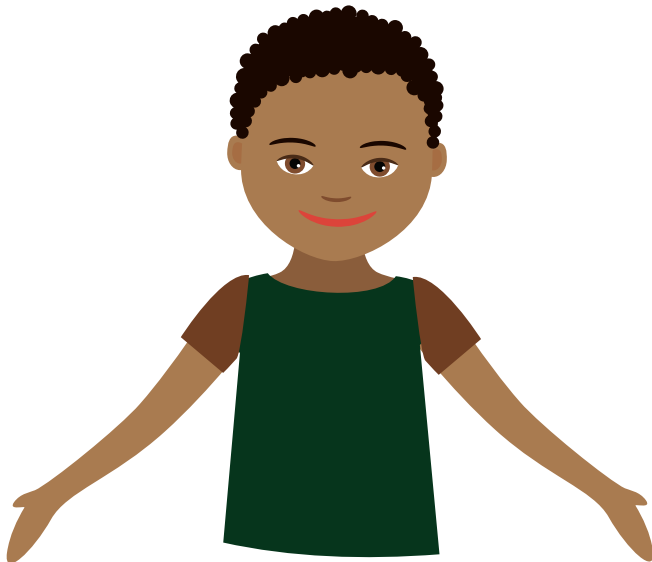
I wonder, "How was their worship like our worship?"







Praise
our God.



Give
thanks.



Offer our
prayers.

Jonah

(based on Jonah 1–4)

Many years ago, a man named Jonah lived in the land of Israel in the coastal city named Joppa (JAH-puh). One day, God told Jonah to take a message to Nineveh (NIHN-eh-veh).

“Tell the people of Nineveh that I am not happy with the way they behave,” declared God. “They do not love me. They are mean to each other. I have decided to punish them.”

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh. The people of Nineveh were enemies of the Israelites. He did not want to take a message to these foreigners he didn’t know. Jonah decided to run away; he jumped on a boat headed to Tarshish (TAHR-shihsh)—in the opposite direction.

God sent a terrible storm. It tossed the ship up and down—up and down—up and down. The sailors were afraid that it might break apart and sink. “Why is this happening?” they moaned.

Jonah realized the storm was his fault. He told the sailors that he was running away from God. When they heard Jonah’s story, they lifted Jonah up and threw him over the side of the boat.

I wonder, “How can you run away from God?”

Jonah landed in the sea with a big splash and the storm stopped. A big fish came along. It opened its mouth wide. Whoosh! Suddenly the fish swallowed, and Jonah was inside!

Jonah stayed inside the belly of the fish for three days! He had plenty of time to think and pray.

“Dear God,” Jonah prayed. “Thank you for rescuing me. I’m sorry that I ran away from you. I’m sorry that I didn’t do what you wanted.”

Right away the big fish swam toward the land and spat Jonah right up onto the beach!

Once again, God told Jonah to take a message to Nineveh. This time, Jonah went. He walked all the way to the city of Nineveh and shouted, “God is not happy with the way you behave. You do not love God, and you are mean to each other. God has decided to punish you.”

The people heard Jonah’s message and believed what he said. They told Jonah they were sorry and wanted to change the ways they treated others. Even the king listened to Jonah.

God heard the people’s prayers and forgave the people. They were jubilant when they realized that God was not going to punish them.

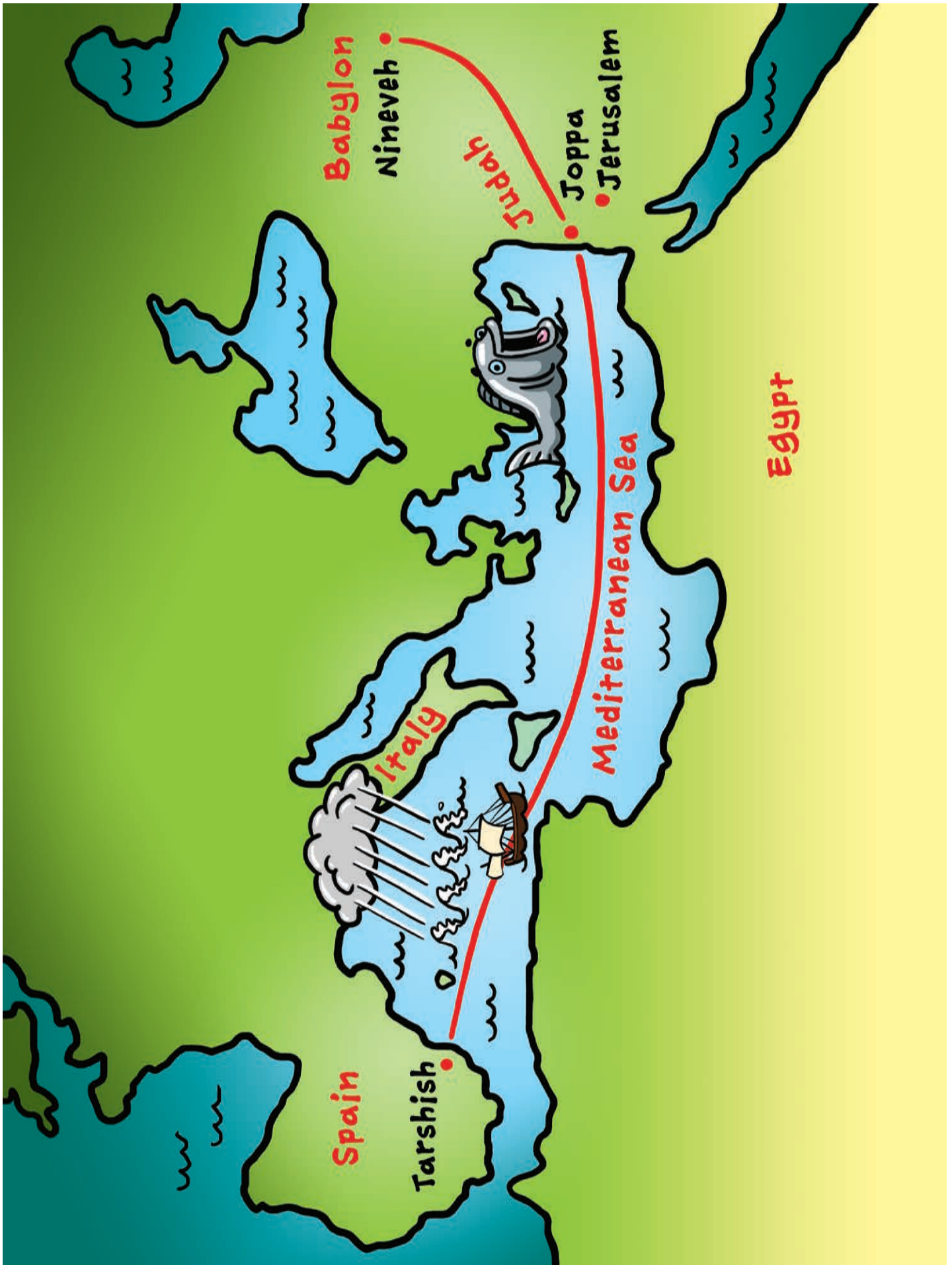
But Jonah was angry with God. “I want you to punish the people,” he shouted.

“Why are you so angry, Jonah?” God asked. “Thousands of people live in Nineveh. I chose to be gracious to them as I was with you when you disobeyed me.”

I wonder, “What did Jonah say in response to God?”







What Shall I Give?

(based on Micah 6:6–8)

God's people have always worshiped God, grateful for what God has given them. They praise, give thanks, pray, serve one another, and make offerings. For many, many years, God's people made offerings in the ways directed by God through the temple laws. They gave animals, grains, fruit, oil, and more to burn as offerings on altars of never-ending fires.

I wonder, "What other things did people offer to God?"

But sometimes the offerings became more important than worshiping God. People wondered, "How many goats or measures of grain are enough to please God? How many jars of oil or baskets of olives will get me closer to God?"

God realized that the people had lost their understanding of what was truly important, not showy ceremonies but a true relationship with God and with one another. So God gave a message to Micah, a prophet who spoke God's Word to the people.

I wonder, "Why was a prophet needed to deliver this message?"

Micah began by posing a question to the people, "What should I bring for an offering to God that shows how much I honor God?" Then he continued, perhaps with a twinkle in his eye, knowing that his words would shock the people, "Should I come with armloads of offerings? Should I even bring my youngest cows?"

The people must have thought, "What is Micah saying? That would be way more than would be required!"

Micah continued, "Will God be pleased with thousands of rams?"

"Who has thousands of rams? This is outrageous!" The people would have been stunned.

Micah had more to ask, "Would God like tens of thousands of rivers of oil?"

"Now that is just ridiculous!" the people thought.

Micah was exaggerating to help the people see that there could never be enough "stuff" to offer God—not armloads or thousands or even tens of thousands of offerings! Then he went one step further, and asked, "Should I give God my oldest child in order to forgive my wrongs?"

God's people must have been alarmed! What was Micah saying? Would their offerings never be enough for God? What should they do?

Micah said, "God has told you what is good; what God requires from you is just three things:

1. Do justice.
2. Love kindness.
3. Walk humbly with God."

I wonder, "What do these things mean?"

The people knew that this meant to be fair and treat their neighbors right, to be loving and kind to all, and to spend time with God, for that is what God really wanted from them.

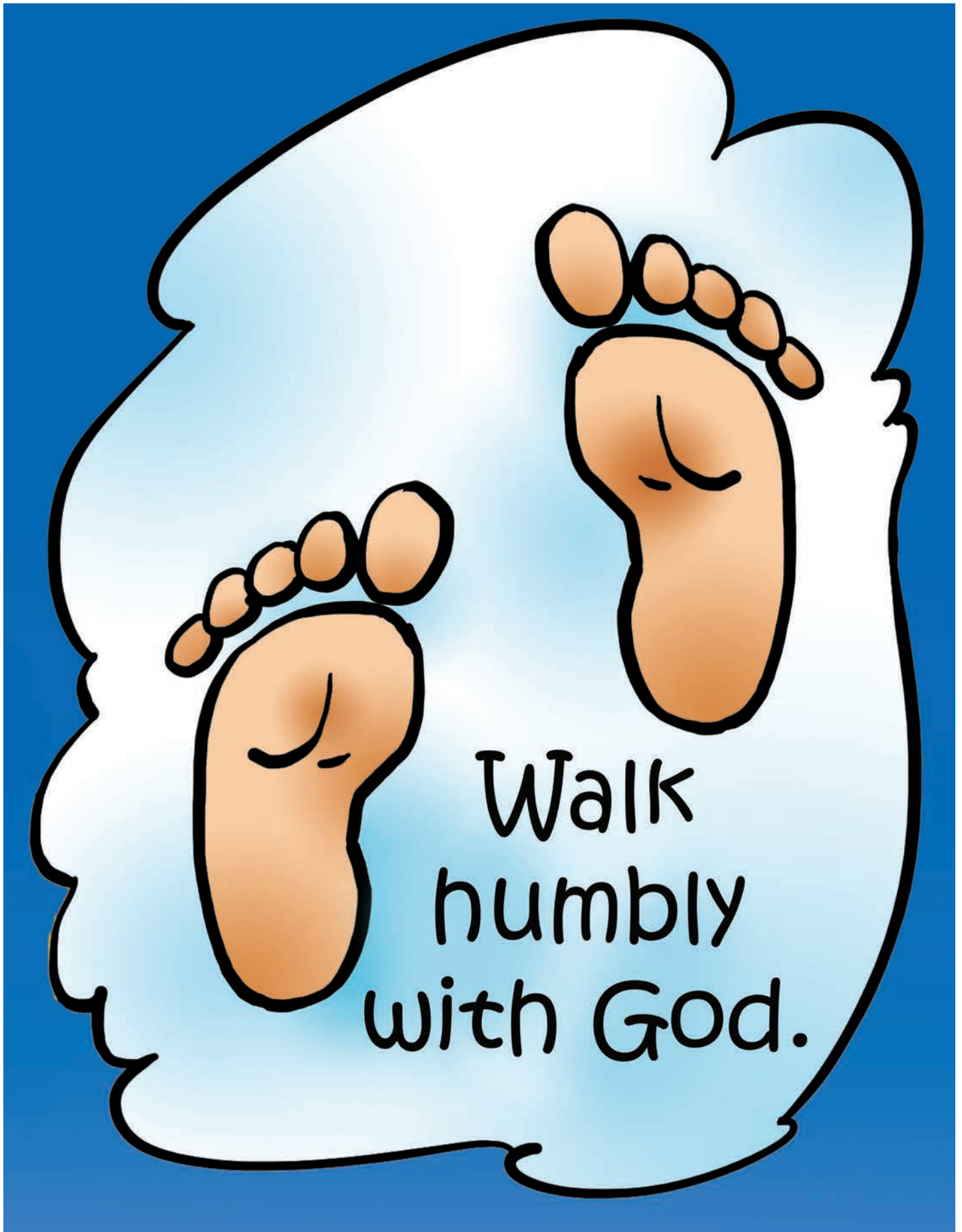
These things are still what is good and what God wants from us today!





Do justice.





Everything Begins with God

(based on Isaiah 56:1–8)

Isaiah lived in the land of Judah. He was a prophet. God spoke to Isaiah and then Isaiah spoke God's words to the people.

Isaiah and the people lived through hard and scary times. There wasn't enough food to eat. Soldiers destroyed their homes during a war. There was nowhere to live. The people dreaded the thought of another war.

God wanted to give the people hope, so God gave a special message to the prophet Isaiah. God had a promise. It was an incredible promise. It was a wonderful promise. It was a promise that began with God.

I wonder, "What did God promise?"

"Don't give up," Isaiah said. "God has made an excellent promise. It is a promise of a new world."

"Tell us about God's promise," the people said.

"God has promised to save us," Isaiah explained. "Things will get better soon, and the whole world will see God's grace."

The people liked the sound of that. "Tell us more," they shouted.

"God will bring together a new community," Isaiah explained. "God will bring the people together in peace, and everyone will be welcome."

I wonder, "How will God bring people together?"

"When will it happen?" they asked.

"It begins with God," replied Isaiah. "But we can help God make it happen. When we love God and welcome others, we will start to see God's new world. When we treat people fairly, we will begin to see God's new world. When we welcome the prayers of all God's people, we join in God's work."

I wonder, "How can I help do God's work?"

God's message helped the people during a hard time. They knew that God was with them. They looked forward to a new world of grace. The people felt hope and joy growing in their hearts. They hadn't felt like that in ages. It felt wonderful, and they gave thanks for God's grace.



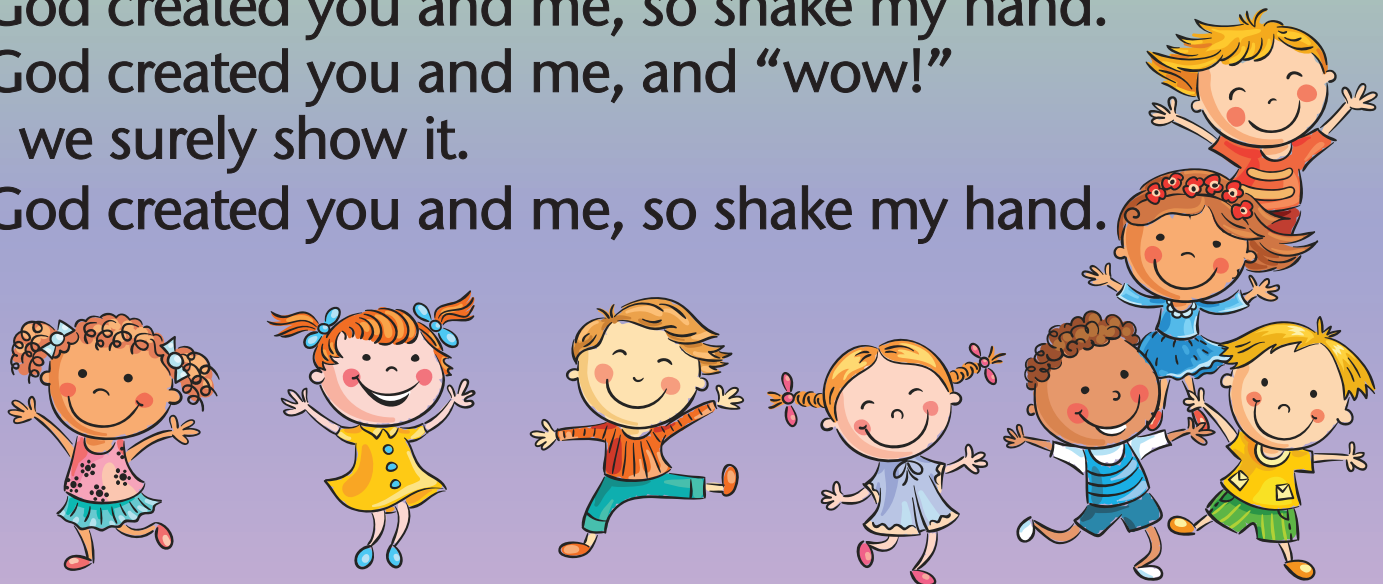
God created the earth, so clap your hands.
God created the earth, so clap your hands.
God created the earth, and the earth surely shows it.
God created the earth, so clap your hands.

God created the sea, so stomp your feet.
God created the sea, so stomp your feet.
God created the sea, and the sea surely shows it.
God created the sea, so stomp your feet.
God created the sun, so shout "hurray!"
God created the sun, so shout "hurray!"
God created the sun, and the light surely shows it.
God created the sun, so shout "hurray!"

God created the animals, hippity hop.
God created the animals, hippity hop.
God created the animals, the animals surely show it.
God created the animals, hippity hop.

God created you and me, so shake my hand.
God created you and me, so shake my hand.
God created you and me, and "wow!"
we surely show it.

God created you and me, so shake my hand.




I'm on my way to the promised land, . . .
I'm on my way to the promised land;
God will be with me.

I'm on my way to the beautiful land, . . .
I'm on my way to the beautiful land
God has given me.

I'm on my way to the promised land, . . .
I'm on my way to the promised land.
Won't you come with me?





Bim bam bim bim bim bam
Bim bim bim bim bim bam.
Bim bam bim bim bim bam
Bim bim bim bim bim bam.

Shabbat shalom!

Shabbat shalom!

Shabbat, shabbat, shabbat,
Shabbat, shalom!

Shabbat, shabbat, shabbat, shabbat, shabbat.
Shabbat, shabbat, shabbat, shabbat, shabbat.

Shabbat shalom!

Shabbat shalom!

Shabbat, shabbat, shabbat,
Shabbat, shalom!

God is so good;
(repeat two times)
God's so good to me.

God cares for me;
(repeat two times)
God's so good to me.



Make a joyful noise,
make a joyful noise,
make a joyful noise,
for the Lord our God.



Sing a song of love,
sing a song of love,
sing a song of love,
for the Lord our God.



Tell it to the world,
tell it to the world,
tell it to the world,
for the Lord our God.




Make a joyful noise,
sing a song of love,
tell it to the world,
for the Lord our God.



God hears our prayers,
God hears our prayers,
God hears our prayers,
God loves us so much.





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! . . .

We are growing every day,
we are growing every day,
we are growing every day,
closer, God, to you.

We are learning how to pray,
we are learning how to pray,
we are learning how to pray,
closer, God, to you.

We are learning how to love,
we are learning how to love,
we are learning how to love,
closer, God, to you.



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, . . .

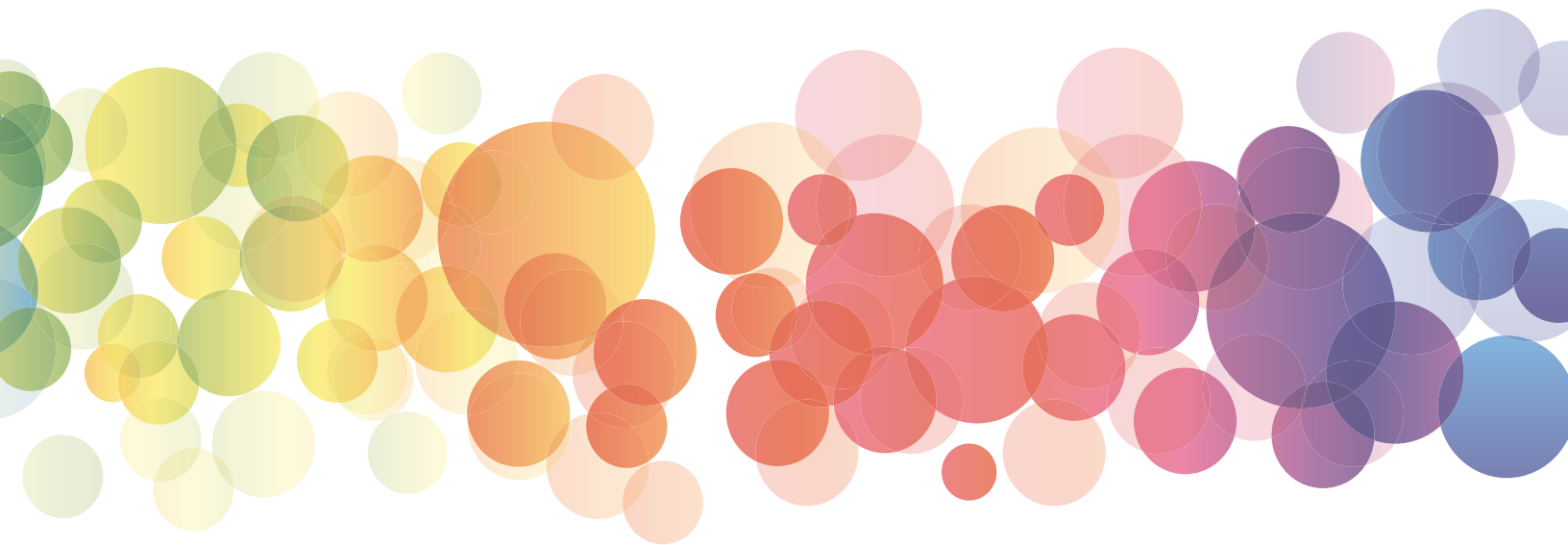
Just like Jesus healing others, . . .

Just like Jesus feeding others, . . .

Just like Jesus teaching others, . . .

Just like Jesus loving others, . . .





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