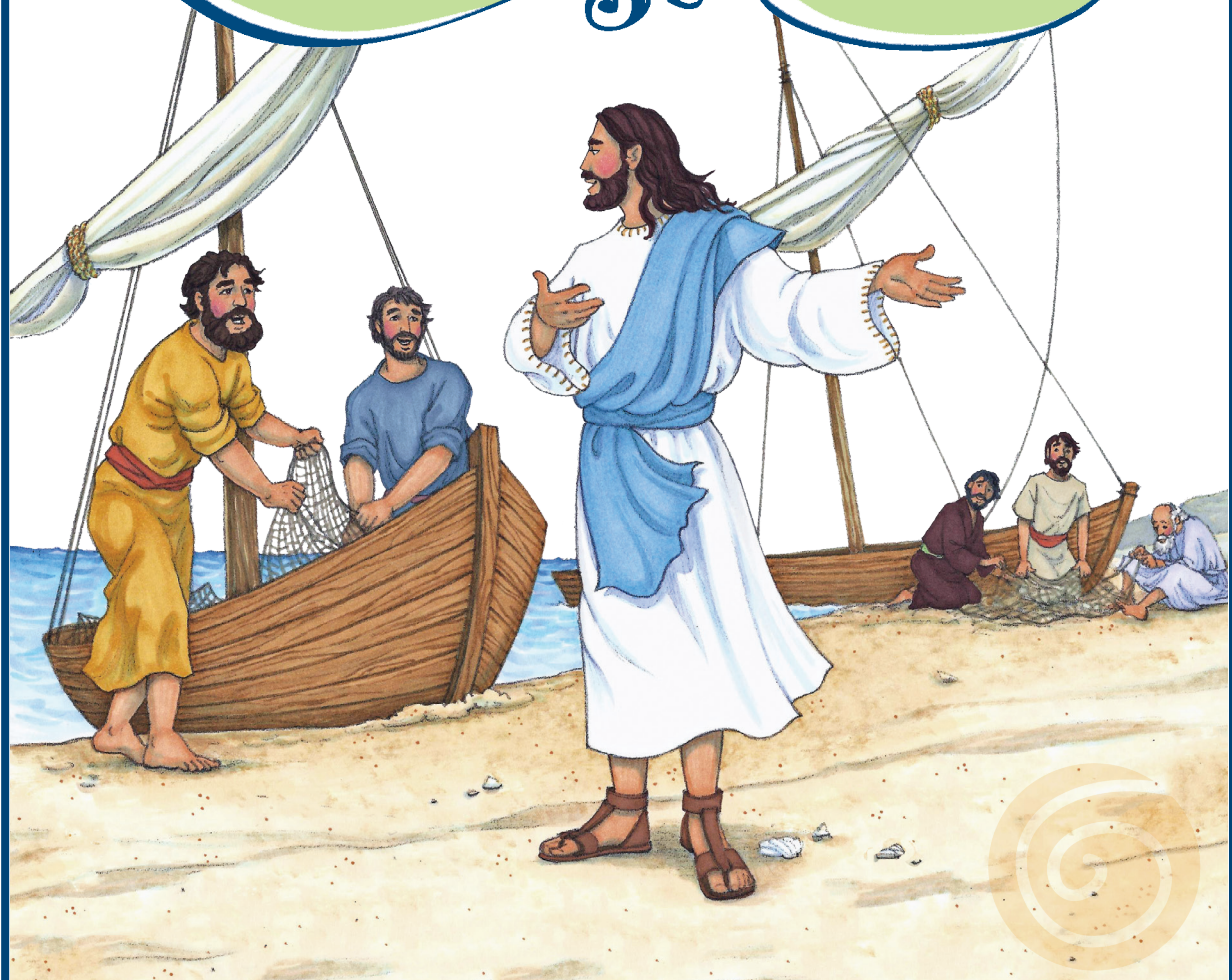


FamilyTime



A Collection of 98
Bible Stories and Devotions



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[Jesus] is before all things, and in Him all things
hold together. Colossians 1:17



Jesus Calms the Storm

Matthew 8:23–27

Jesus was tired. He had healed many people earlier that day. Now He needed to rest. Jesus said to His disciples, “Let’s go to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and began to sail. Jesus fell asleep. A sudden strong storm did not wake Him. Waves crashed over the boat. The disciples were afraid that the boat would tip over and they would die. Jesus just kept on sleeping.

“How can He sleep in this storm?” asked the disciples. They cried, “Wake up, Jesus! We are going to die!” Jesus got up. He looked at the storm

and said, “Quiet! Be still!” The wind stopped blowing. The waves stopped crashing. Then Jesus asked, “Why are you afraid? Don’t you trust God?”

The disciples were afraid again. They asked, “Who is this that even the wind and the waves obey Him?” The answer is this: Jesus is God. The Lord God has all of nature under His control. God made the world, and God continues to take care of us. What a great and awesome God He is!

Find the letters of the word “live” in the word “believe.” Why is it important to live, as well as to believe, God’s Word?

Never Beyond God's Care / Romans 8:38

A fisherman once lived in a house by the sea. Each day, he sailed his small boat out to sea to catch fish to sell. One day, the fisherman stayed out too late, and a sudden storm darkened the sky. Before he knew it, he couldn't see the shore. The frightened fisherman didn't know which direction to sail. What if he went the wrong way and sailed farther out to sea? He prayed hard that God would guide him home.

After a while, the fisherman saw a light flickering in the distance. Yes! It seemed to be getting brighter. He set off in the direction of the glowing light and soon reached the shore. How thankful he was!

But then the fisherman discovered a horrible thing. The light that had guided him back to shore was a fire that burned down his house. The fire that

saved his life destroyed his home and all his possessions.

Sometimes, it seems that things can't get any worse. Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, or tornados may destroy everything we have. Sickness, divorce, money problems, or abuse can ruin lives. Tragedies and suffering are a result of sin in the world. As long as we live in this sinful world, there will be hard times, suffering, and death. Still, God never loosens His control over all things. We can rely on His unchanging, unending love for us, no matter what happens.

In times of trouble, we can count on God to be the one treasure we will never lose. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. We can be sure of that because He loved us enough to send His Son to rescue us from sin.

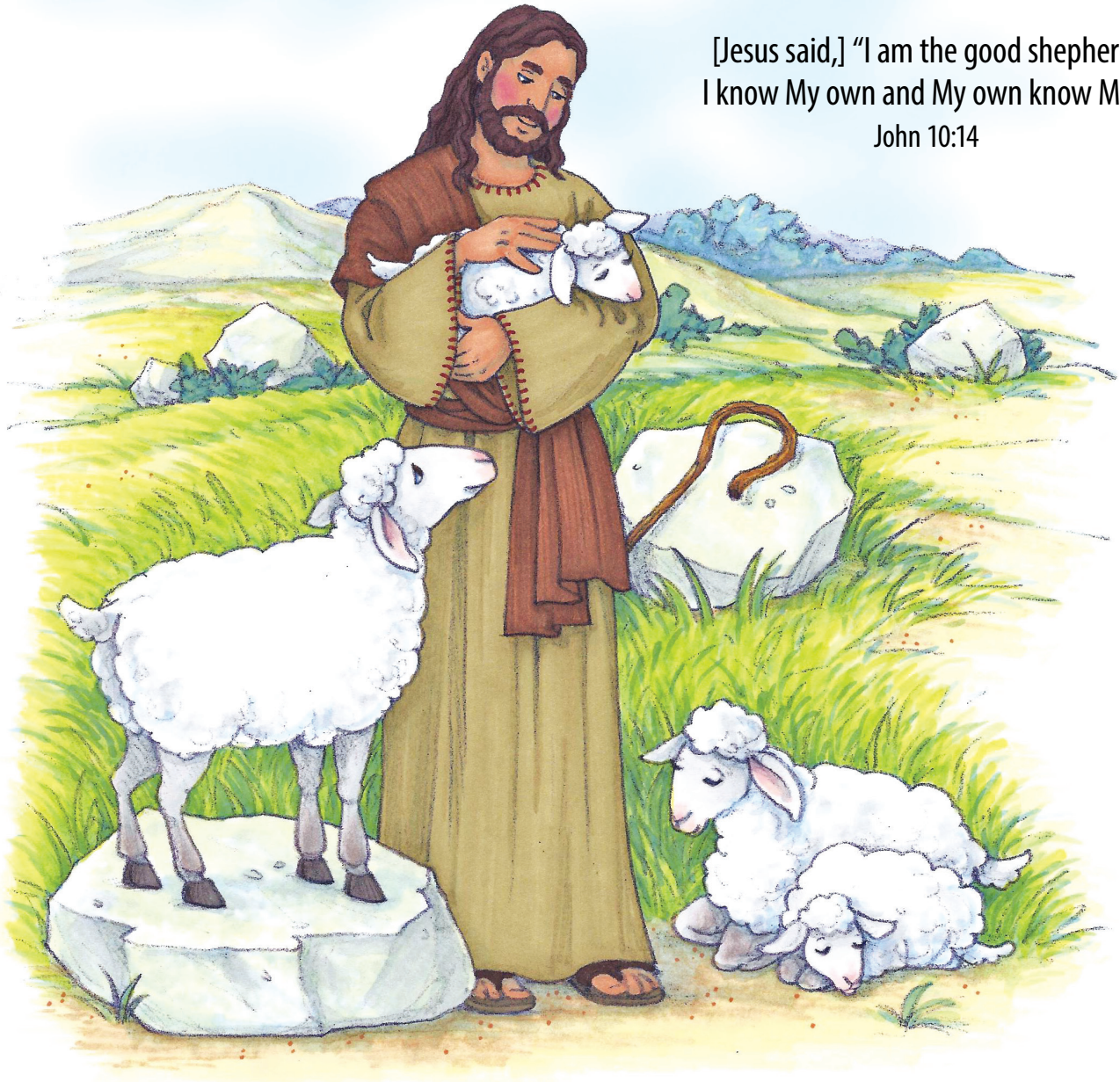
Jesus lost a lot too. He gave up His place in heaven to live on earth. He felt sadness and weariness, and He was treated unfairly. He even lost His life when He died a horrible death on the cross. To people watching that, it must have seemed there was no hope.

But through His death and resurrection, Jesus proved that He has power over sin and death! We now have a new life in Christ. We can trust His promise always to be with us and to give us what we need, even when times get tough. We can always look to Him for a new beginning.

Talk about it: Have you ever felt as though things in your life could not get worse? How did Jesus help you through it?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to remember that even though bad things happen in our sinful world, we are never outside of Jesus' love and care for us. We pray in His name. Amen.

[Jesus said,] "I am the good shepherd.
I know My own and My own know Me."
John 10:14



Jesus Is the Good Shepherd | John 10:1–21

Jesus sometimes used word pictures to teach people important truths. For example, when Jesus was talking about the Church, He used the word picture of sheep and their shepherd. Jesus said that He is like a good shepherd, because a good shepherd would give his life to save the sheep, just as Jesus would give His very life to save each of us. Jesus said that He is the only one who can keep people safe. He is the only one who can lead people to heaven. There is no other way. People who believe in Jesus follow Him.

Just as a sheepfold has many different kinds of sheep, including young and old, tall and short, cautious and adventuresome, the Church has many different types of people. But Jesus, our Savior, knows each of us; He calls us by name. And, as members of His Church on earth, we follow Him. Since we follow the Good Shepherd, Jesus, He would have us love and care for others in the flock in the same ways that He loves and cares for each of us.

All Part of the Picture / Romans 12:4–5

All right, class,” Mrs. Sanchez said, “Time for art!”

Art was Roxanne’s favorite subject. She quickly cleared her desk. Mrs. Sanchez gave a blank sheet of paper and a small box of crayons to each student. “Today, I want you to draw a landscape using the crayons I gave you. Let’s get started.”

This’ll be easy, Roxanne thought. But when she opened the box of crayons, she saw that each one of them was exactly the same shade of blue. How could she draw a landscape with one color? Looking around, Roxanne noticed that all of her classmates were looking at their boxes of crayons in confusion.

Roxanne raised her hand. “Mrs. Sanchez, all I have is blue. I could color in the sky, but that’s about it.”

“Hmm.” Mrs. Sanchez placed one finger on her chin and looked up at the ceiling in thought. Then she said, “You know, you may have to find the color you need from someone else. I think the only way you’ll be able to finish your picture is by working together.”

Have you ever been faced with a problem that you tried to take care of on your own, but you just couldn’t? God has given each one of us special talents and strengths. What’s easy for you might be quite difficult for me, and vice versa. God has surrounded us with friends and family who help us when we need it. In the Church, He has given us brothers and sisters in Christ. And I’m not just talking about your home congregation.

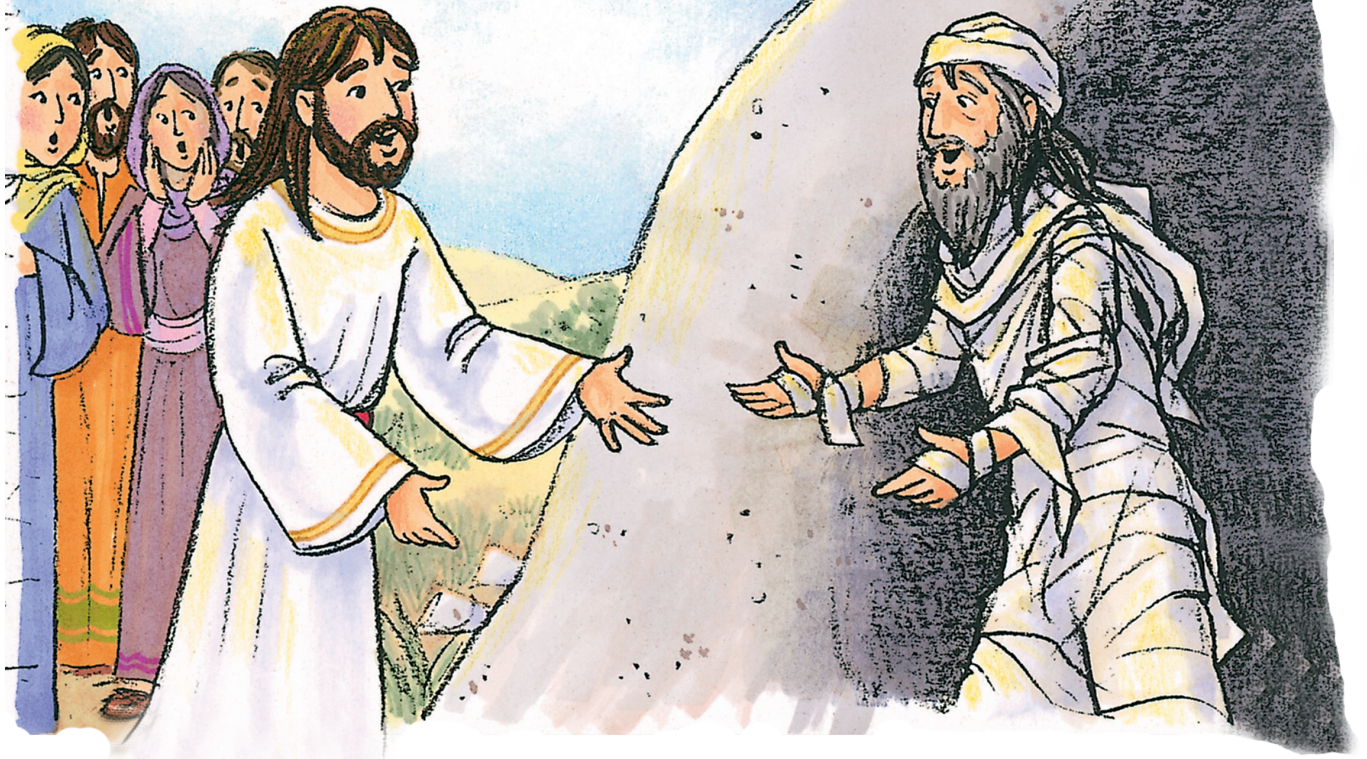
The Holy Christian Church is made up of every person who believes in Jesus as his or her Savior. All of us are unique—we have differing strengths and weaknesses, different cultural backgrounds, and unique talents. But all believers have one thing in common: Jesus Christ.

As believers, we are part of the Holy Christian Church, which means that we all are saved by Jesus. Like a good shepherd who gave His life for His sheep, Jesus died and rose again so that those who have faith in Him can have eternal life. What a beautiful picture!

Talk about it: Think about a few ways that you can serve Jesus as a member of His Church. How can you help add more members?

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for filling the world with other believers. Help us to support one another as we live together as Your people. Help us to grow Your Church by sending Your Holy Spirit so that more people can be brought to faith. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

[Jesus said,] "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. John 11:25–26



Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead | John 11:1–44

Jesus had many friends. Some of His best friends were named Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They lived in Bethany. Jesus often visited with them in their home. Now, Jesus was in another city. He heard that Lazarus was sick. Jesus did not hurry to see His old friend. He waited two days. Jesus knew that Lazarus had died. He planned to help Lazarus anyway.

At last, Jesus went to Bethany. Martha came to meet Jesus. They stood on the road and talked. Martha said, "If You had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus said, "Lazarus will live again!" Soon, Mary came out to Jesus, along with some friends. She was very sad because Lazarus had died. Jesus was sad too. He cried.

Jesus and the people went to the place where Lazarus was buried. It was called a tomb. The tomb was a cave. A stone covered the entrance. Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. The people were surprised when Jesus said, "Open the tomb." Some men took away the stone. Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus walked out of the tomb. Jesus had made Lazarus alive again!

Someday, after we die, Jesus will bring us back to life, just as He restored life to Lazarus. But after He brings us back to life, Jesus will take us to live with Him in the happiness and joy of heaven. God promises in His Word that nothing can ever separate us from God and His love for us. Nothing . . . not even death.

Afraid of Falling Away / Psalm 23

Right now, you probably feel “You love Jesus so much your heart could burst,” Mr. Keiser told his Sunday School class. “As you grow older, it may get harder to stay close to Jesus. When you go to high school, some of your friends might make fun of you for being a Christian.”

Candice started to worry. She did love Jesus a lot. But what if something happened when she got older? What if she forgot about Jesus? What if she stopped believing in Him? Then she wouldn’t be able to go to heaven.

The next Sunday, Candice sat in church with her family and looked at the service folder. There was a picture of some lambs on the front. Candice looked at the picture while Pastor Young read the day’s reading from the Bible. He read, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and

they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:27–28).

When Candice was very young, she liked to sing “I am Jesus’ Little Lamb.” She pretended Jesus was holding her in His arms. Suddenly, Candice realized what Jesus’ words in the Bible reading meant. In Baptism, Candice became a child of God. She was Jesus’ little lamb, and He was holding her. She didn’t have to be afraid about forgetting Jesus. He would never let her go. That is how Candice can be sure she will go to heaven.

Have you ever worried about falling away from the Savior? You don’t need to worry. Jesus loves you so much that He gave His own life for you. He promises to take you to heaven. He’s holding you right now, and He will never let you go. Not even death will separate us from God and His love for us in Jesus.

Psalm 23 is sometimes called the “Good Shepherd Psalm.” The words of this psalm remind us “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (v. 4).

When we have worry or doubt, we can remember Jesus and His love for us. He loved us so much He died to save us. And He has defeated death for us. He’ll hold us close to Himself, for we are His lambs. He’ll stay by our side, even through death itself. God has promised us in His Word that nothing can separate us from His love.

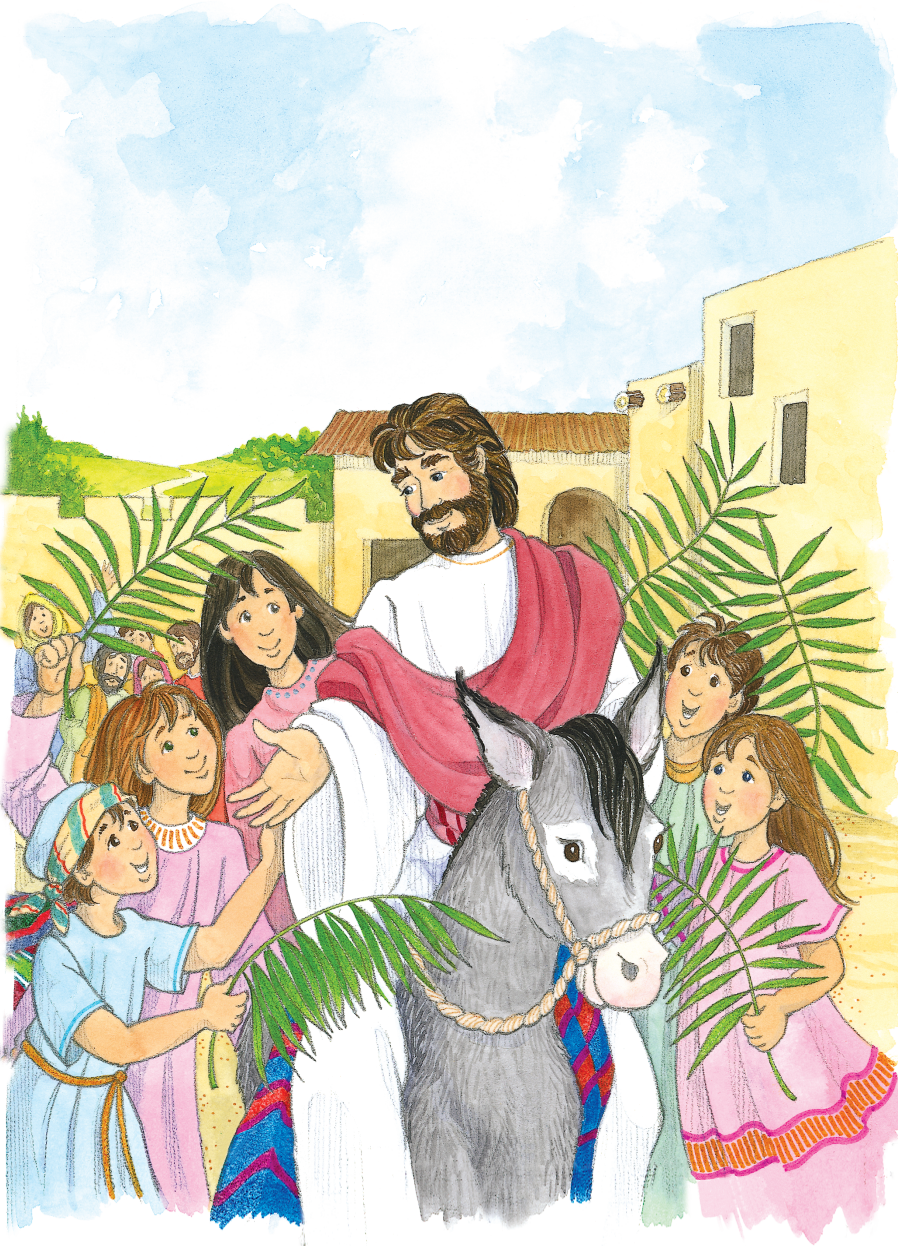
Talk about it: What worries or concerns do you have when you think about your faith in Jesus today? How can God’s promises help you face and overcome these worries or concerns? Read Romans 8:38–39.

Prayer: Thank You, Jesus, for promising to keep us close to You always. Help us to live each day as Your people, trusting that we belong to You! Amen.

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens,
and His kingdom rules over all. Psalm 103:19

Jesus Enters Jerusalem— Hosanna to the King!

Matthew 21:1–11



Just a few days before Jesus was to suffer and die for the sins of the world, something very special happened. Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey. The people welcomed Jesus into their city. Honoring Jesus as their king, many people placed their cloaks before Him on the road. Still others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. As Jesus passed by, the people shouted words of praise: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” The children shouted just like the grown-ups, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

Honoring Jesus in this way as a king fulfilled what a prophet had described many years before. He had written, “Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.” Jesus is indeed our king. As His followers, we are members of His kingdom.

The Kingdom of God / John 3:5

It's not fair," Greta wailed. "The boys keep calling themselves 'Kings of the Elm.' If I want to play in their tree house, I have to be ten years old, five feet tall, and a boy!"

"Why don't you help me wash the car? You can be Queen of the Chrome," suggested Mom. "Or you can help Dad cook dinner and be Princess of the Pots."

"But I want to be part of a *special* kingdom!" Greta huffed before sitting on the steps to the front porch.

"Oh, you are, Greta," Mom said, crouching beside her daughter. "Do you remember the part of the Lord's Prayer that talks about God's kingdom?"

"Thy kingdom come. That's what I want!" shouted Greta.

"But you are already part of the kingdom of God," said Mom, "You entered that king-

dom when you were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The pastor put water on you, and you were forever transformed."

"Transformed? I don't feel any different."

"In Baptism, the Holy Spirit worked faith in your heart. You became part of God's kingdom of grace. Baptism changes you so much that Jesus calls it being born again. You didn't look any different when you got baptized, but you became an heir of heaven."

"Are the boys part of this kingdom?" asked Greta.

"Yes, the boys were baptized too." Mom patted Greta on the back. "We love them too much to leave them out. Someday, Jesus will come again and take all of His children to live with Him in the kingdom of heaven."

"Like a prince coming to save his subjects?" asked Greta.

"Something like that. One thing's for sure—it will be the best day ever; the end of all your disappointments and the beginning of pure joy."

When we pray the Lord's Prayer and say, "Thy kingdom come," we ask that God give us the Holy Spirit. We also ask that God use us to bring others to His kingdom of grace so that more people will be prepared when Christ comes again in all His glory.

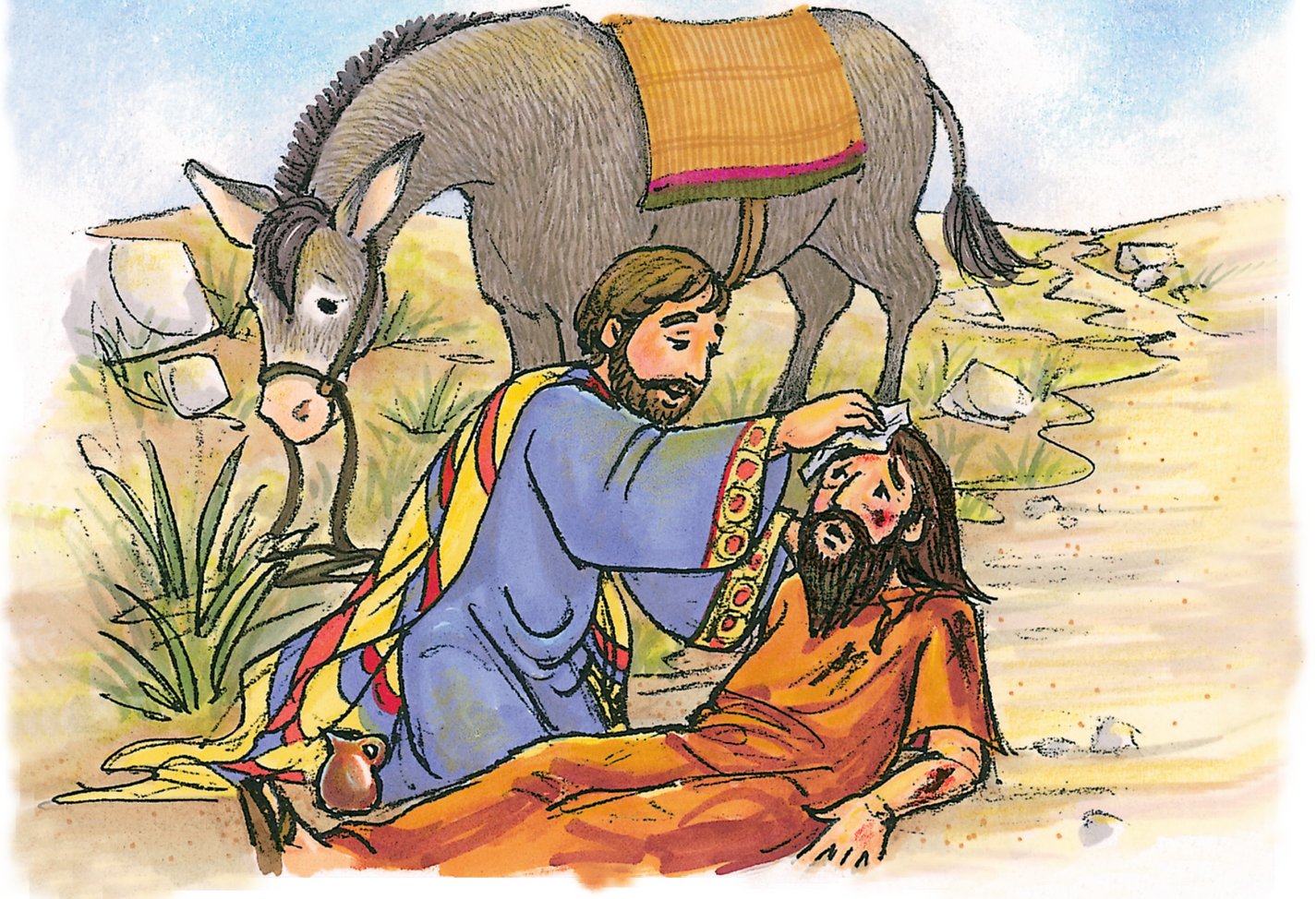
God's kingdom is truly a powerful, special place because it is filled with God's love!

Talk about it: God is an eternal, generous King. What gifts has He poured out on you?

Prayer: Dear Lord, may Your Word be preached everywhere so the kingdom of God may come to those who are still outside of it. Help us to live our lives for You.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:37–39



Jesus Teaches on the Ten Commandments

Matthew 22:34–39; Luke 10:25–37

Many years after God gave the Ten Commandments to His people, God sent His Son to earn forgiveness for every commandment we break because of our sinfulness and also to keep every commandment in our place.

Once, a man asked Jesus which of the commandments was the greatest. Jesus gave an excellent answer to the man's question. He summarized both parts of the Ten Commandments. He said the greatest commandment is to love

God with all you are and have and to love your neighbor as yourself. The commandments are all about love.

Another time, Jesus told a story about love. In the story, a man was attacked by robbers. The robbers left the man wounded and almost dead. After two travelers passed by without stopping to help, a man who was from an enemy country saw the wounded man and helped him. He showed the man the kind of love Jesus showed to each of us when He lived and died in our place to save us.

Notice the Signs / Romans 13:8

Why are there so many different kinds of signs along this highway?" wondered Michael as he and his dad passed a flashing roadside message.

"Because drivers need a lot of information to drive carefully and reach their destinations safely," answered Dad. "The signs guide traffic and alert drivers of changes in the road—like that orange sign."

After a minute, Dad said, "I have an idea. To pass the time, let's look for all the different kinds of road signs. We can see how they help us drive safely and show love to other drivers."

"Show love to other drivers?" Michael giggled at the thought.

Dad wasn't surprised that Michael laughed. He explained

that the kind of love that God wants us to have for one another is a helpful love; it doesn't harm. And a way to show that kind of love to others is to follow the road signs. So Michael and his dad noticed the signs—speed limits, mergers, no passing zones, and exits.

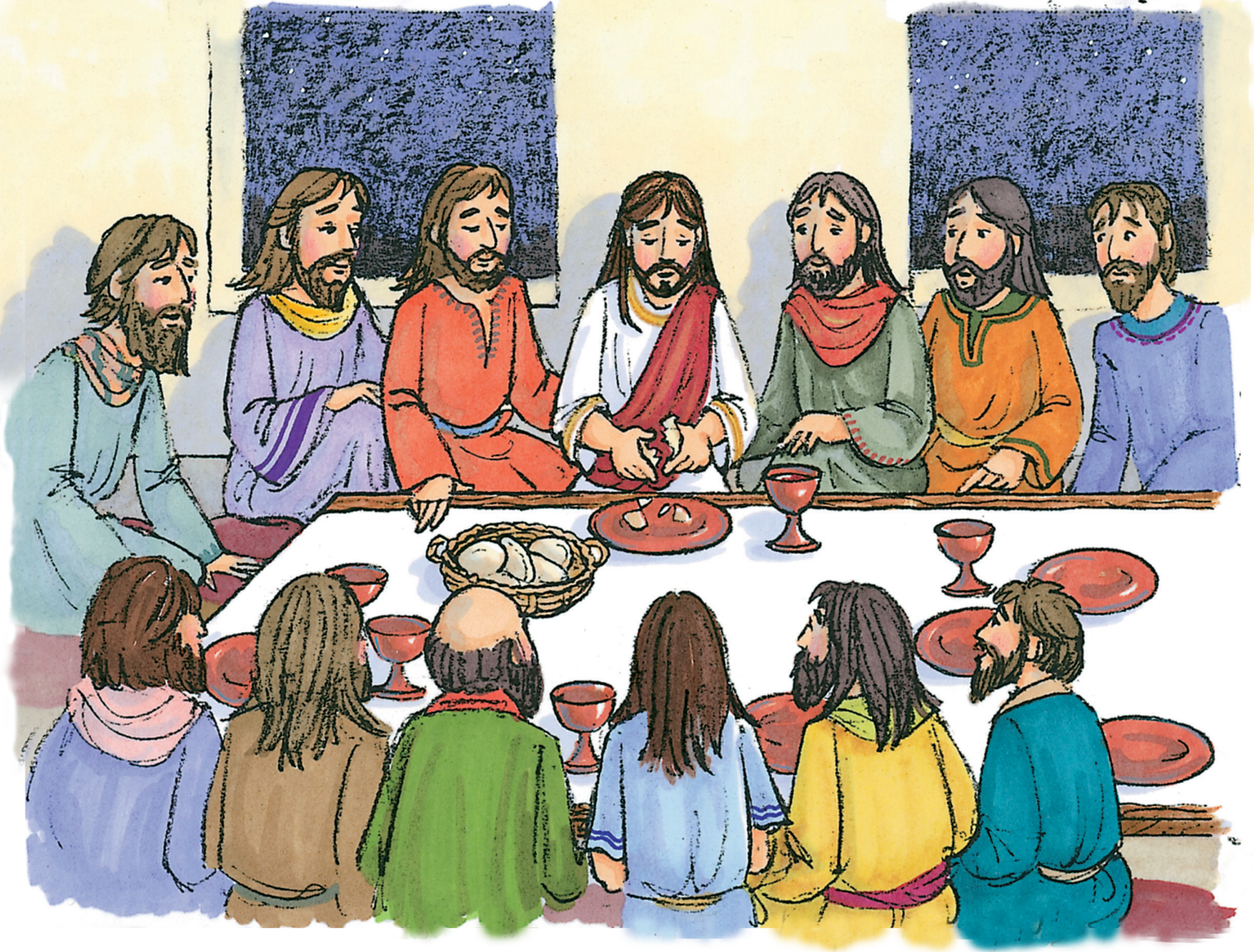
God's road signs of love are His Ten Commandments. The first three Commandments tell us how to love God. Matthew 22:37 sums up those first three Commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." The rest of the Commandments tell us how to love others. Matthew 22:39 says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Did you notice that the word *love* is

present in both of these verses? All of the Commandments can be summed up with that one word: *love*. Romans 13:10 says, "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." God requires us humans to keep all His laws, but our sinful nature and sinful acts make that impossible for us. What was impossible for us was possible for Jesus. He fulfilled the Law. In doing so, He gave us a new sign—the cross—to remind us of His perfect victory over sin, death, and the devil. Jesus' resurrection is God's sign that one day we will be with Him in heaven.

Talk about it: Talk about the ways you can show love to either God or another person.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank You for being God's sign of love, my Savior. Help me to follow You. Amen.

[Jesus said,] “This is My body. . . . This is My blood.” Matthew 26:26, 28



The First Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:17–29

On the night before Jesus died on the cross to save us, He gathered His disciples around Him for a special meal. This special meal was the Passover meal. It celebrated the time when the people of Israel were living as slaves in Egypt. God had His people put blood from a lamb on the entrances to their homes. The angel passed over the homes on which the blood of the lamb had been spread and saved all those inside.

Jesus is the new Passover lamb. And as Jesus ate with His disciples that night, He began a new type of Passover meal. We call it the Lord's Supper. When Jesus gave the disciples bread that He had broken, He said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” When He gave them wine to drink, He said, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood.” Jesus told the disciples to celebrate His special meal and remember His great love for them—a love that moved Jesus to suffer and die on the cross; a love that brings forgiveness of sins.

Participation Is Celebration / 1 Corinthians 10:15–17

Ms. Krause's students came from different churches, but they were all curious about the Lord's Supper.

A few weeks earlier, the question in "Q-Time" was "What is Communion like?" Ms. Krause decided to put off giving the answer until the students had time to interview three people and find out what Holy Communion was like for them.

That was a few weeks ago. She said they would discuss the question sometime soon after there had been a worship service with Communion. Today was the day.

Noel said he could always smell the wine on his dad's breath after he came back to

the pew. When Andrew asked his grandma what it means, she said Communion made her certain that all her sins were forgiven, and it filled her with joy, hope, love, and peace. Alia asked Pastor Krume about it, and he said he always felt humble giving and receiving Jesus' own body and blood, participating with Jesus and others in such a sacred meal.

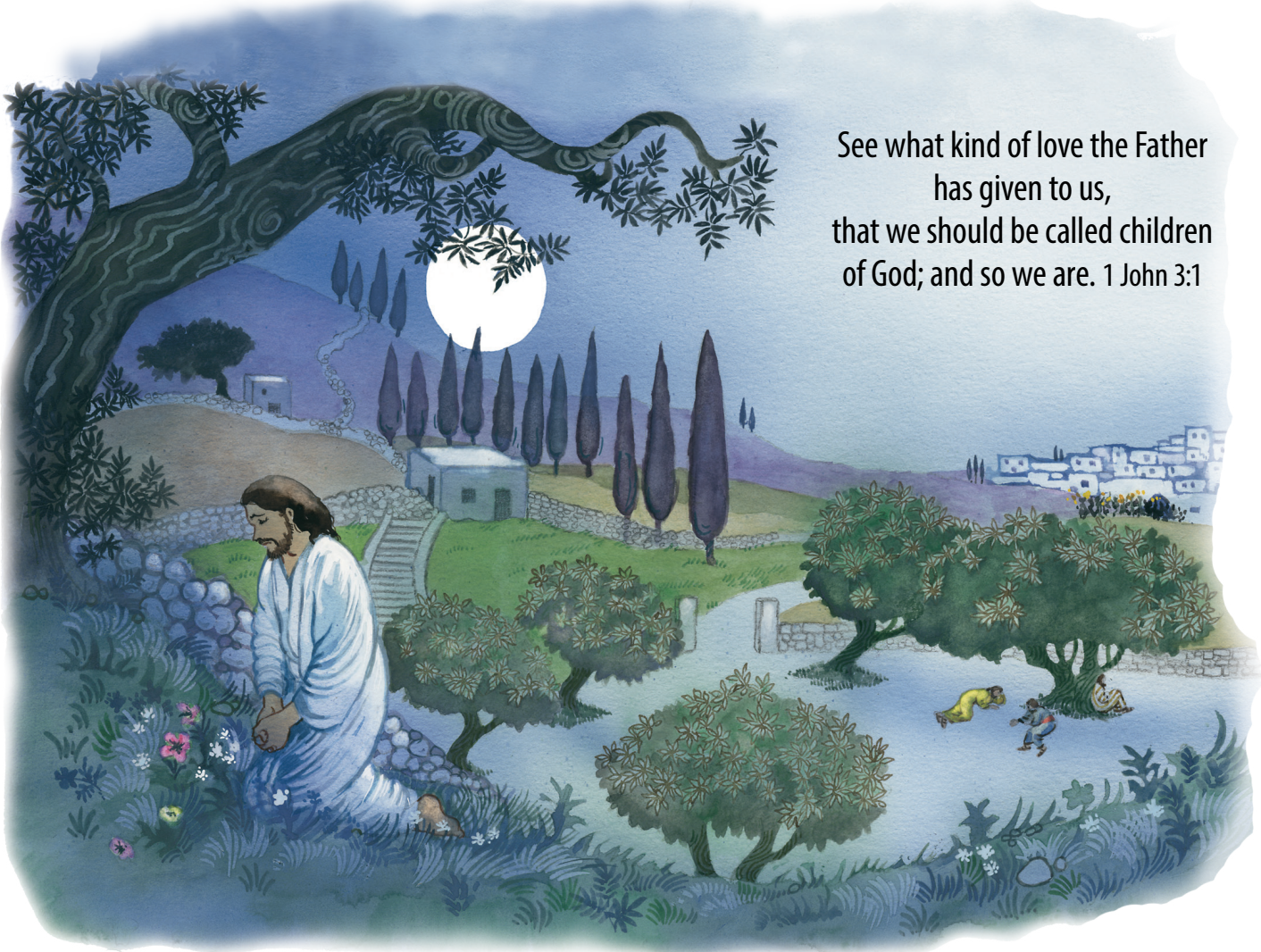
Ms. Krause said it is sort of like filling up your car with gas. When we become weak, Jesus' own body and blood make us strong. She also said it is like the gas used in furnaces and cooking stoves. She explained that natural gas doesn't have any odor, but the gas companies

make it smell like rotten eggs so people know it is there. In the Lord's Supper, we can't see Jesus' body and blood, but in the bread and wine, we know it is there—because Jesus said so.

Forgiveness is ours all the time, but sometimes we might forget it or doubt it. Communion lets us smell, taste, and even touch our forgiveness in Jesus' own body and blood as we receive it in, with, and under the bread and the wine, so we know it is there. God prepares us to receive it in faith; we rejoice in the gift. It is a mystery, a miracle, and a marvelous gift!

Talk about it: Interview three people to find out what Holy Communion means to them.

*Prayer: Dear God, thank You for assuring us of our forgiveness
in Holy Communion. We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.*



See what kind of love the Father
has given to us,
that we should be called children
of God; and so we are. 1 John 3:1

Jesus Prays in the Garden | Matthew 26:30–46

After Jesus had shared the Last Supper with His disciples, He went with them into a garden called Gethsemane. He took Peter, James, and John aside with Him. Jesus began to be very troubled. He said, “My soul is overwhelmed with sadness to the point of death; stay here and keep watch with Me.” He went away from them about as far as you can throw a stone and fell to the ground.

Jesus knew that suffering and pain would soon be upon Him, and He was greatly troubled because of it. Jesus talked to His Father in heaven. He prayed, “Father, all things are possible with You. Could You take away the suffering I will have to go through? Yet, let Your will be done.”

Returning to Peter, James, and John, He found them asleep. Jesus said, “Watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

Jesus went away a second time to pray. When He returned, He found them asleep again. A third time, Jesus went away to pray, saying the same words. Then an angel came from heaven to strengthen Jesus.

Jesus had received the answer to His prayer. His heavenly Father knew what would be best. Jesus knew the suffering, pain, and torment He would have to endure to save us. Willingly, Jesus walked into the dark night. He woke up the sleeping disciples. They arose to meet the soldiers who had come to arrest Jesus.

My Father Knows the Way / 1 Peter 5:7

Father was familiar with the city, but Ronald and his mother were not. Father, after all, had grown up in this city. Still, Ronald and his mother wondered about the way Father was taking them to get from the airport to Grandma's house. They seemed to be going in circles. Father drove them in their rental car down several dark alleys and through a very smoky industrial area.

"I think we just passed that same tree five minutes ago," whispered Ronald. "Dad, are you sure you know where you are going?"

Ronald's mother looked doubtfully out the window as they drove through an empty parking lot. Finally, she asked, "Wouldn't the highway have been a better option?"

Father replied, "This is the best way. Trust me."

Sure enough, the car pulled up to Grandma's house much

earlier than they expected.

Father really did know the best way.

Do you ever wonder if God really knows the best way to lead you in life? Sometimes, we spend time worrying about silly things like not having the right clothes to fit in at school or not getting the new bicycle we wanted for our birthday.

We sometimes worry about more serious things too, like whether our family will have enough money to pay the bills or repair damage to our home after a bad storm.

Just as Ronald and his mother doubted Father, we often doubt whether our heavenly Father will take care of our needs. We want control; we feel as though only we know what's best for our lives.

But we don't know. God alone knows what is best.

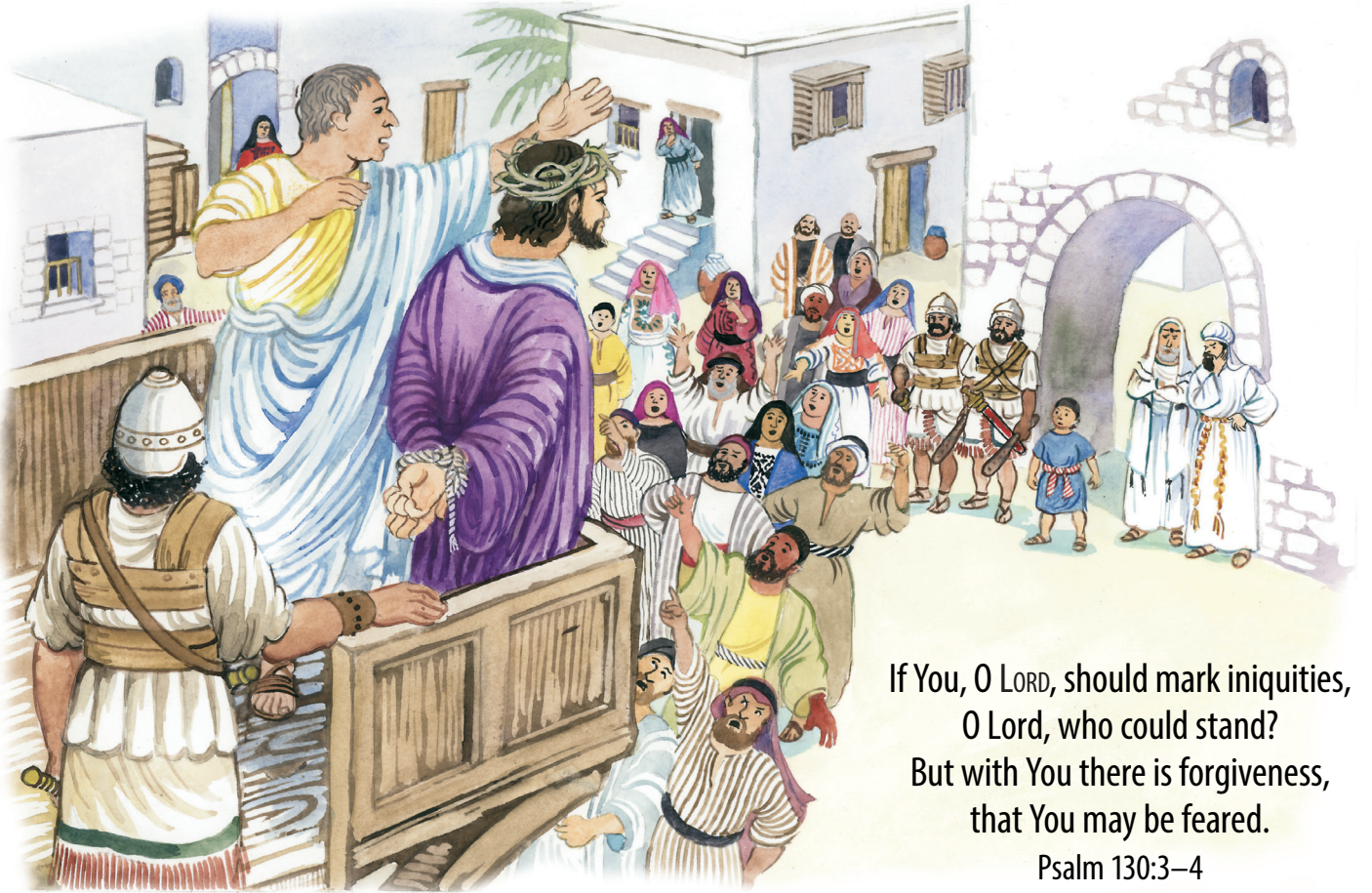
God created us, takes care of us, and knows the best way to take each of us through our lives. When life takes unexpected turns, we can rest assured that God has a plan.

He wants us to be saved so that we can spend eternity with Him. That's why He sent Jesus to be our Savior. Like a loving father, God promises to be with us through joyful times and scary times, sad and lonely times too.

We can count on our Father in heaven to hear our every prayer. He has promised to do so for Jesus' sake. Even though God doesn't always give us what we *want*, we can count on God to give us all we *need*. He always knows the best way.

Talk about it: What blessings has God given your family? When has God worked things out for good in your life?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be my Savior. Help me to trust in the way You care for all my needs. Help me to talk to You regularly and often in prayer. Help me to trust in You and in Your love and care for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with You there is forgiveness,
that You may be feared.

Psalms 130:3–4

Jesus Earns Our Forgiveness

Matthew 27:27–56; Luke
23:32–49; John 19:1–30

After Jesus was arrested, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, put a crown of thorns and a purple robe on Jesus to mock Him and make Him suffer. Then Pilate gave in to the people and sentenced Jesus to death. Soldiers led Jesus to Golgotha (Calvary). Here, at nine o'clock in the morning, they nailed Jesus to a cross.

Jesus' body suffered horrible pain. In addition, people taunted and humiliated Jesus. Soldiers mocked Him and gambled for His clothes. Offering Him sour wine, they said, "If You are the King of the Jews, save yourself." Above His head was posted a sign intended to ridicule Him.

Jesus' response? He prayed to His Father in heaven. Jesus prayed not for Himself but, rather, for His enemies. "Father, forgive them," Jesus said, "for they know not what they do."

Two thieves were crucified with Jesus. One asked Jesus to remember him in heaven. Jesus said, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Then, looking down from the cross, Jesus saw His mother and the disciple John. Jesus said, "Dear woman, here is your son" and "Son, here is your mother." From that moment on, John took care of Mary as if she were his mother.

From noon until three o'clock, there was darkness over the land. At about three o'clock, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

He said, "I thirst," and so they gave Him vinegar to drink. Then Jesus said, "It is finished. Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit," and died. A Roman centurion said, "Surely He was the Son of God!"

Forgiven and Forgetting / Matthew 6:14–15

Corrie ten Boom lived in Holland during World War II. Corrie and her family watched as Nazis rounded up Jewish families—mothers, fathers, children, grandparents—and sent them off to die of starvation, disease, and brutality in concentration camps.

Despite dangers, Corrie ten Boom and her family protected and hid Jewish people. When the Nazis found out, the ten Boom family was arrested.

Corrie's father was killed by Nazi soldiers, while Corrie and her sister were sent to a death camp. Corrie's sister Betsie died, but Corrie survived and eventually returned home.

After the war, Corrie spoke to groups of people about the horrors of prison camp. She told how Jesus was with her in that horrible place. She also talked about God's forgiveness.

At the end of one of her talks, Corrie began shaking hands with listeners. Suddenly, she felt cold all over. A former guard at the death camp stood before her with a smile on his face. He extended his hand to shake hers. "I'm so glad to know that Jesus forgives me," he said.

The image of the cruelty at the death camp flashed in Corrie's mind. She didn't want to shake the man's hand. She prayed for God to help her forgive the former prison guard.

Corrie remembered that God's love and forgiveness is for *all* people. Through Jesus Christ, God forgives all our sins.

The former prison guard repented and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. God forgave him. Corrie remembered that she is also a sinner who is continually forgiven through Christ Jesus.

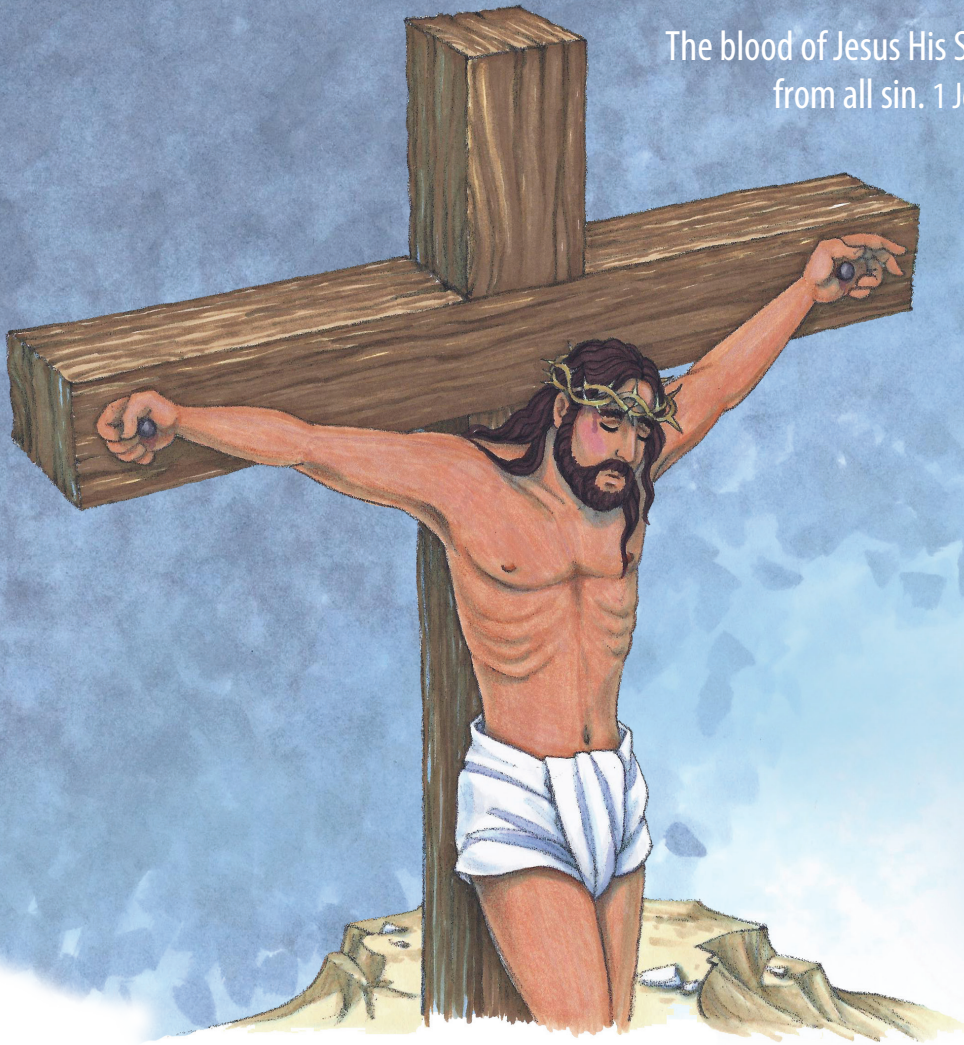
With God's help, Corrie shook the man's hand and forgave him. By forgiving the former prison guard, Corrie showed that she truly believed in God's forgiveness. Through Jesus' death for your sins, God forgives you too. That love and forgiveness of God gives you the power to forgive others.

In the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to help us forgive the sins of others in the same way that God forgives us. After all, the Bible tells us, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Talk about it: Is there someone whom you find hard to forgive? How can remembering that God forgives your sins help you forgive others?

Prayer: Dear God, I know that I need Your forgiveness. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for my sins and the sins of all people. Help me forgive others, just as You forgive me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us
from all sin. 1 John 1:7



Jesus Is Crucified to Save Us | Mark 15:6–39

Jesus had to die. People who hated Jesus said so. But God said so too. God loved His Son, Jesus. But He also loved us. Jesus died to take away our sins. Here is how it happened:

Jesus had done nothing wrong. Still, His enemies put Him on trial. Some people shouted, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” They wanted soldiers to nail Jesus to a cross. They wanted Jesus to hang from the cross until He died. Pilate, the Roman governor, said, “Take Jesus away and crucify Him.”

They brought Jesus to a hill called Calvary (or Golgotha). They nailed Jesus’ hands and feet to the cross. They lifted the cross and placed it into a hole in the ground. People passed by the cross.

Many of them made fun of Jesus. They didn’t believe He was the Savior.

It was early afternoon, but the sky grew dark! Jesus hurt all over. He spoke from the cross. Then He died. There was a terrible earthquake. Big rocks split. The thick curtain in the temple tore from top to bottom. One of the Roman soldiers guarding the cross said, “Jesus really was the Son of God!”

We remember the day when Jesus died. We call it “Good Friday.” We call it a “good” day even though it was so very sad because on Good Friday Jesus died for the sins of the world. He paid for our sins. Now we can be forgiven and live some day forever with God in heaven!

He Took Our Sins upon Himself / 2 Corinthians 5:21

Class, it's time for Bible study," announced the teacher, Mrs. Reitz. "Today, we will need a volunteer to be Jesus."

Of course, all the students wanted to be Jesus, so they all raised their hands. Mrs. Reitz chose the most eager volunteer.

"Okay, Jason, come up here in front of the class. The rest of you may go to your lockers to get your coats."

The children returned wearing their fluffy, warm coats. They were also wearing confused looks on their faces.

"Now," Mrs. Reitz explained, "let's imagine that these are *sin coats*. When God sees you,

He sees that you're wearing a sin coat. So each of you, bring yours up here to Jesus. He will take them from you and put them on."

The children enjoyed the fun as Jason donned coat after coat. But it wasn't long before he began to wish he hadn't volunteered. He could hardly stand up under the weight of all the coats! He was also getting quite warm, and beads of sweat broke out on his forehead.

The teacher continued, "All of our sin coats are now on Jesus. He took them also from everyone who had ever lived and ever would live. He did this out of love for us."

Mrs. Reitz quietly let Jason crawl out from under the pile of coats. Then she continued, "When Jesus died, He took away our sins. They are gone! Now when God looks at us, He sees that Jesus has removed our sin coats. So, children, what have you learned today?"

Jason sighed and said, "I learned not to be so quick to volunteer to be Jesus!"

Talk about it: How does it make you feel when someone helps you carry a heavy load? How does it make you feel that Jesus has removed your load of sins?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, Your great love is more than I can comprehend. Thank You for volunteering to take my sins and die for them in my place. Amen.

An hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear
His voice and come out. John 5:28–29



Jesus Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed! | Matthew 28:1–15

The friends of Jesus were sad. They were afraid too. Jesus was dead. They thought Jesus' enemies might kill them. Jesus was buried in a place called a tomb. It was like a cave. The door to the cave was covered with a big rock. Soldiers guarded the tomb. They didn't want anyone to take Jesus' body.

It was Sunday morning. There was an earthquake. An angel came down from heaven and rolled away the big rock. The soldiers were so afraid that they fell over. Two of Jesus' friends came to His tomb. Both of them were named Mary. The two Marys could see inside the tomb. They were afraid. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus. He isn't in the tomb. He came back to life, just as He said. You will see Him soon."

The two Marys were happy. They ran from the tomb. Suddenly, they stopped. They saw Jesus. He was alive! They ran to Him. Jesus said, "Go and tell My disciples that you saw Me. Tell them I am alive. I will meet them later."

We call this happy day "Easter." Easter is a day of celebration. On this day, we remember that Jesus once was dead but came back to life again. Christians down through the years have greeted one another in a special way on Easter Sunday. When people say, "He is risen!" others say back, "He is risen indeed!" Easter is a happy day because after we die, Jesus will bring us back from the dead, just as He brought Himself back from death to life.

What Death Is Like / 1 Thessalonians 4:16

When Gretchen was growing up, her parents hardly ever hired a babysitter. When her mom and dad visited friends in the evening, they brought Gretchen along with them. And the other parents brought their kids too. Gretchen and her friends would pile their families' coats in a mountain on the bed and then get down to business. While the adults talked, the children played and played . . . and then played some more.

One night, the kids got tired and lay across the coat-covered bed. Gretchen and her sister snuggled in and fell asleep.

When they woke up, they weren't even near the pile of coats. They were in their own beds. They were wearing pajamas. It seemed as though one moment they were one place, and the next they were home.

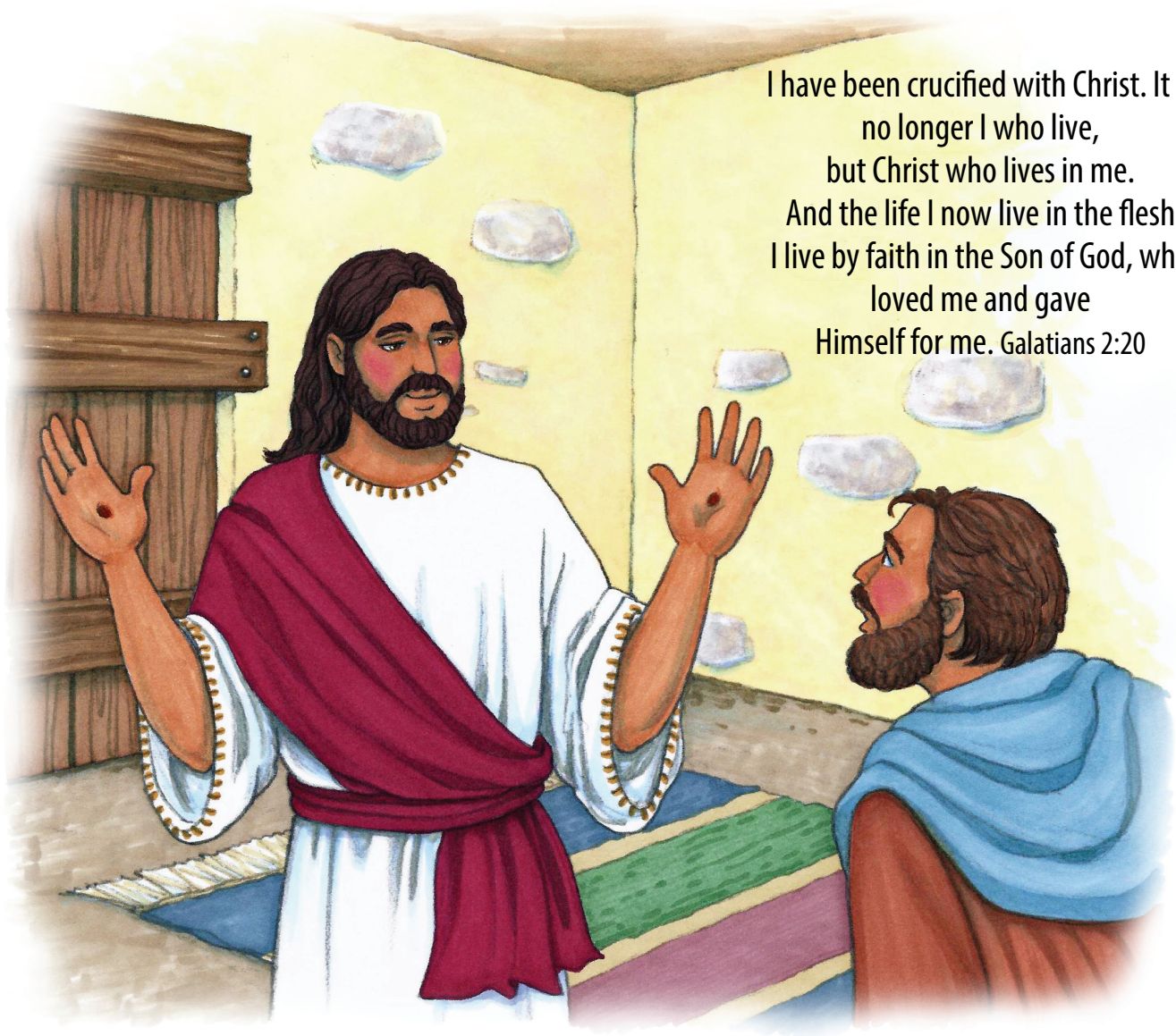
While Gretchen and her sister were asleep, their parents did all the work. They carried them from the bed to the car and from the car to their own beds. They switched their play clothes for sleepwear. They prayed over them instead of with them.

When we die, God does the same thing for us. That's what it means when we say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body."

One second, we will fall asleep on earth, and the next we will be home in heaven. The Bible also tells us that on the Last Day, Christ will come again and take us to live with Him in glory. Jesus does all the work. He died on the cross for our sins, He arose on Easter, and He ascended back to heaven to prepare a place for us. When our time on earth is over, we will fall asleep in Jesus. He will take His children home to be with Him forever.

Talk about it: How can we be sure that when we die we will wake up in heaven?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank You for saving me through Your death and resurrection so that I will go to heaven when I die. Give me guidance and power to live, knowing that I am always in Your loving arms. Amen.



I have been crucified with Christ. It is
no longer I who live,
but Christ who lives in me.
And the life I now live in the flesh
I live by faith in the Son of God, who
loved me and gave
Himself for me. Galatians 2:20

Jesus Teaches Thomas

Luke 24:36–48; John 20:24–29

It was the evening of the first Easter day. The disciples had locked themselves inside a house. They were afraid that the same people who killed Jesus might want to kill them. They also heard from friends who said that Jesus was alive. They were mixed up, and they didn't know what to do.

The disciples talked about all that had happened. Suddenly, Jesus was standing in the room with them! The disciples thought He was a ghost. They were afraid.

Jesus said, "Why are you afraid? Why don't you believe that I am alive?" Jesus told the disciples to touch Him. He showed them the nail holes in

His hands and feet. Then He asked for something to eat. Now they knew that Jesus wasn't a ghost. Ghosts don't have bodies. Ghosts can't eat! The disciples knew that Jesus was alive.

The disciple named Thomas wasn't with them that night. Later, when the other disciples told him they had seen Jesus, Thomas didn't believe them. He wanted to see for himself. So Jesus appeared again the next week. He told Thomas, "Put your finger here; see My hands. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas's heart changed. He said, "My Lord and my God!" Now He believed that Jesus was alive. Jesus blesses us today for believing this truth even though we have not seen Him.

Name above All Names / Philippians 2:9–11

Hey, Zip!” That’s what Andrew used to hear when he was growing up. He was a skinny kid. One day, Andrew’s brother told him that if he stood sideways and stuck out his tongue, someone would mistake him for a zipper. Unfortunately, some of Andrew’s friends heard him say that, and so he got Zip for a nickname.

A nickname usually tells something about a person. Sometimes it’s a compliment, but sometimes it isn’t.

As time passed, Andrew grew up and changed, and the nickname Zip no longer applied. You might say Andrew outgrew it.

The Bible gives many names for Jesus. One of these names is Christ. The name Christ means “Messiah.” It reminds us that Jesus is the Savior promised to be born among God’s people. This name and all other names for Jesus tell us something about Jesus as a person and about His life and work for us.

All of these names apply. They always will, because Jesus will never outgrow them.

Philippians 2:9–11 reminds us that the name of Jesus is above all other names and that one day all people will kneel before Him and honor Him as Lord. Jesus’ name is the greatest of all names because Jesus is the only Savior of the world.

Talk about it: Jesus has many names. Each name reminds us of something about Jesus. What is your favorite name for Jesus? Why?

*Prayer: So many wonderful names apply to you, dear Jesus! Thank You that You are my Savior and Lord.
Amen.*