

LAUGH AND LEARN BIBLE **FOR** KIDS

Written by **Phil Vischer**



READ AND COLOR THE GOSPELS



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**FROM THE
LAUGH AND LEARN
BIBLE FOR KIDS**



Written by **Phil Vischer**

Illustrated by **Michael K. Foster**

**READ AND COLOR
THE GOSPELS**

For more information on the **Laugh and Learn Bible for Kids**,
visit **LaughandLearnBible.com**

THE GOSPELS

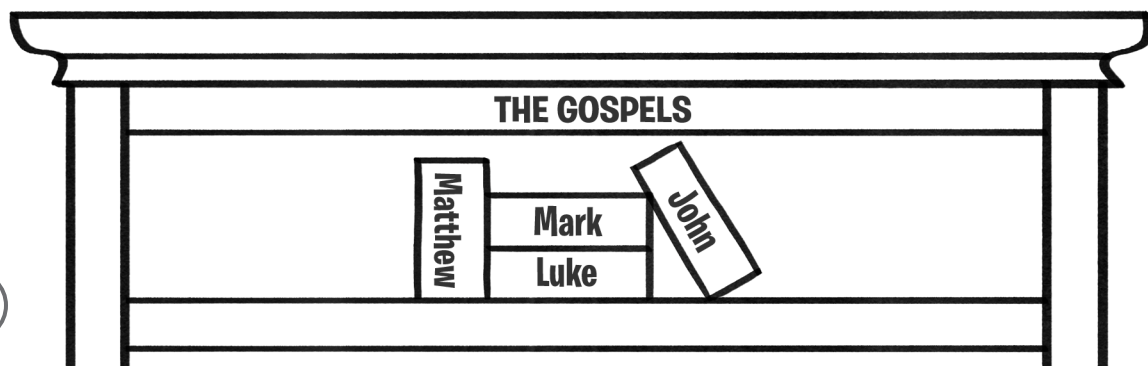
The word **GOSPEL** means “**GOOD NEWS**.” When the writers of the Bible talk about “the gospel” they mean the good news about Jesus and the **KINGDOM** of God. The gospel is the third **PROMISE** God gave to Abraham—the “blessing for the whole world”—come to life!

The four books we call “the Gospels” are the books in the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus, God’s Son. *Why are the stories of Jesus called “the Gospels?”* Because Jesus **IS** the good news! Jesus is the **BLESSING** for the whole world! Jesus came to earth to show us God. God is loving. God is kind. God wants to heal the sick and cheer up the sad. God wants to make all the bad go away. God wants all of us to have a chance to be His friends **FOREVER** in a world without sickness, sadness, or sin.

Jesus showed us who God is, but that’s not all. Jesus also made a way for messy people like us to be **FRIENDS** with a perfect God. Jesus took our mess—our sin—and paid for it Himself.

Jesus came so we can **SEE** God, and so we can be **WITH** God. Forever! That’s the good news. That’s the Gospel.

“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON . . .” John 3:16 (NIV)



The Old Testament pointed ahead to Jesus as the **ONLY WAY** to fix our broken relationship with God. In the Gospels, we meet Jesus. Jesus Himself says:

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” John 8:12 (NIV).

“I am the good shepherd [who] lays down his life . . .” John 10:11 (NIV).

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” John 14:6 (NIV).

THE FAMILY OF JESUS

Did you know we can trace Jesus' family all the way back to Abraham? Remember God's third promise? "From your family will come a blessing for the whole world."

Jesus was the blessing, and His family history (or genealogy) shows God's faithfulness to do what He promised—no matter how long it took!

A **GENEALOGY** is the line of people traced down from one generation to the next.

A **GENERATION** includes all of the people who are born and live around the same time. You and all of your friends are a generation. Your parents are from another generation.

A **DESCENDANT** is someone who is part of your family and is born after you. So your "descendants" would be your children, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren, and so on.



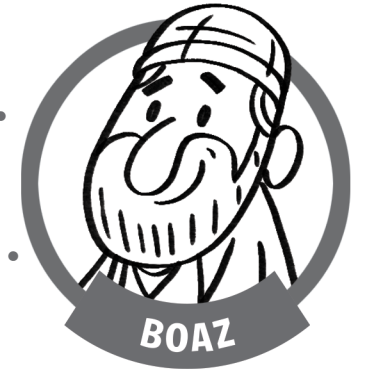
"FOR TO US A CHILD IS BORN, TO US A SON IS GIVEN ... HE WILL REIGN ON DAVID'S THRONE AND OVER HIS KINGDOM ... FROM THAT TIME ON AND FOREVER." Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)



Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob (aka Israel). Jacob had twelve sons (*remember Joseph?*), including one named Judah. Judah had kids, and then they had kids, and, well... you remember how this goes...

... 11 GENERATIONS ...

Boaz was the son of Salmon (no, not the fish!) and the great-great-great-great-great-grandson of Judah. *Remember Boaz?* He married Ruth and redeemed her family.



... 3 GENERATIONS ...



David was the son of Jesse and the great-grandson of Boaz. Remember, God promised King David that one of his "descendants" would be King forever—the blessing for the whole world! But David had to trust God, because he wouldn't be around to see the promise fulfilled.

... 26 GENERATIONS ...

Joseph was the son of Jacob. No, not Isaac's son Jacob. Lots of people were named Jacob back then—and today too! Joseph was a carpenter. He led a simple and humble life, which is probably why God chose Joseph to be Jesus' dad.



... 1 GENERATION ...



There were forty-one generations between the time God made His promises to Abraham and when the last promise came true through the birth of Jesus—the Savior of the world. That's almost 2,000 years of trusting God! But Jesus was well worth the wait!

BORN IN A BARN



Remember Abraham?

God gave him three promises.

1. YOUR CHILDREN WILL BECOME A GREAT NATION.
2. THAT NATION WILL HAVE ITS OWN LAND.
3. FROM THAT NATION WILL COME A BLESSING FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

After 1,500 years, two of those promises had come true. Abraham's kids became the nation of Israel, and they got their own land. The Promised Land.

*But the blessing for the **WHOLE** world? **WHAT** was it? And **WHEN** was it coming? Would it solve the problem of sin? Would it change the people of the world, so they could be friends with God again?*

The prophet Isaiah talked about the "Messiah," a word that means "**ANOINTED ONE**." God anointed kings and very special leaders when He had an important job for them to do.

But 400 years had passed since the time of Isaiah—400 years without any new prophets . . . 400 years without any new messages from God—and the Israelites were getting tired of waiting for this special leader.

***WHERE** was the blessing?*

Some of the Israelites were starting to lose hope.

But **THEN** something incredible happened.

An angel appeared to a young woman named Mary.

"You will have a son!" the angel said.

"How will this be?" Mary asked. "I'm not even married!"



It's true—Mary wasn't married. She had promised to marry a man named Joseph. But they weren't married yet. Then the angel said something amazing. He told Mary the baby's father would be **GOD** Himself! Her baby would be the **SON** of **GOD**!

Pretty wild, right? You would think that Mary would have passed out and fallen on the floor right then! But Mary was brave. She trusted God.

"I am the servant of the Lord," she said. "May this happen just as you have said."

Then the angel said one more thing to Mary. He said the baby's name would be **JESUS**.

When it was almost time for the baby to come, Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. They needed somewhere to stay—a nice place for Mary to have her baby.

*If this baby really was God's own son, He should be born in a palace, right? In a **BIG**, beautiful palace, surrounded by fancy people wearing fancy clothes! After all, this baby was the Son of God!*

But Mary didn't have her baby in a fancy palace. Or in a nice, warm inn, by a fire. No, Mary had her baby in a barn for animals. Mary's baby—Jesus—wasn't surrounded by fancy people. He was surrounded by sheep. And goats. And chickens.

If this was God's blessing for the **WORLD**—the blessing Israel had been awaiting for almost 2,000 years—this wasn't the way people expected it to happen!

Then more angels showed up. A whole bunch of them! And they sang and celebrated the birth of a new king! The birth of Jesus!



BORN IN A BARN

FAMILY CONNECTION

LUKE 2:1-21

Where do you think God's mighty angels announced the birth of His Son? Probably in the biggest city, to the world's most important people, right? To kings and generals! To rich, important, fancy people!

But that isn't where the angels sang of Jesus' birth. This amazing group of God's **MESSENGERS** appeared in the middle of a field. In the middle of nowhere. And they didn't sing to kings and rich folks. They sang to shepherds. To a group of dirty, smelly guys who took care of dirty, smelly sheep.



God showed the world His power—who He really was—not in an army, but in a baby. Not in a palace, but in a stable. Not to kings and rich people, but to **SHEPHERDS**.

God's rescue plan was happening. His kingdom was on the move. But God was announcing, very clearly, that this blessing for the world wasn't going to be what people expected.

This little tiny baby, born in a stable, celebrated by shepherds, was going to turn the whole world upside down!

FUN FACTS



The “crib” used to hold Baby Jesus after His birth is called a manger. The word *manger* comes from the Latin word *mandere*, meaning “to chew” and the French *manger*, meaning, “to eat.” A manger was a feeder for animals such as donkeys, cattle, and horses. The Bible tells us that Jesus was placed in a manger because there was no room for His family at the inn (Luke 2:7).

TALK

In what ways was Jesus' arrival different than people expected?

What do you think God was trying to show the world by sending His Son this way?

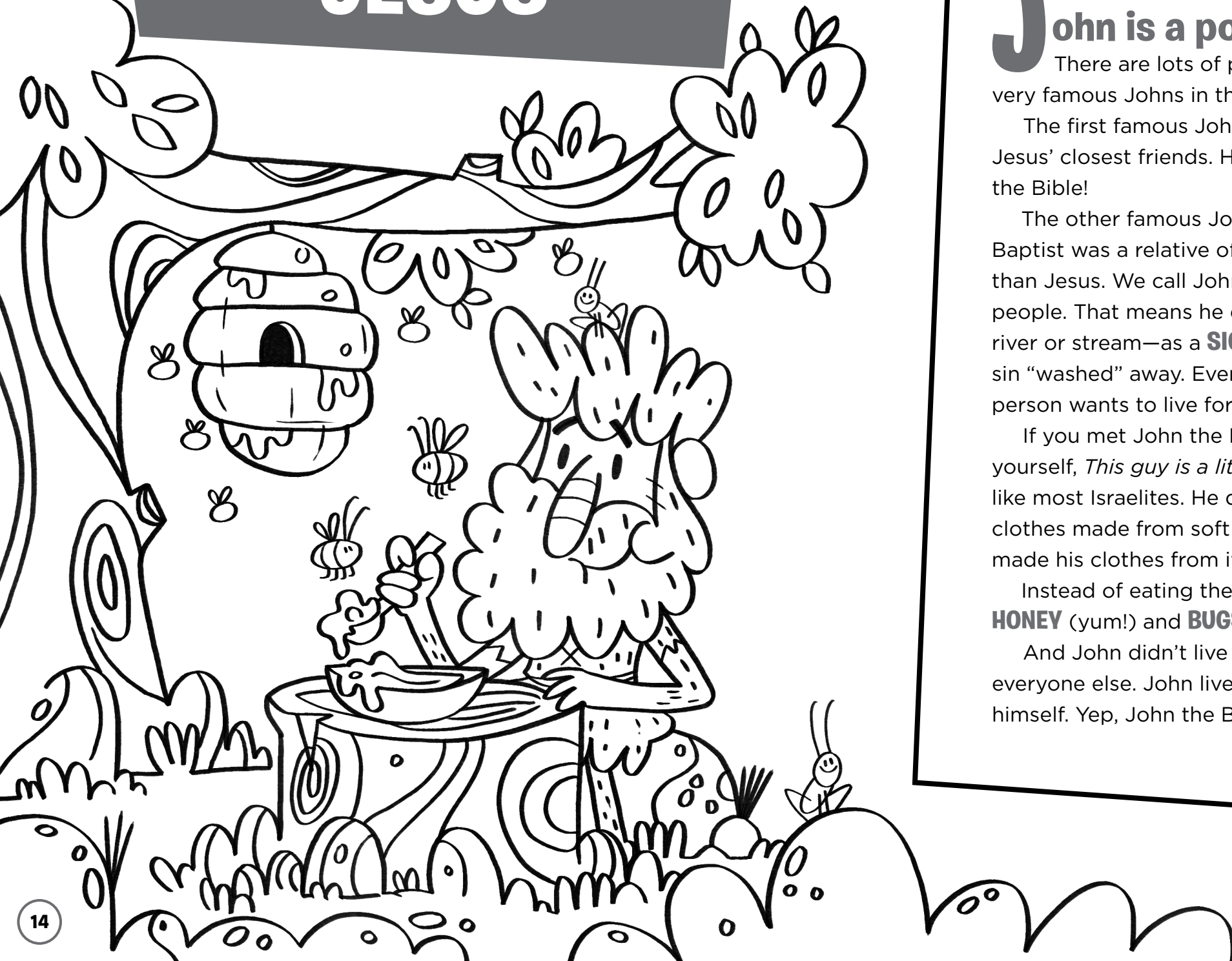
Dear God...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, as a blessing for the whole world. Help us to trust You when your blessing looks different than we expected. Amen.



JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS



John is a popular name, isn't it?

There are lots of people named John! There are two very famous Johns in the Bible.

The first famous John is John the disciple. He was one of Jesus' closest friends. He also wrote five different books in the Bible!

The other famous John is **JOHN THE BAPTIST**. John the Baptist was a relative of Jesus. He was six months older than Jesus. We call John "the Baptist" because he baptized people. That means he dunked people in water—usually a river or stream—as a **SIGN** that they wanted to have their sin "washed" away. Even today, being baptized shows that a person wants to live for God!

If you met John the Baptist, you'd probably think to yourself, *This guy is a little weird*. John the Baptist wasn't like most Israelites. He didn't dress like they did. Instead of clothes made from soft wool or cotton, John the Baptist made his clothes from itchy camel hair.

Instead of eating the food most folks ate, John ate only **HONEY** (yum!) and **BUGS** (yuck!).

And John didn't live in one of the towns of Israel like everyone else. John lived out in the wilderness, all by himself. Yep, John the Baptist was a little unusual.

John spent his days walking around in his itchy camel clothes, preaching about the kingdom of God and the Messiah.

“Stop doing **BAD** things!” he’d yell. “The day of God is coming!”

Soon people from towns and villages started coming out to see this bug-eating guy in itchy camel clothes, who said he had a message from God.

“Is this a new prophet?” they wondered. Israel hadn’t had a new prophet in 400 years!

“Maybe he is the Messiah!” someone said.

But John shook his head. “I’m not the Messiah. He is coming—someone so great that I don’t even deserve to touch His **SHOES!**”

People were amazed. This bug-eating, camel-clothed guy seemed like he was really close to God! *Who could be coming that was even closer?*

By now, Jesus was around thirty years old, but the people didn’t know who He was. One day Jesus came to John and said, “Baptize me!”

John was confused. He knew who Jesus was. He knew that Jesus had never done anything wrong. It seemed to him that Jesus should baptize John, not the other way around!

But Jesus said, “No, it is right for you to baptize Me.”

So John baptized Jesus in the river, and when Jesus came up out of the water, something **AMAZING** happened.



JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS

FAMILY CONNECTION

MATTHEW 3



TRICKY BITS

What is baptism?

Baptism can be done by sprinkling water on the forehead (infant baptism) or as John performed, by full immersion in water (getting dunked). Being immersed in water and raised up again represents the cleansing that occurs when we accept God's gift of salvation. Because of Jesus, we can have a fresh, new life!

- We baptize to declare our new life in Jesus (Romans 6:4).
- We baptize to follow Jesus' example (Luke 3:21-22).
- We baptize because Jesus told us to (Matthew 28:19).

First, something that looked like a dove came down from the sky and landed on Jesus!

It was the **SPIRIT** of God!

Then a voice came out of the air and said, "This is my Son, whom I love very much. I am very happy with Him!"

It was the **VOICE** of God!

People couldn't believe what they had seen and heard. The Spirit of God came to rest on this fellow they'd never heard of. This Jesus. And God Himself had spoken out loud about Him!

Who was Jesus? Was He the Messiah they had been waiting on for so long? Was this finally God's blessing for the world?

No one knew for sure, but they went home that day very excited!

TALK

What made John the Baptist stand out from the crowd?

Why do you think Jesus asked John to baptize Him?

Dear God...

PRAY

Dear God, we want to stand out for You like John the Baptist did. Please show us how to boldly point people to You. Amen.



THE DESERT TEMPTATION

After Jesus was baptized, He did something unusual.

The crowd around John the Baptist was very excited. They had seen the Holy Spirit appear like a dove and had heard the voice of God calling Jesus His **SON!** Maybe the Messiah—the One who would save Israel and bless the whole world—was finally here!

It was the perfect time for Jesus to say, “Okay, everybody, follow Me! I’m the Messiah!”

But He didn’t. Instead, Jesus walked off into the wilderness, all by Himself. He left the crowds behind and went out into the wildest parts of Israel to be **ALONE.**

You see, Jesus knew what was coming. He knew that being the Messiah—that saving Israel and blessing the world—was going to be very, very hard. He knew He couldn’t do it unless He was very close to God, His Father.

So Jesus went off to spend time with His **DAD.**



For forty days Jesus stayed in the wilderness. He didn't eat any food. He spent all of His time talking with God, His Father. At the end of forty days, Jesus and His Dad were very, very close. But He was also very, **VERY** hungry.

And then Jesus had a visitor.

Do you know who it was? It was that sneaky **SNAKE**, God's enemy, the one who had lied to Adam and Eve way back at the beginning so sin would ruin God's world.

God's enemy knew Jesus was hungry. He knew the big things Jesus had to do would be hard. God's enemy showed up to **TEMPT** Jesus with ways to make things easier.

"If You really are God's Son," the enemy said, "why don't You just turn these rocks into bread? Then You can eat!"

"No," Jesus said. "I don't live by bread, I live by the words that come from My Father."

Then the enemy took Jesus to the **HIGHEST** place in Jerusalem—the very top of the temple.

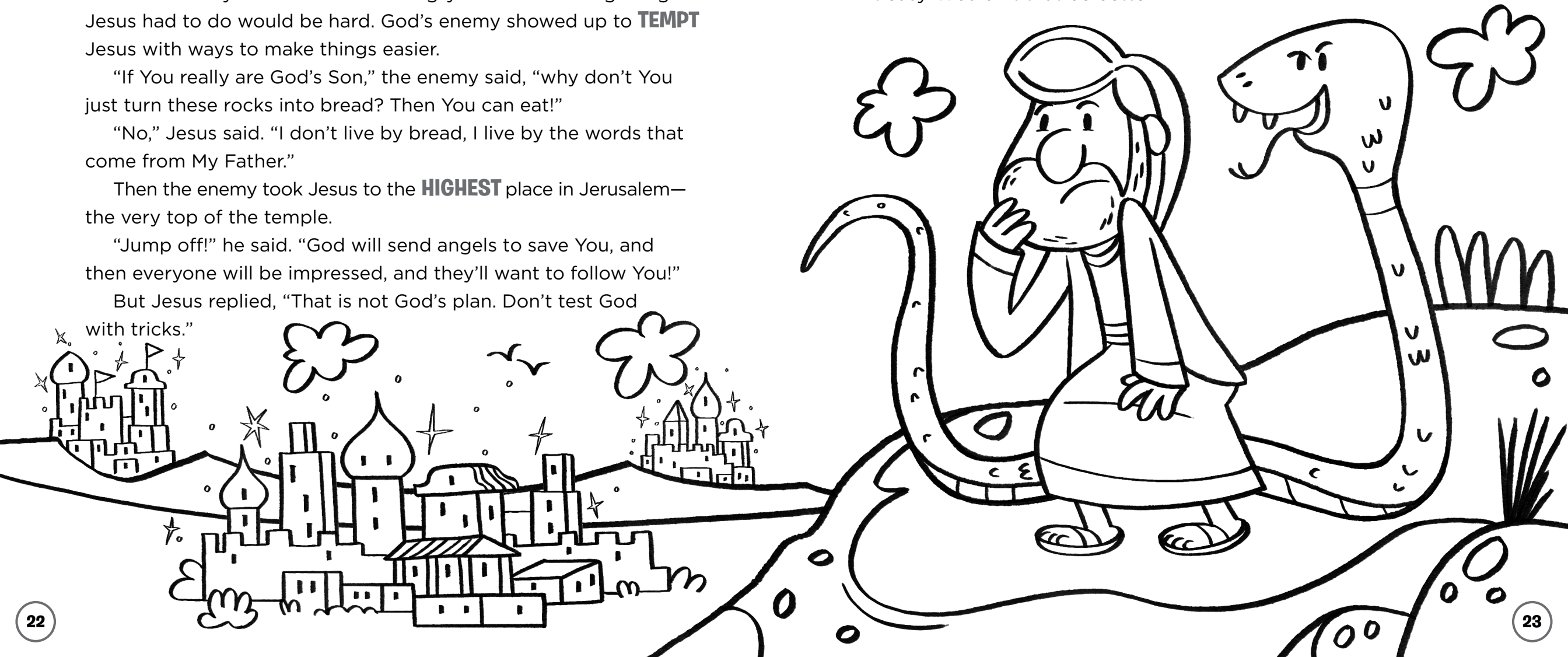
"Jump off!" he said. "God will send angels to save You, and then everyone will be impressed, and they'll want to follow You!"

But Jesus replied, "That is not God's plan. Don't test God with tricks."

Finally, the enemy took Jesus to the top of a high mountain. Jesus could see **ALL** the kingdoms of the world.

"Do You want to rule all these kingdoms?" the enemy asked. "I can make that happen! All You have to do is bow down and worship **ME**."

What should Jesus do? God wanted Jesus to be a new kind of king. A blessing for the whole world! Jesus knew that God's plan was going to be very, very hard. God's enemy said he could make it easy. *Wouldn't that be better?*



THE DESERT TEMPTATION

FAMILY CONNECTION

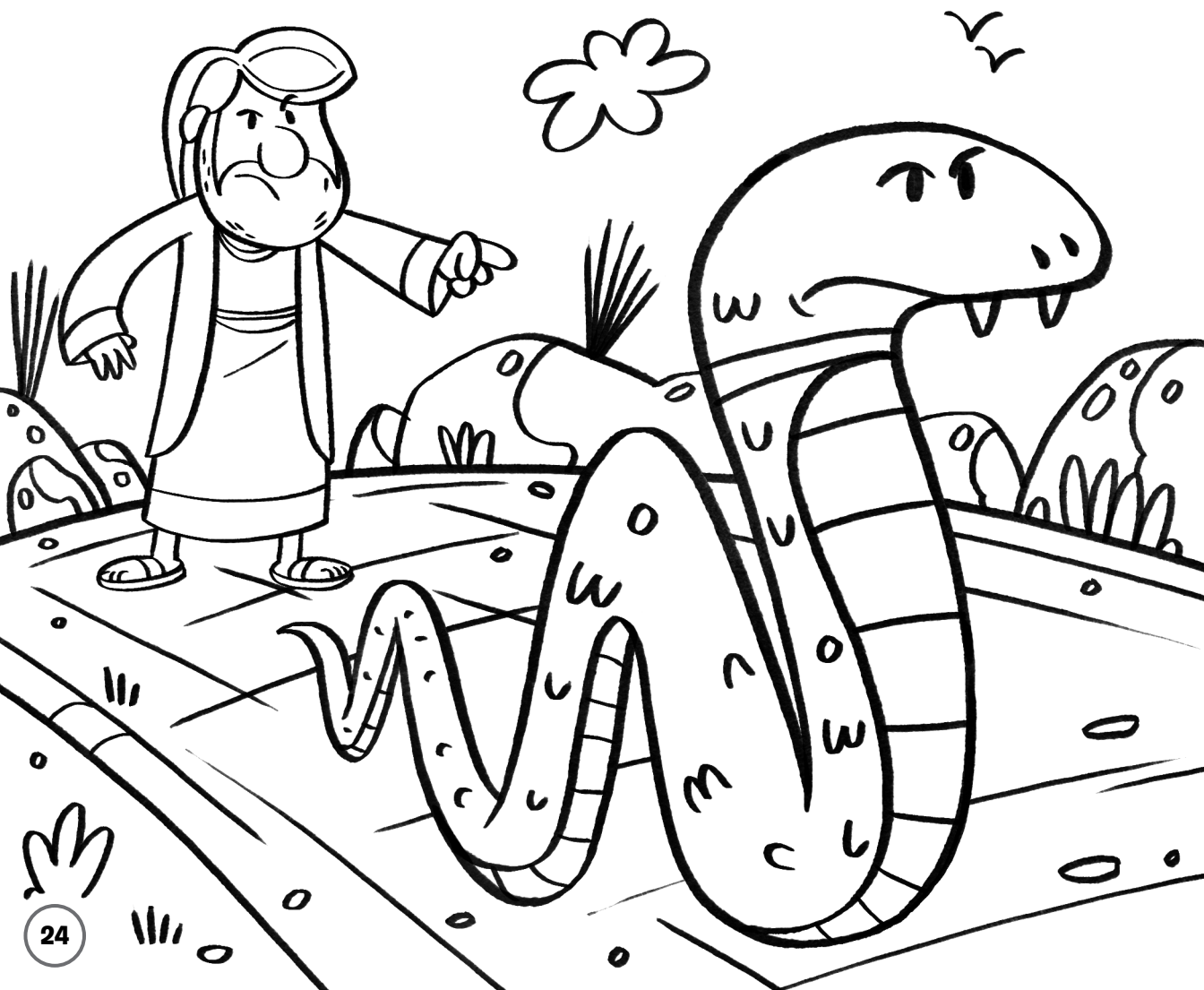
MATTHEW 4:1-11

But Jesus knew He was talking to a **LIAR**.
“I will only bow to God!” Jesus yelled. “Leave me now!”

And the enemy left. He had tried his best to fool Jesus, the same way he had fooled Adam and Eve many years before. But Jesus was too close to God, His Father. And being close to His Father made Jesus strong.

God took care of Jesus, because He was God’s Son, and God loved Him very much.

NOW it was time to save the world.



TRICKY BITS

If Jesus is God, how could He be tempted?

This is a tricky question, all right! Jesus was God, but Philippians 2:7 (ICB) says He “gave up his place with God and made himself nothing” to carry out God’s rescue plan. God’s enemy wanted to see if Jesus would follow through. He wanted Jesus to act in God’s power and step outside God’s plan. But Jesus passed the test! He resisted the temptation, humbling Himself to become the blessing for the whole world.

TALK

What was Jesus doing when God’s enemy came to tempt Him?

What should we do when we are tempted to do something we know we shouldn’t?

Dear
God...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for giving us the power to overcome temptation and choose Your way! Amen.



THE PHONY PHARISEES

Jesus was traveling around Israel, teaching people about the kingdom of God. And people were amazed! They'd never heard anyone teach like Jesus did.

Then Jesus started doing things that were even **MORE** amazing. He started healing people. People who were sick. People who couldn't see. People who couldn't walk. Jesus would simply touch them, or just say one word, and they were healed!

If someone came to your house who could make sick people better or make blind people see just by touching them, you'd be pretty excited, right? You'd probably tell all your friends about it.

Well, that's what happened with Jesus. People told their friends about the things they saw Jesus do, and those people told **THEIR** friends . . . and pretty soon everywhere Jesus went, hundreds of people were showing up to see Him.

Including the **PHARISEES**.



Who were the Pharisees? In Jesus' day, the Israelites hung out in different groups. Sort of like at school, where you might have the kids who are good at sports, and the kids who are good at science, and the kids who are good at music.

Well, the Pharisees were the people who were **REALLY** good at following rules. *Remember all the rules God gave Moses way back at Mount Sinai? Remember the Ten Commandments?* Those rules. The Pharisees loved following them.

The Pharisees even made up **MORE** rules. Rules for how to dress, what to eat, how to sell and buy things. Who to eat with. How to wash their hands. Rules about everything! They were more concerned with following the rules than following God.



When the Pharisees heard about this guy named Jesus who was doing amazing things and attracting big crowds of people, they only had one question: *Is He following all the rules?*

The Pharisees started watching Jesus to see what He would do.

Healing people? That was okay . . . **UNLESS** He healed them on Saturday! Saturday was the Sabbath, and the law of Moses said no one should work on the Sabbath.

Eating dinner with people? That was fine . . . **UNLESS** He didn't wash His hands the right way first, or He ate with people who did bad things, like tax collectors, who always took more than they were supposed to from people.

Sure enough, Jesus healed someone on a Saturday. He broke a **RULE!** And then He ate dinner with a tax collector. Another broken rule!

Jesus knew the Pharisees were watching Him, so He did something **REALLY** wild.

There was a man who couldn't walk. He needed to be healed. But instead of healing him, Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven."



THE PHONY PHARISEES

FAMILY CONNECTION

MATTHEW 9:1-8

The Pharisees went nuts!
Why did the Pharisees go nuts? Because forgiving sins was something only God could do. If Jesus thought **HE** could forgive sins, that meant Jesus thought He was equal to God!

Saying you were equal to God was just about the biggest rule you could break. In fact, the punishment for breaking that rule was **DEATH!**

Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking. So He looked at them, right in the eyes, and said, "What is easier? To say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? If you don't think I can forgive sins, watch this."

And Jesus turned to the man and said, "Get up and walk!"



EVERYDAY TRUTH

God helps me live out what I believe.

TALK

Why did the Pharisees have a problem with Jesus?

In what ways can we sometimes act like the Pharisees today?

Dear God ...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for making a way for us to be Your friends. Help us to love everyone, even those who don't do what You ask us to do. Amen.



JESUS' DISCIPLES



The kingdom of God is here!

Repent and believe the good news!”

Jesus walked around Israel and said this to everyone He met.

*What is the “**KINGDOM OF GOD**”?* The kingdom of God is where God rules. It’s anywhere—in heaven or on earth—where what God wants to happen is happening.

What does it mean to “repent”? It means to turn away from the bad things we used to do. To put those bad things away and leave them behind.

*And what was this “**GOOD NEWS**”?*

Well, that part is simple. The good news is Jesus!

Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, was here at last! The promises from long, long ago, made to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David, were finally coming true. Many of the Israelites knew all the old stories about Abraham and Moses. They remembered Isaiah’s promises about the coming of a **NEW** king—the Messiah!

It was time for God to reveal what He had always wanted to happen—right before their eyes!

Some of them were very excited when they saw Jesus.

“This could be Him! This could be the Messiah!”

Others were confused.

“This could be the Messiah?” they wondered.

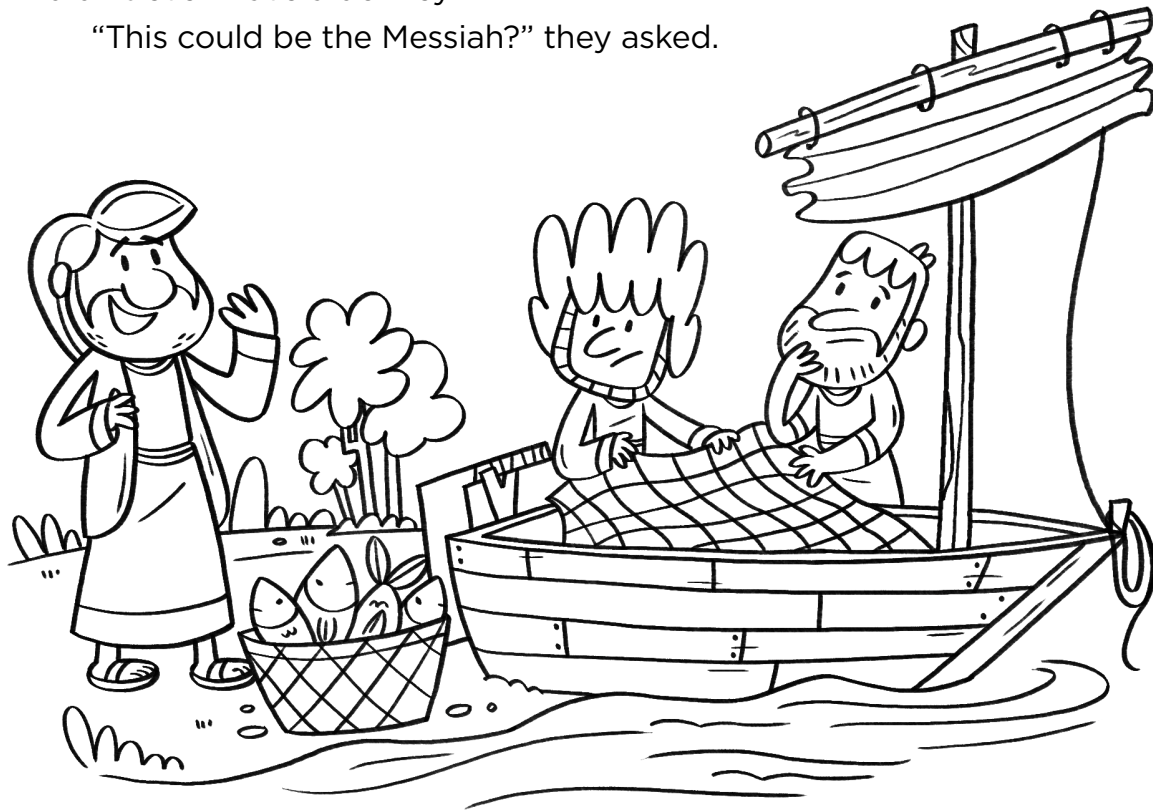
You see, many Israelites thought the Messiah would be a great military leader. In Jesus' day, Israel was a part of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was bigger than the Assyrian Empire. Bigger than the Babylonian Empire. Even bigger than the Persian Empire! The Israelites couldn't do **ANYTHING** unless the Romans said it was okay.

This really bothered some of the Israelites.

"When the Messiah comes," they'd say to each other, "He's going to kick the Romans out of Israel! We'll have our **OWN** nation again!"

But Jesus didn't look like that kind of Messiah. He wasn't dressed like a warrior, or riding a big horse, or carrying a sword. He just looked like . . . a guy. A **REGULAR** guy. He didn't have a horse. He didn't even have a donkey!

"This could be the Messiah?" they asked.



Then Jesus did something interesting. He started collecting **PEOPLE**. First, two brothers named Simon and Andrew. Simon and Andrew were fishermen.

"Follow Me," Jesus said.

And they did. They put down their fishing nets, and they followed Jesus.

Then two more fishermen, James and John. They got right out of their boat and followed Jesus. Then a tax collector named Levi. Nobody liked tax collectors, because they often cheated people. But Jesus chose Levi anyway. He looked at Levi, a guy no one liked, and said, "Follow Me."

And Levi did.

Jesus kept collecting people—Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, another James, Thaddeus, another Simon, and Judas.

TWELVE people in all.



JESUS' DISCIPLES

FAMILY CONNECTION

LUKE 5:1-11

You will be my disciples," He said.
What's a **DISCIPLE**? A disciple is a student. But in Jesus' day, a disciple didn't just go to class with his teacher. He **LIVED** with his teacher! Disciples learned how to live good lives by watching their teacher.

"I will teach you how to live your life," Jesus said to His disciples. "But not just any kind of life. The forever-kind-of-life in the kingdom of God!"

A kind of life no one had been able to live because sin had broken God's creation. Jesus was going to teach that kind of life to His new students—to His new friends!

"And what will we do after we start living this kind of life?" they wondered.

Jesus smiled.

"Teach it to the **WHOLE** world."

Jesus was bringing a new kind of life to His disciples.

A forever-kind-of-life. And these twelve people—fishermen and tax collectors, ordinary people—were going to teach it to the world!



EVERYDAY TRUTH

**I am a disciple of Jesus,
choosing to follow
His way, every day!**

TALK

What is a *disciple*?

In what ways are we God's disciples?

Dear
God ...

PRAY

Dear God, we want to follow You and share Your love with others. Thank You for inviting us to spread the good news to the whole world. Amen.



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Blessed are the poor in spirit.
The kingdom of God belongs to them.”

Jesus was standing on a hill, and a huge crowd had gathered to hear Him talk.

“Blessed are those who are sad. They will be comforted.”

Jesus was making a list, but it wasn't a kind of list that **ANYONE** had heard before.

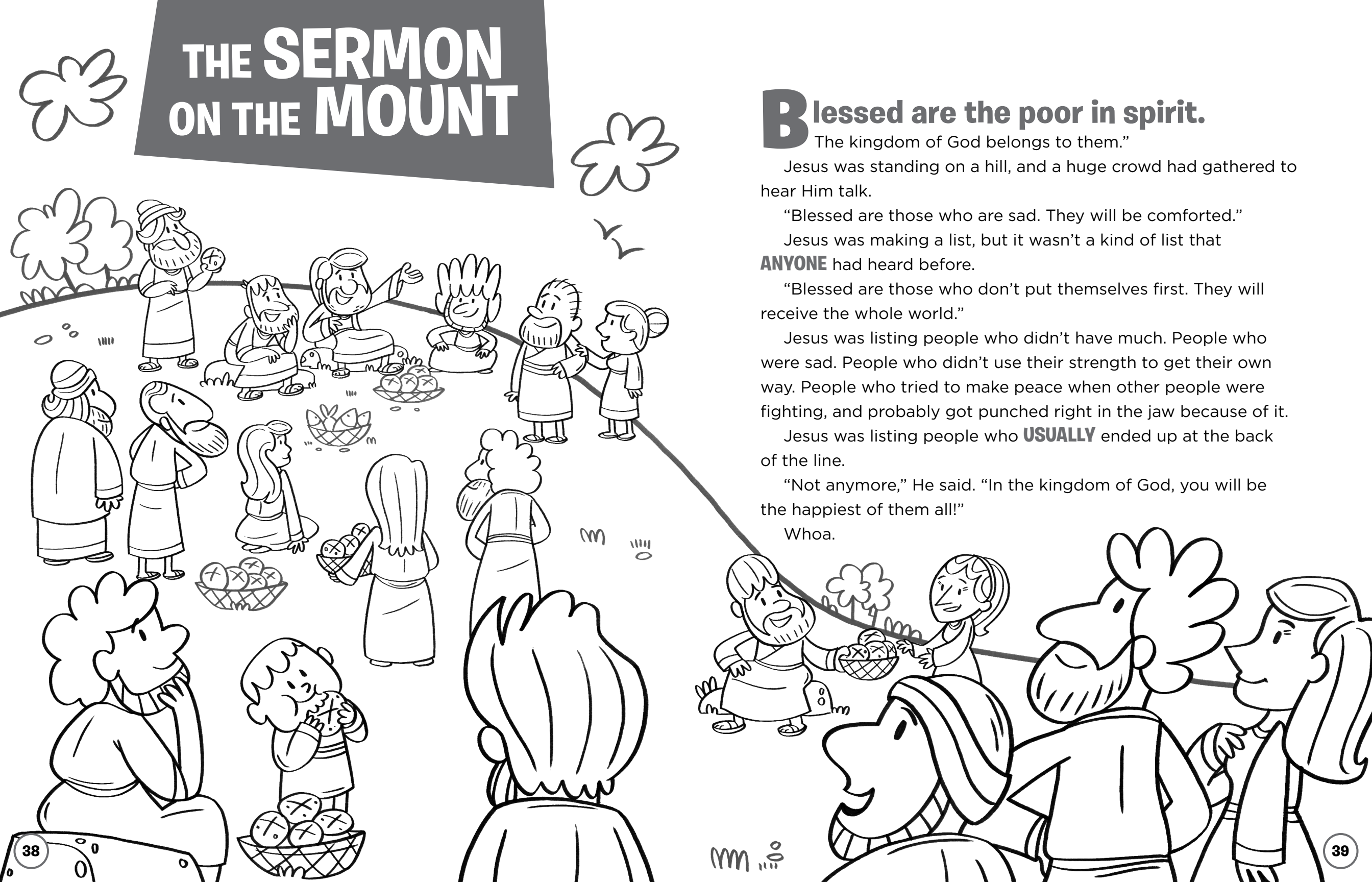
“Blessed are those who don't put themselves first. They will receive the whole world.”

Jesus was listing people who didn't have much. People who were sad. People who didn't use their strength to get their own way. People who tried to make peace when other people were fighting, and probably got punched right in the jaw because of it.

Jesus was listing people who **USUALLY** ended up at the back of the line.

“Not anymore,” He said. “In the kingdom of God, you will be the happiest of them all!”

Whoa.





Jesus was talking about God’s kingdom—where God is in control—and it sounded like an **UPSIDE-DOWN** world!

If you’ve been sad, you’ll be happy. If you’ve been last, you’ll be first. If you’ve tried to make peace, you will be the sons and daughters of the King of Peace. The sons and daughters of God Himself!

The people around Jesus couldn’t believe what they were hearing. The least important people in the kingdoms of earth will be the **MOST** important in the kingdom of God?

Remember how the angels brought the message of Jesus’ birth not to kings and rich people, but to shepherds? Remember how Jesus was born not in a palace, but in a barn?

Yep. God’s kingdom is totally different from the kingdoms of earth! But Jesus wasn’t finished.

“The law of Moses says to not kill people,” He said. “But I say, hating someone in your heart is **JUST** as bad!”

What? Hating someone is as bad as killing them?

“The law says people who hurt you should be punished. But I say, if someone hits you on the cheek, let them hit your other cheek too. If someone steals your shirt, give them your coat as well!”

What? Give my coat to someone who steals my shirt?

“The law says to love your neighbors. But I say you should love your enemies just as much!”

People got **REALLY** confused.

“This guy is crazy!” they said to each other.

But Jesus wasn’t crazy. Jesus was teaching them about a whole new way to live. A forever-kind-of-life lived with God.

You see, the old rules of Moses could only change what you did on the **OUTSIDE**. They couldn’t change who you were on the **INSIDE**.



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

FAMILY CONNECTION

MATTHEW 5

“I didn’t come to make you do better things,” Jesus said. “I came to make you **DIFFERENT** people. I came to make you the kind of person that I am.”

And that kind of person doesn’t need all those rules. That kind of person has a new heart. A heart that loves everyone. A heart that gives to everyone. A heart that puts other people first, always. A heart like Jesus’ heart.

“Come to me, all you who are tired, worn-out, and weighed down by the rules. I’m not here to make you follow the rules. I’m here to make you a new person!”

Standing on the hill that day, preaching his “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus invited everyone into a new kind of life. A life that wasn’t about rules, but about **RELATIONSHIP**. A life that was about a relationship with Jesus that can change us from the inside out!



EVERYDAY TRUTH

My friendship with Jesus changes me from the inside out!

TALK

What did Jesus come to do according to this sermon?

If it’s not about rules, what is our new life with Jesus about?

Dear God ...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You that Jesus made a way for us to be Your friends, so we can be changed from the inside out! Amen.



IT'S A MIRACLE!

Jesus and His disciples walked all over Israel. Everywhere they went, big crowds would gather to see Jesus.

He talked a lot about the kingdom of God. But He didn't just **TALK** about the kingdom of God; Jesus also **SHOWED** people what the kingdom of God was like.

How? By doing amazing things. Unbelievable things! Jesus called them "signs" that pointed to the kingdom of God. Today we call them **MIRACLES**.

In Jesus' day, many people were **AFRAID** of the sea. Fishermen and sailors had to go out on the sea, which often put them in danger. Today we have satellites that tell sailors when big storms are headed their way, but back in Jesus' day, it was hard to know when a big storm was coming. The sea was scary!

One night, Jesus was on a boat with His disciples when a **HUGE** storm took over the sea. Their boat was going to sink, and the disciples were afraid they would die. Meanwhile, Jesus was asleep in the boat.

The disciples woke up Jesus and said, "Hey! Did You notice the storm? We're going to die!"

Jesus opened His eyes, looked at them, and said, "Why are you so afraid?"

Then He turned to the storm—the **GIANT** storm that was sinking their boat—and said, "Stop it!"

And guess what? The storm stopped! Completely.

The disciples couldn't believe what had just happened. *Who can talk to a storm and the storm obeys Him?*

Jesus was giving them a **SIGN**. In the kingdom of God, there was no danger from the sea, because Jesus was the King of everything! Even the big, scary sea listened to Jesus.



Another time Jesus was surrounded by thousands of people who had followed Him far away from town with no food to eat.

The disciples got nervous. “What will we give them to eat?” they wondered.

One little boy had **FIVE** loaves of bread and **TWO** small fish. He gave them to the disciples.

“Will this help?” he said.

The disciples thought it was silly. You can’t feed thousands of people with two loaves of bread and five little fish!

Or can you?

Jesus took the boy’s gift and prayed over it. Then He started breaking pieces off and giving them to people.

And there were more pieces . . .

And more pieces . . .

And **MORE** pieces . . .

So many pieces that every person got to eat as much as they wanted.

The disciples couldn’t believe their eyes!

“Why are you so surprised?” Jesus asked.

He was giving them another sign. In the kingdom of God, there is **ALWAYS** enough. Enough food, enough warmth, enough love. Where Jesus is King, we will never run out of anything!



Jesus also **HEALED** people. This was a sign that Jesus was King over sickness and disease. In the kingdom of God, there is no sickness!

But even more amazing, one time when a sick little girl died before Jesus could get there to heal her, Jesus said to her parents, “Don’t worry. She’s okay.”

And the little girl came back to life, got up, and walked **RIGHT** out of her room! Even though she had died. Even death has to obey Jesus in the kingdom of God.

Everyone was amazed by the things Jesus did. The crowds that followed Him got bigger, and bigger, and **BIGGER**. Everyone was excited to see Jesus!

IT'S A MIRACLE!

FAMILY CONNECTION

MARK 4:35-41; MARK 6:30-44;
MARK 5:21-43

Except the Pharisees. *Remember them?* They thought Jesus was getting **TOO** popular. **TOO** many people were following Him around, and some of those people even said they thought Jesus should be king!

The Pharisees went to the Sadducees to talk about Jesus.

Who were the Sadducees? They were the group of Israelites who were in charge of punishments. The Pharisees kept track of all the rules, and the Sadducees were in charge of **PUNISHING** the people who broke the rules.

“This Jesus guy is breaking rules and causing trouble!” said the Pharisees.

Hmm, thought the Sadducees, We might have to do something about that.

So the Sadducees began looking for a way to arrest Jesus.



FUN FACTS

There are thirty-seven miracles of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. Jesus healed someone twenty-four times, he performed a miracle of nature ten times, and He raised someone from the dead three times! The Feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded in all of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).



TALK

What do Jesus' miracles tell us about the kingdom of God?

What amazing thing have you seen that could be a miracle?

Dear God ...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for the amazing signs You give to show us what Your kingdom is like. Amen.



THE LAST SUPPER

Jesus and His disciples walked to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

What was Passover?

*Remember when God rescued the Israelites from Egypt by sending plagues of frogs and flies and darkness? Remember the angel God sent to kill the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go free? That angel “passed over” the homes of the Israelites if they had the blood of a **LAMB** over their doors. The sons of Israel were saved by the blood of that lamb.*

Ever since that day, Israelites have celebrated Passover with a **SPECIAL** meal, just like the one they had that night in Egypt many years earlier. So Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. Lots of other people came, too, and many of them had heard stories about Jesus.

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, a big crowd of people came out to meet Him. They laid down palm branches in front of Him, which was a sign of royalty. They shouted, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” and “Blessed is the coming kingdom of David!” It was like a parade for a **KING**.



This made the Pharisees and Sadducees **VERY** nervous. Since Israel was a part of the Roman Empire, the Israelites weren't allowed to have their own king. The king of the Romans was Israel's king. Any time someone in Israel said, "Let's have a new king," the Romans would send in soldiers and throw a bunch of people in **PRISON**—or worse!

The Pharisees and Sadducees had to do something to stop all the commotion about Jesus and this talk of a "new king." And they had to do it fast! *But what could they do?*

Jesus and His disciples got together to eat the Passover meal, just like they did every year. But this year, Jesus did something **DIFFERENT**.

First, Jesus told His disciples that **ONE** of them was going to turn against Him by helping the Pharisees and Sadducees arrest Him and take Him away!

All the disciples looked at each other. "Who could it be?" they wondered.

Then Jesus picked up a piece of **BREAD** and said, "This is My body, which is given for you."

After that, He picked up His **CUP**, and said, "This cup is the new covenant of My blood, poured out for you."

A **COVENANT** is a "promise," like the promises that God had made to Abraham long, long before.

The disciples were confused. It sounded like Jesus was saying God was making a new promise—a new way to bless them and save them—and it had something to do with Jesus' blood and body. It had something to do with Jesus . . . dying?



THE LAST SUPPER

FAMILY CONNECTION

MATTHEW 21:1-11;
MATTHEW 26:17-50

The disciples couldn't believe their ears. *Was Jesus saying that He was the new Passover lamb? That He was going to die to save them? But **HOW** could Jesus be king if He wasn't even alive?*

Everyone was confused.



After dinner, Jesus went out to a garden to **PRAY**. He knew what He had to do next, and He knew it wasn't going to be easy.

When He finished praying, Jesus turned to His friends and said, "The hour has come."

And just at that moment, His disciple Judas walked into the garden, leading a group of soldiers sent by the Sadducees to arrest Jesus.

TRICKY BITS

WHAT is Communion? Communion is a practice of the Last Supper message of Jesus.

WHO can take Communion? Followers of Jesus.

WHAT do we take? A piece of bread, to represent Jesus' body, broken for us. A cup of wine, to represent His blood, shed for us.

WHY do we take it? To remember Jesus' sacrifice.

TALK

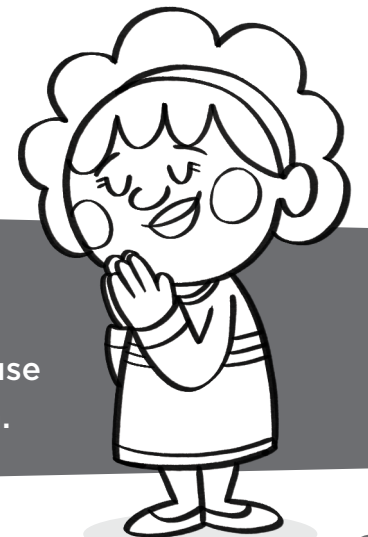
What *covenant* or "promise" did Jesus make to His disciples during their Passover meal?

What do you think it means that Jesus was the new Passover lamb?

Dear
God...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for the hope we have because Jesus was willing to be our Passover lamb. Amen.



JESUS' DEATH



The soldiers who arrested Jesus

brought him to the Pharisees and Sadducees.

“You think You are equal to God?” they asked Him. But Jesus wouldn’t say anything.

The Pharisees didn’t care if He answered or not. “Guilty!” they shouted. “He is guilty of blasphemy!”

*And the penalty for **BLASPHEMY**—for saying you are equal to God?*

DEATH.

There was a problem, though. Even if the Pharisees and Sadducees said Jesus was guilty, they weren’t allowed to kill anyone. Only the Romans could do that. So they dragged Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

Pontius Pilate looked at Jesus and asked, “What have You done that has made everyone so angry?”

But still, Jesus wouldn’t say **ANYTHING**.

“I don’t see anything wrong with this man!” Pilate said to the Pharisees and Sadducees.

But they all yelled back, “According to our rules, He needs to die!”

Pilate didn’t know what to do. He didn’t think Jesus deserved to **DIE**, but he didn’t want the Pharisees and Sadducees to complain about him to the other Roman leaders. Staying out of trouble was the best way to keep your job as a Roman governor. Maybe the troublemaker had to go.

So Pilate gave in. He washed his hands in front of the crowd, which was a way of saying, “This isn’t my fault.”

Then he had Jesus killed on a wooden **CROSS**.

As Jesus was dying, He looked up to heaven and said, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.” Even at that moment, Jesus was forgiving. Even at that moment, He was loving.

The sky turned **DARK**. Jesus died. Then the ground began to **SHAKE!** A Roman guard standing near Jesus saw everything that happened and said, “This man must have been the Son of God!”

But it was too late. Jesus was dead.

Jesus’ friends didn’t know what to think. *How could Jesus be the Messiah, the blessing for the whole world, if He wasn’t even alive?*

Jesus had done some **AMAZING** things while He was living. He’d shown everyone what God the Father was like. Incredibly loving. Incredibly good. Incredibly powerful. The life of Jesus had taught people who God is.

Jesus had also announced the **KINGDOM OF GOD**. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they’d lived with God, the way things were supposed to be. There was no sickness, no hunger, no hurting, and no death.

Jesus had said the kingdom of God was back. He’d given everyone a taste of that kingdom through His miracles. Jesus showed us that in this kingdom of God, there is nothing to be afraid of—not even death!

Jesus also explained that the kingdom was starting small, like a seed. Jesus’ miracles were like tiny green shoots from a seed, poking up through the soil. Those shoots would grow bigger and bigger, until finally the day would come when Jesus is King, and the kingdom of God would be **EVERYWHERE!** When the whole world would be made new again, the way God always wanted it to be!

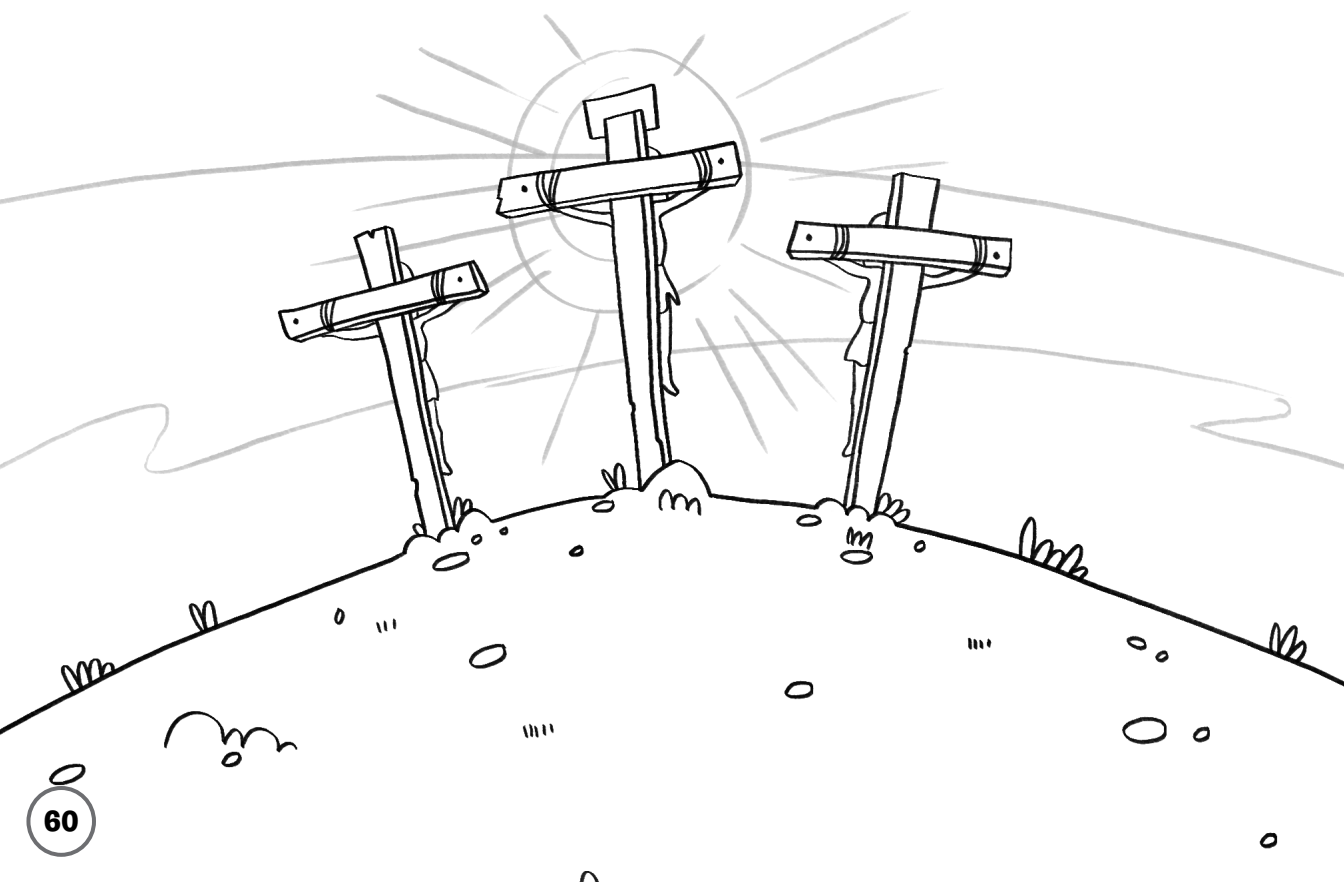


But what about sin? What about the selfish and mean things we do that keep us far from God? Did Jesus do anything about that?

He sure did. As Jesus was dying on the cross, God saw all the bad things we've ever done, the **STAIN** of our sin, appear on Jesus. Jesus became "dirty" with all that sin so that we would have a chance to be clean. So that we could be with God again.

Jesus died so we wouldn't have to. Jesus died so we could live with God in a world without sin, without sickness, without death. A world where Jesus is King.

You're probably asking: *If Jesus died, how can He be King?* That's a good question—with an even better answer. Because Jesus didn't **STAY** dead!



JESUS' DEATH FAMILY CONNECTION

MATTHEW 27:32-54



EVERYDAY TRUTH

**I can live with
God because Jesus
died for me!**

TALK

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

What happened to the "stain" of our sin when He died?

Dear
God...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins and for inviting us to be children of the King! Amen.



HE IS ALIVE!

There was a rich man named Joseph

from a town called Arimathea. He wasn't the same Joseph that was married to Jesus' mother, Mary, or the Joseph with the coat of many colors. Joseph was a popular name back then.

Joseph was a **FOLLOWER** of Jesus. He loved Jesus. Like all of Jesus' followers, Joseph was very sad when Jesus died. He wanted to do something nice for Jesus, to show how much he **LOVED** Him.

So Joseph went to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, and asked if he could take care of Jesus' body. And Pontius Pilate said yes.



When important people died in Israel, they weren't buried in the ground. Instead, their bodies were placed in special **TOMBS** that were carved out of solid rock, like small caves. Joseph had a special tomb that he had made to use when he died someday. But he decided to give it to Jesus instead.

Jesus' body was placed inside Joseph's special tomb. A big **ROCK** was rolled in front of the cave, so no one could get in.

Some of the Pharisees and Sadducees went to Pilate and said, "What if Jesus' friends move the rock and take His body, and then say Jesus is alive again? That would cause a lot of trouble for you!"

That **WOULD** cause a lot of trouble, Pilate thought. So Pilate put guards outside the tomb to make sure no one moved the stone.

Jesus died on a Friday. All day Saturday His body lay in Joseph's tomb, and His friends were very, **VERY** sad.

Early Sunday morning, two of Jesus' friends came to visit the tomb. They were both women named **MARY**. Neither of them was Jesus' mother though. Mary was a popular name back then too.

The two Marys were very sad. They missed Jesus very much. They had brought **SPICES** and **PERFUME** to put on Jesus' body, which is something people did long ago.

"But how will we roll away the heavy stone?" they wondered.

Just as the two Marys were wondering what to do, **BOOM!**

The ground shook. Then an angel appeared right in front of them. The angel rolled the stone away from the grave. He looked toward the Roman guards, who were so scared they probably fainted and fell on the ground!



Then the angel looked at the two Marys and **SMILED**.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus. But He isn't here. Jesus isn't dead anymore. He is alive!"

The two Marys couldn't believe what they were hearing!
Jesus was alive?

As they turned to go tell everyone what had happened, the two Marys bumped right into someone.

It was **JESUS!** Seeing Jesus filled their hearts with joy!

"Don't be afraid," Jesus said. "Go tell My disciples that I am alive again! Tell them they will see Me too!"



And that is exactly what happened. Jesus appeared to **ALL** His disciples. He explained to them why He'd had to die. He told them the great news that death had no power in God's kingdom.

Then Jesus told His friends it was time for Him to leave. From now on, spreading the kingdom of God would be **THEIR** job.

"But we need Your help!" His friends said.

Jesus smiled. "You will have My help. I will send you a Helper, who will fill you with **POWER**. The power of God! And you will do the kinds of amazing things you've seen Me do!"

And then Jesus rose up into the sky and disappeared!

The disciples were amazed. **AND** a little confused. *How would they spread the kingdom of God without Jesus? Who was this "Helper" Jesus was going to send? And how would he help?*

Jesus' friends didn't have answers to any of these questions, but they were about to get them in a big, big way.

HE IS ALIVE!

FAMILY CONNECTION

MATTHEW 28



EVERYDAY TRUTH

**Because Jesus is alive,
death has no power in the
kingdom of God!**

TALK

How do you think Jesus' friends felt when they saw Him again after His death?

What do you think it means to be filled with God's power?

Dear God ...

PRAY

Dear God, thank You that Jesus is alive and can be our friend even today. Help us to see Your power in our lives as we follow Him. Amen.

