

Sampler

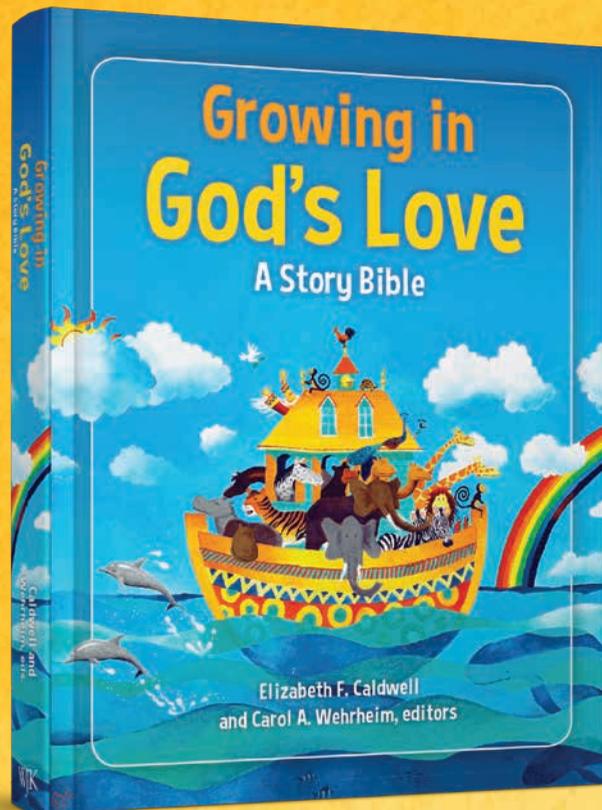
Growing in God's Love

A Story Bible



**Elizabeth F. Caldwell
and Carol A. Wehrheim, editors**

Help Children Grow Their Faith!



Growing in God's Love A Story Bible

Coming January 2018 from
Westminster John Knox Press!

9780664262914 • Hardback
360 pages • 7" x 9"
List Price: \$25.00 • Ages 4–8

Help nurture the faith of the children in your life with *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*. This engaging resource features 150 popular Bible stories that are organized by 13 themes, including Strong Women and Men; Listening for God; Parables; Healings and Miracles; and more. Each story is built on the latest in biblical scholarship and learning theory and helps children begin to understand the Bible and apply its teachings to the world around them. *Growing in God's Love* features diverse artwork from more than twenty artists to appeal to a variety of ages and learning styles. Three reflection questions—Hear, See, Act—are included at the end of each story to help children further ponder the message of the story.

For more information, visit wjkbooks.com/GrowingInGodsLove.

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Key Information about *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*

How many stories are featured in *Growing in God's Love*?

Growing in God's Love includes 150 stories from the Old Testament and the New Testament.

How is *Growing in God's Love* different from other story Bibles?

- Each featured story in *Growing in God's Love* is based on the latest in biblical scholarship and learning theory. As a result, readers will discover new interpretations of familiar stories inside this unique resource.
- Readers will hear a variety of voices in this book. Over twenty contributors worked on the featured stories and a complete list of contributors can be found on page 32 of this sampler.
- *Growing in God's Love* encourages children to bring their own questions and curiosities to each story. Three reflection questions—Hear, See, Act—are included at the end of each story to help children further ponder the message of the story.
- This story Bible features diverse artwork that welcomes all kinds of families to read and imagine a world that accepts everyone in the name of God's love. Several of the characters are also featured in more than one story and in some cases different artwork is used for the same character. This was intentional so that the illustrations provide children a variety of ways to see each biblical character.
- The Bible stories in *Growing in God's Love* are divided by themes that relate to the lives of children.
- This story Bible helps adults gain confidence in discussing Bible stories with a child, as it encourages readers to sit with a story instead of looking for specific answers.

How were the featured stories selected?

The stories inside *Growing in God's Love* were selected for several reasons, including:

- Many of them are used in the curriculum taught in churches.
- The stories can help children with the various issues they face in today's world, whether at school, home, or in the neighborhood.
- Each story helps children see how Jesus loves and how the face of God is in each person they encounter.

How can you use *Growing in God's Love*?

There are several ways you can use this unique resource with the children in your life, including:

- During Sunday school classes and general Storytime sessions
- Inside your children's sermons
- At Vacation Bible School
- And more!

About the Editors

Elizabeth F. Caldwell is Professor Emerita of Pastoral Theology at McCormick Theological Seminary and Visiting Professor in Religious Education at Vanderbilt Divinity School. A noted Christian educator and author, Caldwell was an editor for the Common English Bible translation and *Daily Feast: Meditations from Feasting on the Word*. She was named APCE Educator of the Year in 2004.

Carol A. Wehrheim is author of *The Baptism of Your Child; Getting It Together: Spiritual Practices for Faith, Family, and Work*; and *Giving Together: A Stewardship Guide for Families*. She is an award-winning Christian educator in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and served as general editor for the Feasting on the Word Curriculum. She was named APCE Educator of the Year in 2001.

About the Cover Artist

Darius Gilmont is an artist with many years of experience in educational illustration. Originally from England, he has lived in Israel since 1993, and the majority of his art, whether painting or sculpture, is on biblical, Old Testament, themes. His work appeals to adults and children alike. For more information, visit www.darius-art.com.

About the Artwork

The artwork featured in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* comes from 21 artists around the globe. Various art styles are shown to appeal to a variety of ages and learning styles and featured artists include:

- Roberta Baird
- Paige Billin-Frye
- Kate Cosgrove
- Len Ebert
- Nell F. Fisher
- Laura Freeman
- Darius Gilmont
- Aimee Hagerty-Johnson
- Oksana Kemarskaya
- Art Kirchoff
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- Eleanor Troth Lewis
- Dennis McKinsey
- Nancy Munger
- Michelle Nidenoff
- Craig Orback
- Dani Padrón
- Lina Safar
- Margaret Sanfi lippo
- Gabhor Utomo
- Farida Zaman

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How God Made Everything

Based on Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Long ago, before telescopes and microscopes, before scientists discovered everything they know today, people told stories about the beginning of the world. This is the story about the beginning of the world that the people of God told. They thought everything God made was beautiful.

At first, it was really hard to see. Water was everywhere. So God made light, the light you see every morning when you wake up. When God saw the light, God said, "It's beautiful!"

Then God moved the water around. Some of it, God spread all over the world. Some of it, God put up in the clouds in the sky for rain. God said, "Water's beautiful, too!"

After that, God put the world's water in the oceans and lakes and rivers. Then the dry ground you walk on appeared. In the ground, God planted grass and trees and everything that grows outside your window and outside everyone's windows.

God made the geranium in the little pot on your windowsill too. God said, "Aren't all these plants beautiful?"

To make sure we all have light, day and night, God made the big sun that you see every day. Then God made the moon and the stars you see when you lie on your back on the ground at night. God said, "Don't you think they're beautiful too?"

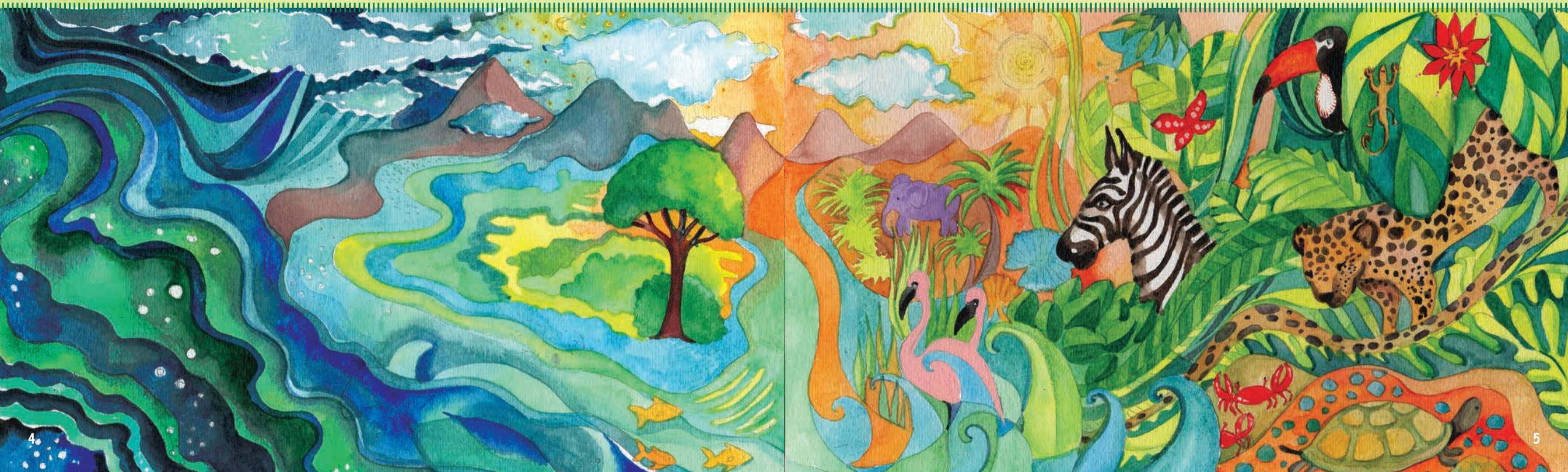
Finally, God made all the animals everywhere, the fish and the crabs and the whales in the water, and the birds flying up with the clouds in the sky. God made all the animals around us on the ground. Then God made us people. God said, "Wow! You're all beautiful."

Then God spoke to us for the first time. God told us who we are and what we should do. God said, "You're all my people in the world I made. I made you just enough like me that you too can see how beautiful everything is. Take care of the world. Keep it beautiful. Keep it just as beautiful as I made it."

Hear: What sound do you hear right now in the world God made?

See: What is your favorite animal? What color is your favorite flower?

Act: What can you do to keep the world as beautiful as God made it?



Miriam Hides Moses

Based on Exodus 2:1-10

The Hebrews living in his nation
Grew and grew in population.
Selfish Pharaoh, so very cruel,
Wrote a truly awful rule:

“Because you are too big a crowd,
No more baby boys allowed!”
One Hebrew family, full of joy,
Had just welcomed a baby boy.

Mother took some grass and leaves,
And made a basket to set in the reeds.
She put her baby snug inside,
And took him to the riverside.

Miriam found a spot to hide.
She wouldn't leave her brother's side.
Then Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe
And saw the basket in the waves.

Miriam saw the princess meant no harm,
As she rocked the baby in her arms.
“Shall I get a nurse perhaps?
To care for the baby on your lap?”

Pharaoh's daughter answered, “Please!”
So Miriam ran through the trees.
When mother came to where they were,
The Pharaoh's daughter hired her to care.

One day, when baby boy was grown,
Mother walked him to Pharaoh's throne.
The princess spoke aloud and said,
“I found him in the riverbed,

So Moses is to be his name.
And I will love him all the same,
As though this boy were borne to me,
Adopted now to royalty.”

Hear: Miriam had to be very quiet when she was hiding by the river. Be quiet and listen for a moment. What do you hear?

See: Miriam waits by the water's edge to see what would happen to her baby brother. When was a time you watched or waited patiently? What happened next?

Act: In this story, the Pharaoh felt the Egyptians were more important than the Hebrews. How can we make sure everyone feels important?



Esther, a New Queen

Based on Esther 2:1-4, 7-12, 16-18

Have you ever done something when you were angry and later you were sorry you did it? Maybe you threw a toy when it didn't work right? Or perhaps you tore up a picture you were drawing? Later you wanted to play with the toy, or you wanted to work on the picture some more. Too late. King Ahasuerus had a similar problem.

King Ahasuerus finally calmed down after he took the crown from Vashti. But now he wanted a queen, and he didn't have one. Some young men servants suggested a plan. "Why don't you gather at the palace all the beautiful young women who aren't married? Put them in the care of Hegai, who is in charge of the women's quarters. He can get them ready so you can choose one to be queen in place of Vashti."

The king liked the idea. So some of his servants went throughout the realm to



find beautiful young women. One of these women was Esther. Her mother and father had died. Her cousin Mordecai took care of her. He said, "Esther, don't tell anyone at the palace that you are a Jew."

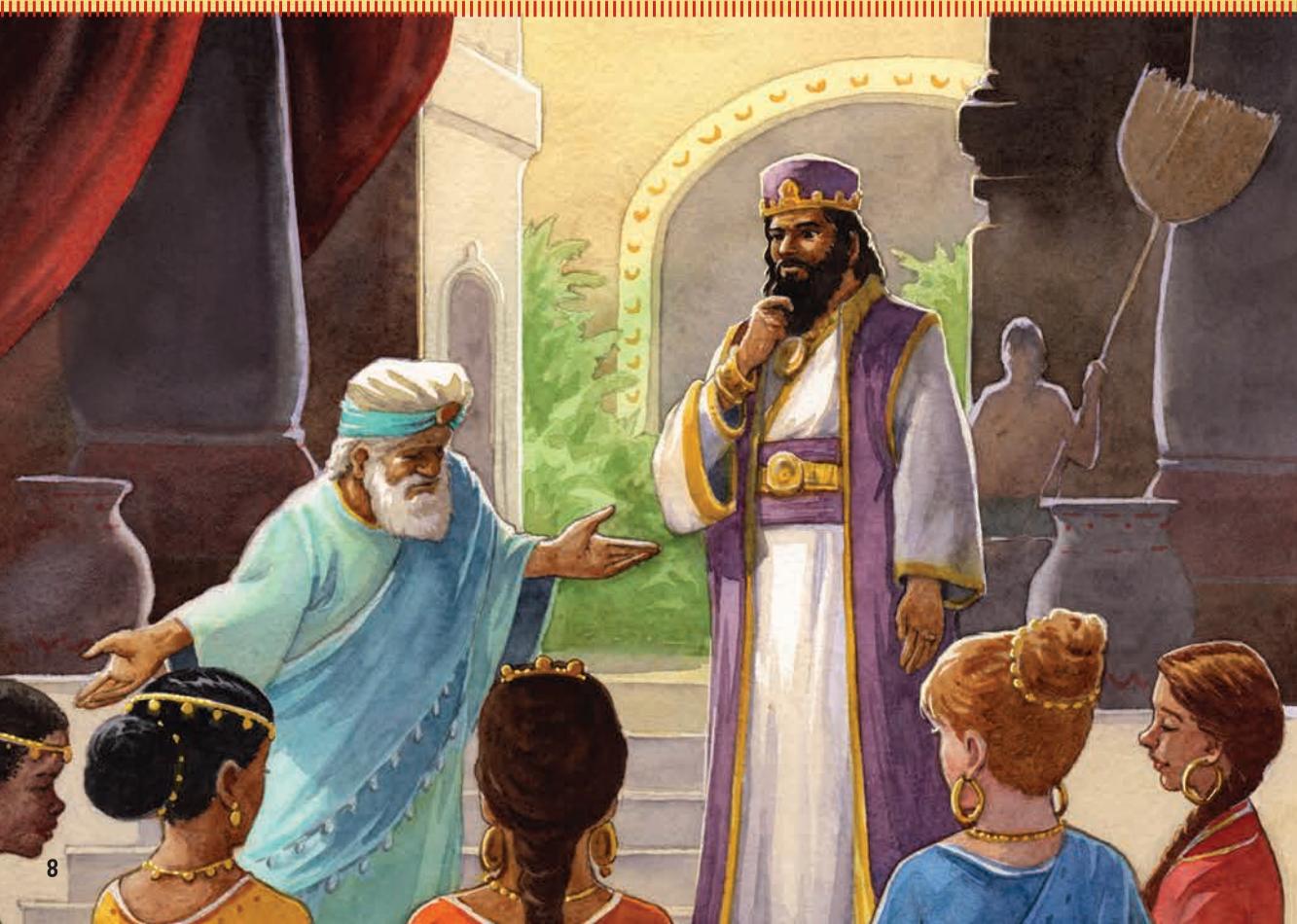
Hegai liked Esther right away. He believed that she was beautiful and also kind. He made sure she had the best of everything, from beauty treatments to food. Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the women's quarters so he could see how Esther was doing.

After one year, the beautiful young women were to go before King Ahasuerus. The women went in to the king, one at a time. If she wasn't chosen, she went to the second women's quarters, where she would then live. When the king saw Esther, she won his love immediately. The king placed the queen's crown on Esther's head. Then he had a huge feast in her honor and declared a holiday. Long live Queen Esther!

Hear: What do you think the king said when he saw Esther? What do you think Mordecai said when he heard that Esther was the new queen?

See: Who do you think came to the feast in honor of Queen Esther? How do you think the tables looked loaded with food?

Act: Esther took good care of herself during the year she lived in the palace. How do you take good care of yourself? Why do you think it pleases God that you take good care of yourself?



Help Me, God!

Based on Psalm 28

When you need help with something like homework or learning to pitch a ball or ride a bike, who helps you? When you make a mistake, who helps you learn how to do better next time? Perhaps you ask a parent or grandparent, aunt or uncle, teacher or neighbor to help because you know they love you. Because we know that God loves us, we can ask God for help, too. God may not teach us how to ride a bike, but God can help us be kind and loving.

The book of the Bible called the Psalms is a book of poems and prayers. Some of them ask God for help. They show us how we can ask God for help. This poem-prayer is based on verses from Psalm 28.

Listen, God.

I will cry from the bottom of my heart.

if you do not listen to me.

I am angry about people who do bad things.

They do not care about you.

I do not want to be like them.

You do listen to me, God.

I want to love you, God.

I trust you. You help me

I will thank you with song!



Hear: What do you think this prayer means?

See: How have you seen people pray? What can you do with your hands and face when you pray?

Act: What help would you ask God for? Can you draw a picture and show it to an adult you trust?

Where Does God Live?

Based on Psalm 29:3; Exodus 3:1-6; Acts 2:2; Matthew 3:16

When someone asks you where you live, you might say, “4197 Daisy Lane” or “Tennessee” or “in a yellow house.” But where does God live?

The Bible tells us that God has many homes and can be found in many places, often where we least expect. God is found in the beauty and magnificence of nature—in thunder, in fire and bushes, in the wind, and in a peaceful dove. Jesus often traveled into the wilderness to listen for God’s voice. He knew God could be found in nature.

Many of the words used to describe God in the Bible also give clues to where God might be found: breath, light, mother, father, water, bread of life. These images are like a pin in a map, giving us great ideas of where to look for God. *Breath*, *mother*, and *father* suggest that God lives very, very close to us. God is in our homes, in the people we love the most, and in our own bodies. *Light* and *water* tell us that God lives near the earth. From the highest heights to the deepest depths, God moves,

connecting us all to one another. *Bread of Life* helps us to see God in simple moments like sitting around the dinner table sharing a meal with family or friends.

Solomon built a house for God, and we do the same today. People who love God build sanctuaries and synagogues, mosques and Gurdwaras, places where they can be close to God. God doesn’t live there, but we feel God’s love when we are there.

But God isn’t just found in people or things. God is also found in love. The writer of 1 John tells us that God is the source of love. That means when we treat one another with love, God is there. The best way to discover God’s “address” is to love yourself and others well. When you love like that, you will find God.

Do you have a sense that God is in nature when you play outside and feel the warm sun on your back? Perhaps you feel God’s presence when your parent tucks you in at night or when your friend gives you a big hug. No matter where else God might live, one thing is certain: God lives in you.

Hear: Put your head on your parent’s chest and listen to the heartbeat. That is a God-sound!

See: Where else do you think God lives?

Act: What are some ways you can be a strong home for God’s presence?



Something Big from Something Small

Based on Matthew 13:31–33

God is big. How big? God is too big for us to imagine. Jesus helped people know God by telling stories about the “realm of heaven.” The realm of heaven is what it is like when everyone lives in God’s ways all the time. Each story gives us a little picture of what this would be like.

The realm of heaven is like a mustard seed. Have you ever watched a caterpillar change into a butterfly? Or maybe you have seen a toy car change into a robot. Jesus compared the realm of heaven to how the mustard seed changes. Jesus said, “A farmer plants the teeny, tiny mustard seed. But from that little speck of a seed grows a tree so big that birds can sit on its branches.”

The realm of heaven is like yeast. Pretend you are in a bakery. Take a deep breath. Smell the freshly baked bread. Eat a slice of the warm bread. Mmm! Isn’t it tasty?

Something powerful is hidden in the bread. It is yeast. Yeast makes the bread

dough rise. Jesus told this story about a baker to explain more about the realm of heaven: “A baker mixed yeast into sixty pounds of flour. Thanks to the yeast, the flour changed, or was transformed, into a great lump of dough. The dough was enough to bake bread for at least one hundred people.

These are just two stories about the realm of heaven that Jesus told.

Hear: Sixty pounds of flour is a lot of flour! How much do you weigh? Why do you think Jesus’ story about the realm of heaven is about so much flour?

See: Find mustard seeds in the spice aisle in a grocery store. Look how small they are. This tiny seed changes into a tree big enough for birds to sit on its branches. Why do you think Jesus would talk about birds finding shelter from something that began so small?

Act: The people who heard Jesus’ story about yeast did not think about the yeast we buy in the grocery store. The yeast they used was more like the starter used to bake sourdough bread. Ask someone to help you find a video on the Internet about making sourdough bread. Try making some and sharing it with a friend.



Joanna and Susanna Help Jesus

Based on Luke 8:1-3

Jesus' work kept him very busy. When he wasn't telling stories about God's love, he was making someone well. When he wasn't making someone well, he was feeding someone who was hungry. When he wasn't feeding someone who was hungry, he was answering someone's very big questions about God. Jesus loved his work.

Night and day Jesus stayed busy, but he didn't have a "job." Since he didn't have a job, he didn't have any money. He didn't have a house to live in. He didn't have a wallet because he didn't have any money. How did he live? How did he purchase food? Where did he sleep? The answer to these questions? His friends.

Many people saw the wonderful things that Jesus did. The feeding and the praying. The teaching and the healing. They saw these things and they wanted to help him. Two of these helpers were Joanna and Susanna.

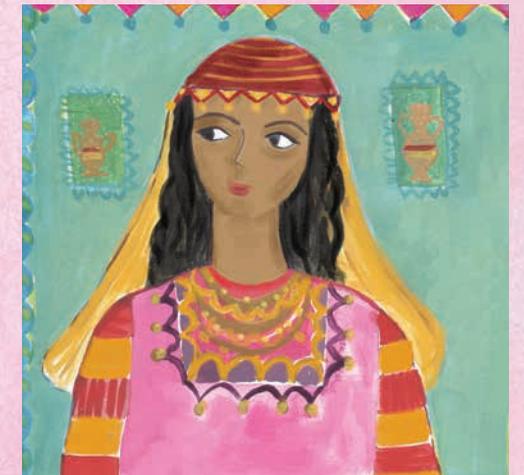
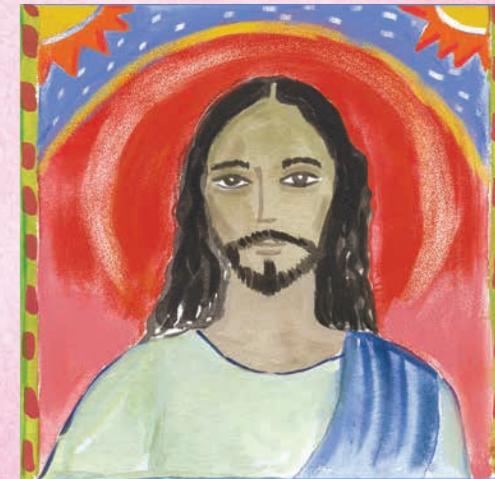
Joanna and Susanna had once been very sick. They had been so sick that no one could make them well. No one except Jesus. He healed them! They felt so grateful to Jesus that they wanted to do something for him. They prayed and they thought and they thought and they prayed. Then they came up with an idea.

They saw that Jesus had no house to live in. They saw that Jesus didn't have a wallet because he didn't have any money of his own. They were worried. "Who takes care of Jesus? What could we do to help him?"

Joanna and Susanna looked at their wonderful houses. They looked inside their full purses. They said, "We have more than we need. We will use our money to feed Jesus and his friends. We will use our money so he can find a place to stay when he travels."

Joanna and Susanna, and others like Mary and Martha and the disciples, were all part of Jesus' work. Their help made it easier for Jesus to share God's love. Their support reminded Jesus that he was never alone.

Hear: You can find another story about Joanna and Susanna in the Bible. Ask a grownup to help you find Luke 24:1-12. What wonderful surprise did Joanna and the other women experience?



See: Look for helpers around you. Where do you see people helping at home, school, or church? What could you do to lend a hand?

Act: Joanna and Susanna had money to share, and they worked together to use it to help spread God's love. Start a penny jar and see how long it takes to fill. How could you use this money to help others?

Jesus Heals with Words

Based on John 4:46-54

What it would be like without telephones or computers that we can use to talk with people far away? Without telephones and computers, people still heard about Jesus and how he healed people. In this story, Jesus does not need to see or touch someone to make them well.

In Capernaum, an important royal official was worried. His son was very sick. He heard that Jesus could make sick people well. When he heard that Jesus was headed to Capernaum, this important official began the long walk to meet Jesus. The journey was long, hot, and dusty. The official walked more than a day before he saw Jesus.

When the official reached Jesus, he fell to his knees. He begged Jesus, "My son is very sick. Please come to my house."

"You just want to see a miracle," Jesus said.

"I want you to make my son better. Please come."

But Jesus said, "Go back home. Your son is alive."

The official trusted Jesus. He started the long journey home.



Before he arrived at his house, his servant ran to meet him. "Your son is alive and well."

"When did he get better?" asked the boy's father.

"Yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon."

"That is the same time I was talking with Jesus. Jesus healed my son without seeing or touching him. Jesus is amazing!"

After this, the official and everyone in his house trusted in Jesus.

Hear: How do you think the boy's father heard about Jesus if there were no telephones or computers?

See: Pretend you are the royal official. Act out the story without using words. How would you look as you walked to meet Jesus? How would you look when your servant came to meet you?

Act: If someone is sad or sick, how can you help them if you cannot see them or be with them?

Jesus at the Pool

Based on John 5:1–13

Jesus heard of a wonderful pool,
Airy and shaded and nice and cool.
If you were sick or body broken
This was water you wanted to soak in.

What's that, you ask? How does it occur?
An angel comes and gives it a stir.
The pool can cure the injured and sick.
Could you believe it? Is this a trick?

Jesus was curious, just like you.
Off he went, to see if it is true.
He found people—sick, wounded, blind—
Had come to leave all their pain behind.

One man was behind the first in line,
Even though he'd been there a long time.
Others rushed past with their heads
bent down,
And no one saw him on the ground.

It didn't take Jesus long to decide
To go to the man, and sit beside,
Look him in the eye, and speak at last:
“Would you like to be well?” Jesus asked.

Hear: What do you think the man heard as he sat by the pool?

See: Have you ever seen someone sitting all alone? Did they look happy or sad? How could you tell?

Act: When have you felt sick or sad? Who helped to heal you?

Then the man told his story out loud:
“I've no one to help me in this crowd.
When I walk to the water, you see,
Someone else steps up in front of me.”

Jesus didn't fill the silence with talk,
Just said, “Stand up, take your mat, and
walk.”
Then the man felt entirely whole,
In both his body and his soul.

He stood right up from where Jesus
kneeled.
For in that moment the man was healed.
Others stopped and asked, “Who made
you well?”
The man shook his head and could
never tell.

For Jesus had not told him his name,
Yet with love, healed the man all the same.
The man looked left, and the man
looked right.
But Jesus was nowhere, not in sight.



Jesus Visits Jerusalem

Based on Luke 19:29–40

What kind of trips do you like to take with your family or friends? Have you gone on trips in your city or town, or farther away? Did you go on a plane, a train, a bus, or by car?

Jesus traveled to cities and small towns to teach the people about God's love. One of the most important trips he took was to Jerusalem, the special holy city.

While he was there, Jesus gave two of the disciples a special task. He said to them, "Go into the village. There you will find a young donkey that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. I want to ride it into Jerusalem."

The disciples were surprised Jesus wanted a donkey to ride, because he always walked everywhere he went. But they loved Jesus and knew he was an important teacher, so they did what he asked. Jesus told them that if anyone asked why they were taking the donkey, they should tell them that he needed it.

They went into the village and found the donkey, just like Jesus had told them. They brought the donkey back to Jesus. The disciples laid cloths on its back so Jesus could ride it.

Now Jesus was ready to ride into Jerusalem. The people following him began to cheer. Crowds lined the streets. Some people joined the disciples and spread their cloths on the road to welcome Jesus. Others wondered why everyone was so excited about a man entering the city on a donkey. Powerful rulers rode big war horses.

The disciples praised Jesus, singing and shouting for joy because of God's love for them. The people welcomed Jesus with blessings, saying "Peace!" The people who knew Jesus and his teaching about love and peace were excited that he was in Jerusalem. They expected great things from this teacher from Galilee.

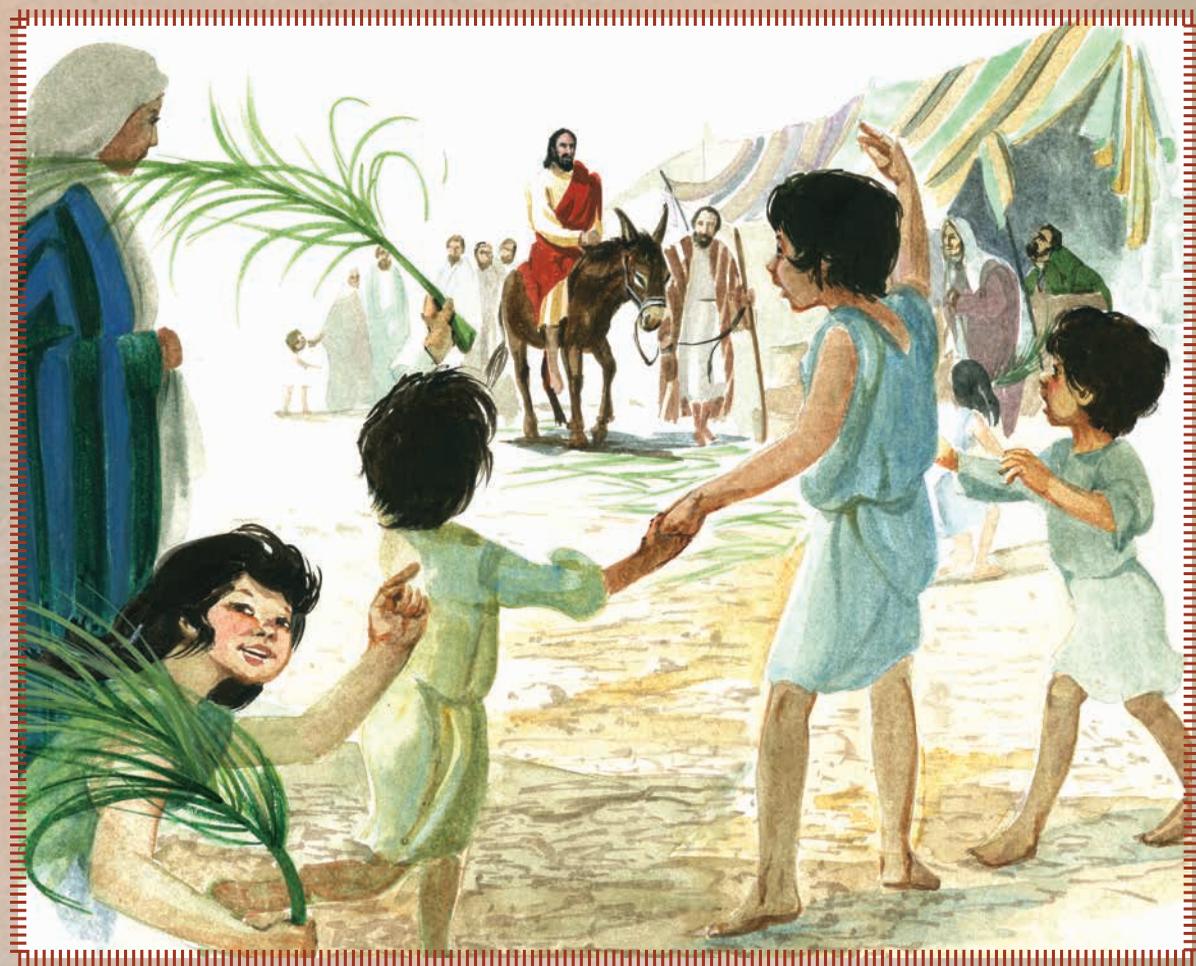
Some teachers of the law (called the Pharisees) were in the crowd. They did not like Jesus being praised so much when he was not a king. They also worried that Jesus would upset the Roman officials. They thought he didn't deserve all this celebration because he was only a teacher riding a donkey. They said to Jesus, "Teacher Jesus, tell your disciples to stop praising you like a king! It's not the right thing to do because you're not our king!"

Jesus told them, "I tell you the truth, if they were silent and did not sing praises, the very stones on this earth beneath us would shout out."

Hear: When have you heard people cheer or shout with joy?

See: Who is in the crowd watching Jesus? Draw a picture of Jesus' followers.

Act: Think of someone you want to celebrate and praise. How would you show that person that you love him or her?



Living Together

Based on Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35

When children move in next door, it takes time to get to know each other. As you play together you learn how to get along. For example, you find ways to agree on the rules for a game you are playing. After all the people were baptized on Pentecost, they needed to learn how to get along.

The people who believed in Jesus wanted to be together. After they were baptized, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. But how were they going to live together day after day?

The disciples taught them about Jesus and what he taught. The people ate meals together like a family. They spent time together like a family. They also prayed for one another.

When one person was shivering in the cold, someone gave him a coat, and he was warm again. Perhaps another person was hungry. Someone gave her food, and they ate together. When anything was needed, those who owned things sold them. They gave the money to the believers so that everyone had enough. No one was left out.



Because they were all Jews, the people went to the temple every day. When they got home again, they ate together. They prayed, and ate, and laughed together. Everyone was happy and loved.

Other people watched them. “What’s going on with you folks?” someone asked.

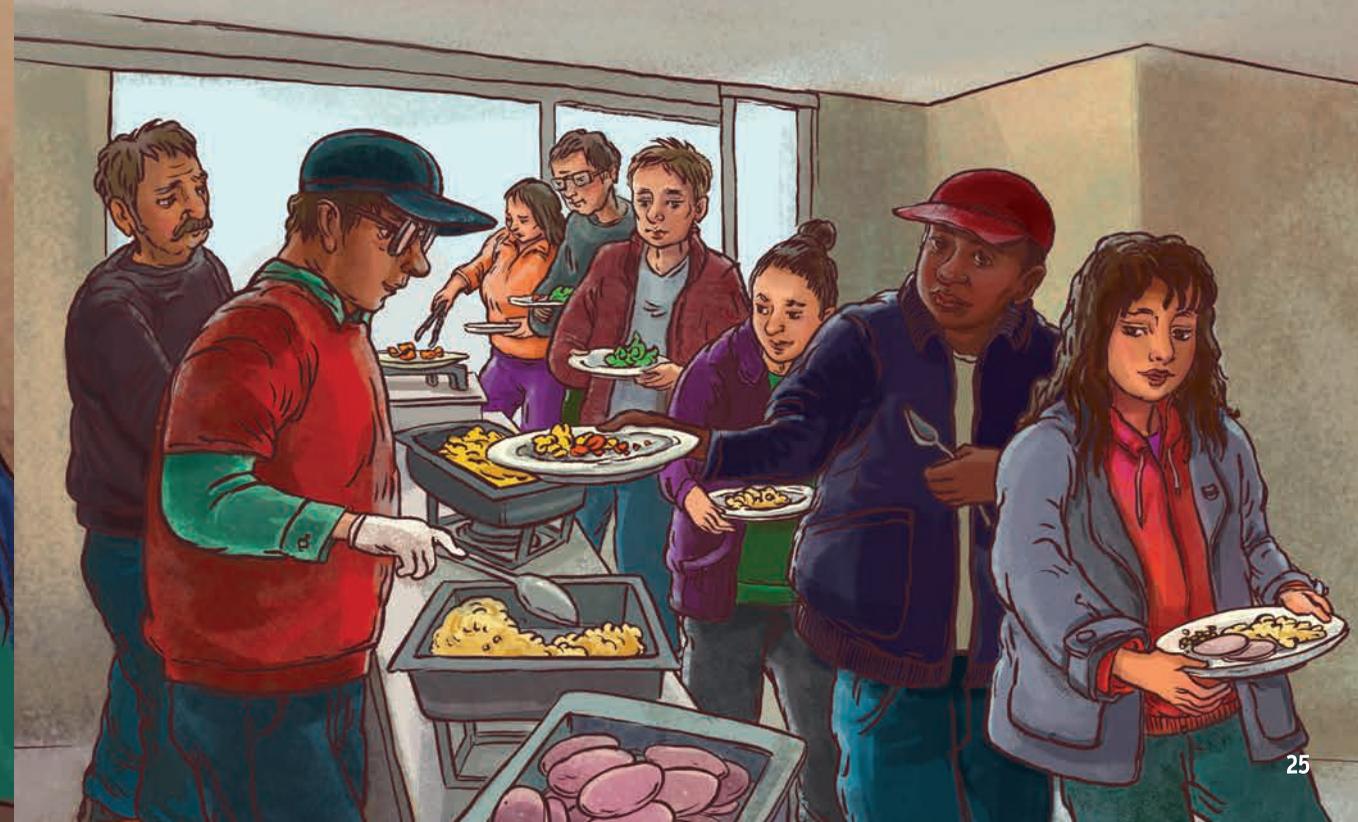
The believers in Jesus smiled and said, “We have been baptized! We’re so filled with the Holy Spirit that we could burst! Jesus has saved me! Jesus has saved my friends and family! Do you want to know more about Jesus?”

When people heard this, they felt the Holy Spirit. They wanted to learn more about Jesus. More and more, the people showed everyone God’s love. More and more people were baptized. More and more people believed in Jesus.

Hear: What does it sound like when people are praising God? How do you praise God? Ask someone you love how it sounds when they praise God.

See: Who is in your church? Look around next time you are there. Draw a picture of the people you see. These people are part of your church family.

Act: Look at the pictures on these pages. How are the people showing love or helping others? What are some ways you can share with others?



You Can Do It!

Based on Hebrews 12:1-2

Have you ever thought you couldn't do something because it was going to be hard? It can be hard to take a test in school. It can be hard to get along with a friend. It can be hard to run for a long time. Sometimes just being you can be hard.

Letters in the Bible are usually written to a person or a church. But the letter to the Hebrews was written to all the Jews who believed in Jesus Christ. It seems that many of them were having a hard time. People who didn't believe in Jesus were mean to them. The Roman rulers hunted them down. This letter has words to encourage them and help them be brave. Perhaps they will help you to be brave and do hard things too.



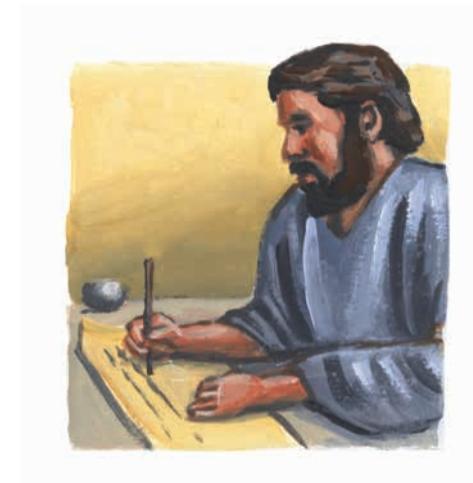
“Let's all run the race of life God has given us. We can do this because a great cloud of witnesses have done it before us.

“Who is in that cloud of witnesses? God told Moses to free God's people, the Israelites who were slaves in Egypt. Moses was afraid of the Egyptian pharaoh. But God gave him courage to lead the people to the Promised Land.

“Then remember Ruth. She stayed with her mother-in-law Naomi. They went back to Bethlehem, a new home for Ruth. It was not easy for her to go to a strange land.”

Remember Miriam, David, Samuel, Esther, and all the prophets of God; they are all in the cloud of witnesses. Each one of them gives us courage to be strong people of God and followers of Jesus today.

The letter to the Hebrews says to keep trying, even when it is hard. Even when we think we can't, we must try. Above all, we keep our eyes on Jesus. Jesus loves us. Jesus believes in us. With Jesus we can do anything, even if it is hard!



Hear: Think of a time when you had to do something hard. Who asked you to do this? Why was it hard?

See: Who are some people in your life who help you do something hard? They are in your great cloud of witnesses. How do they help you?

Act: How will you keep your eyes on Jesus so he can help you do something hard?

The Lord's Prayer

Based on Luke 11:1-4

When do you pray to God? What do you say? Jesus' disciples wanted to know how to pray.

Jesus often went off by himself to pray to God. One day when he returned from praying, one of the disciples said, "John the baptizer taught his disciples to pray. Why don't you teach us to pray as you do?"

Jesus said to them, "When you pray, pray like this:

"Our God your name is forever holy.

'May your plan for your world—to be a place of healing and freedom for everyone—be our work on earth just as it is in heaven.

'Give us what we need for today.

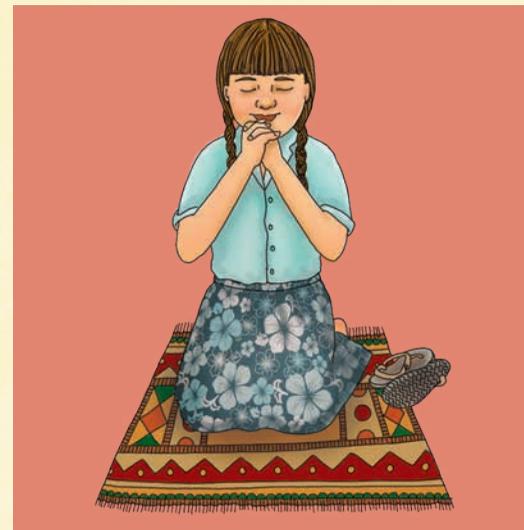
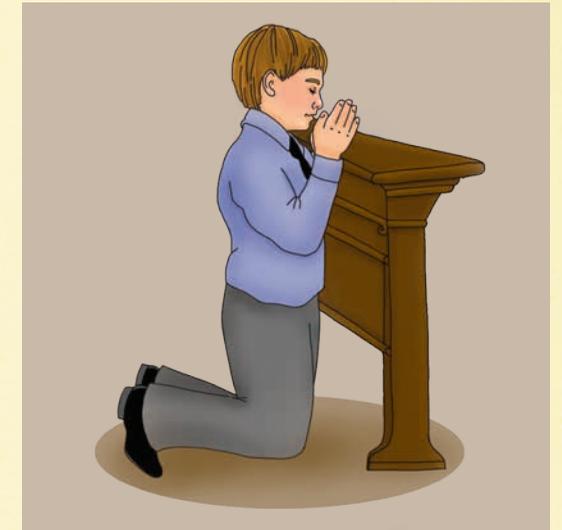
'When we do something that is wrong, forgive us. And help us remember to do that for others.

'Don't ever let us do something that is wrong. Amen.'"

Hear: When do you hear people pray a prayer almost like this?

See: What does it mean to you to pray these words?

Act: What other prayers do you say?



How Big Is God's Love?

You've come to the last story! Do you have a favorite? Is there anything that connects these stories?

Imagine a big, thick, warm quilt. And the colors? Fabrics in every color of the rainbow are in this quilt of God's love—magenta and brown, green and yellow, red and black, turquoise and purple. Every color is needed.

This quilt tells a story. Each square reminds you of God's love.

One square helps you remember how God created the waters and the land, plants and animals, and us.

Another square shows Miriam and Moses leading God's people out of slavery to freedom. God's love followed them with manna to eat and water to drink.

Find the square with Jonah. God had a hard time getting Jonah to understand about loving people who were different from him, people he didn't like.

When you don't feel brave, look at Queen Esther. She knew that God loved her, and this love made her strong enough to stand up to the king and save her people.

When you wonder what God wants you to do in this world, remember Micah. He reminded God's people that when we love God we treat people fairly.

John the Baptist saw God's love coming down when he baptized Jesus.

Jesus helped people know how much God wanted them to love everyone. That included people who were differently abled, people who were different from them. Jesus shared bread with people that others didn't like.

When people were trying to understand what God's realm looked like, Jesus told them to talk with children, because the children already knew.

After Jesus returned to God, God's Spirit stayed with everyone. She reminded them how to share food and share what they had with others who needed it.

When we love God, we take care of God's world.

When we love God, we share God's love with others.

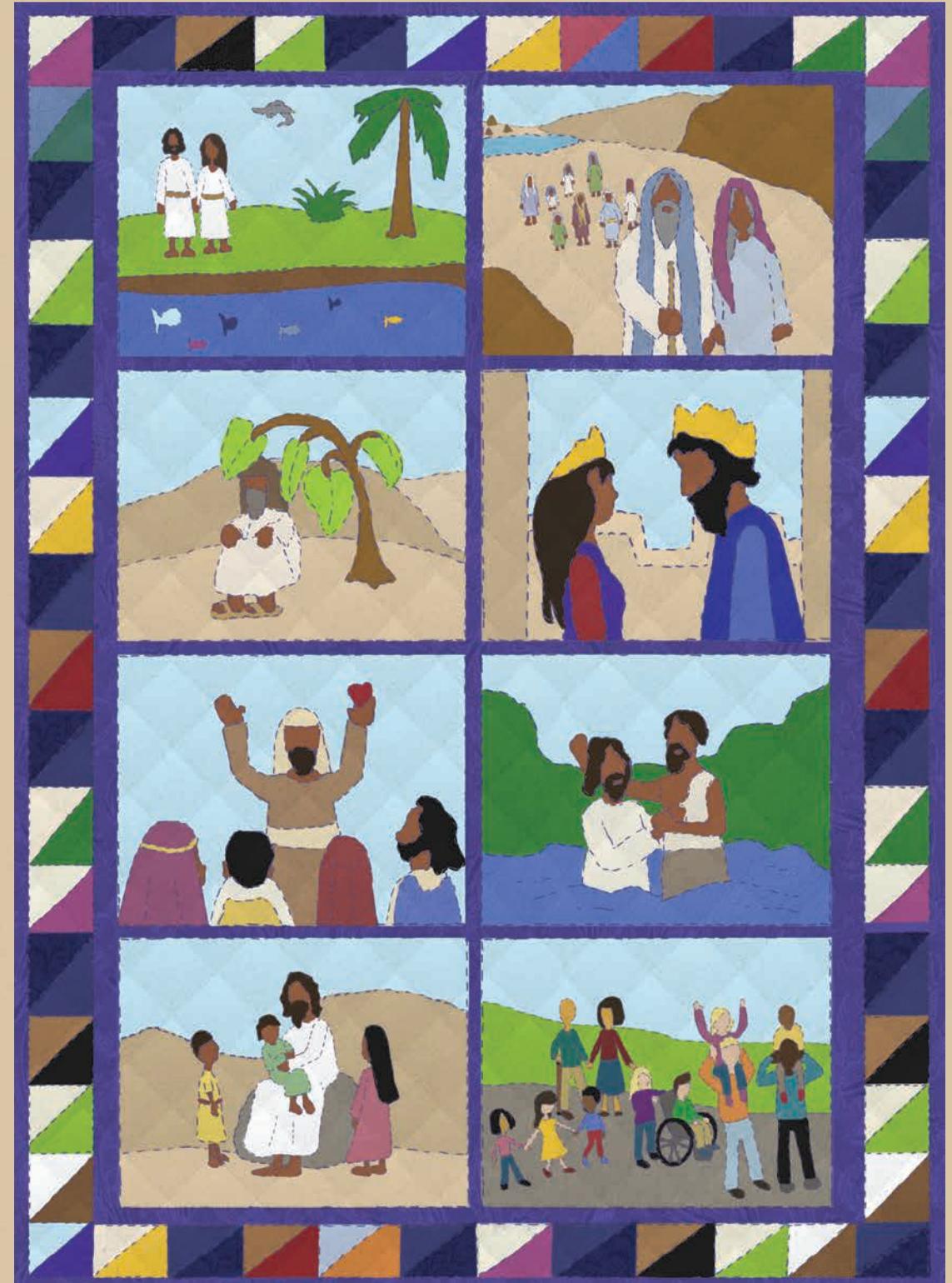
When we love God, we are kind and helpful.

God's love is very big. How big is your love?

Hear: What words from God would you like to hear God say?

See: What other stories would you like to add to the quilt?

Act: How can you show God's love?



About the Contributors

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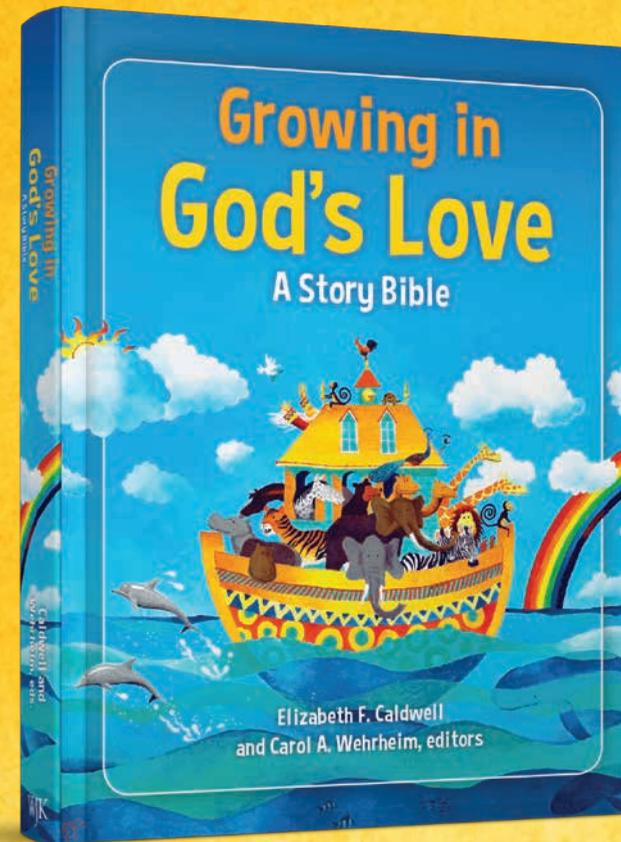
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