

Tropinkka

The Little Path

Christian Magazine for Kids



What is the recipe
for a happy
family?

Love and
faithfulness!



Exploring Faith
With Friends
Around the World!



Issue #2
2012

Natasha BOYKOV

A GIFT

Isn't God amazing?
He made me, I'm alive!
He gave me friends and family,
A home where I can thrive,



My health and my salvation,
Good food and clothes to wear.
All these and more God gave me
To show His love and care.

Illustrated
by Julia PRAVDOHINA

I want to tell Him, "Thank you!"
And give Him something, too.
What should I give Him, Mom?
Give me a hint or two.

Does He want my new necklace,
My toys, my piggy bank?
Or how about some candy?
How can I show my thanks?

My darling, you can offer God
Your worship and your love.
Your heart is treasured more than gold
By the One who reigns above!



Elena MIKULA

TOO COSTLY

Part 8

"Today we'll read the next commandment," Mary said, opening the Bible. "It's short like the sixth one, but it's not as clear, especially for children. 'You shall not commit adultery,'" she read. "I think that means 'Do not betray your family.' People don't like to talk about adultery."

"Is it because they're too embarrassed?" Peter wondered.



"They probably are; after all it's a sin. When a man and woman get married they promise to be faithful to each other. They stay together, live in the same house, and raise children. They become a family. In Matthew, it says, 'And the two shall become one flesh.' It's like they're one person. In a marriage between two people there's no room for a stranger."





Peter thought for a moment. Then he said, “Do you remember when Marie Hawkins missed a whole month of school?”

“Yes, I remember.”

“When Marie came back she told us she hadn’t been feeling well, but it wasn’t because she was sick. Marie doesn’t like to talk about it, but we live in the same apartment building and her grandma comes over to talk to my mom. Marie’s dad had to do a lot of traveling because of his job and, while he was traveling, he met some woman in another town. He started traveling just about every month to meet with her. Then his daughter – a baby girl – was born in that town he kept visiting. When Marie’s mom found out about it, she cried for a long time. Then she asked for a divorce. Marie loves both her mom and her dad. She was so depressed she had to go to a clinic to get help, at least that’s what her grandma said.”

“Did her parents get a divorce?” Mary asked.

“Yes, but now her dad has to split his time between two families. He understands what he did to Marie and her mom was wrong and he misses Marie, but now he has a baby girl and he can’t just leave her. It’s just bad all around.”

“Yes, it’s a terrible thing,” Mary sighed. “A sin like adultery hurts many people.”

Together, Peter and Mary silently colored the letters of the seventh commandment.

“Does Jesus say anything about this commandment in the New Testament?” Peter asked.

“He says not to even look at another woman...”

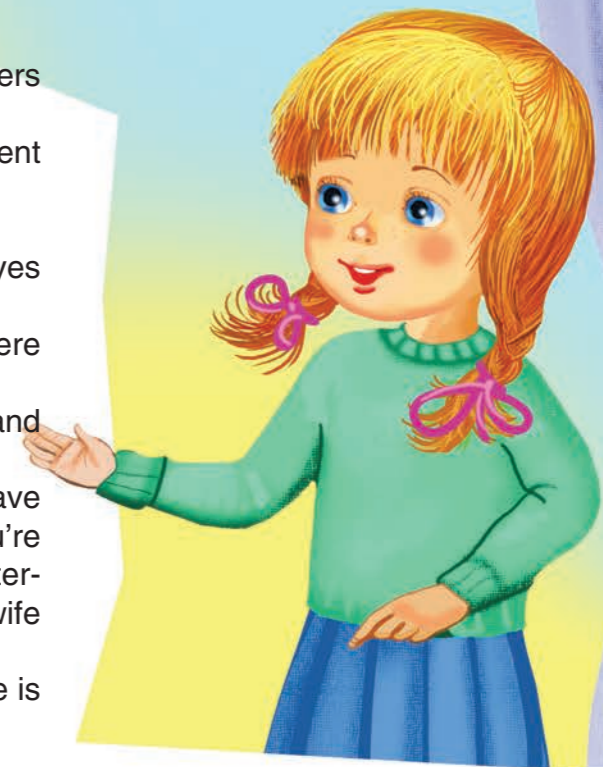
“So we’re supposed to go around with our eyes closed?” Peter interrupted.

“I was going to add ‘and think wrong thoughts.’ There are different ways to look at another person.”

“There are?” Peter wondered. He looked at Mary and blinked a couple times, then shook his head.

“A person can just look, or they can look and have sinful desires,” Mary explained. “For example, you’re married, but you think your neighbor’s wife is better-looking than your wife. You look at your neighbor’s wife and think, ‘It would be better if I had married her!’”

“No way, I’m never going to think like that. My wife is going to be the best one of them all!” Peter smiled.



“I hope you find a wife like that, Peter. It is a very important matter.”

“Ok, Mary, I understand what the Bible says to men about this subject, but what about women? What does the Bible say to them?” Peter asked.

“When it comes to being faithful in a marriage, this commandment applies to both men and women. One difference is that for women there are more consequences for breaking this commandment. Often the woman is left to raise the child by herself, and that is very hard.”

Once again, Peter was silent as he thought about Marie Hawkins and her mom.

“Remember in Sunday School when we heard that the Church is the bride of Christ?” Mary added. “Those who believe in Jesus Christ are the church, so we are that bride. That means we have to be faithful to Christ in everything. When we don’t obey God we are breaking that promise to be faithful.”

“Mary, I just thought of something. Let’s pray! If you and I are the bride of Christ, then we need to be faithful in everything – including praying and talking to him! After all, we love Jesus Christ!”



Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA

(To be continued)



The Seventh Commandment

Today, we're going to talk about the seventh commandment. First, let's read what the Bible says about families. "So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." (Genesis 2:21-24).

That's how God created the first family. One husband was married to one wife. When someone gets married, it's for life. That's why God gave us the seventh commandment.

"You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).



You probably already know what this word means. Adultery means being unfaithful to the one you married. It's when a husband decides some other woman is better than his wife, or when a wife decides she'd be happier with a man who is not her husband. However, God knows that's not true. It doesn't matter what the books and movies say. If you can't be happy with the person to whom you've been joined by God, you can't be happy with anyone. God made it clear that man has no right to separate what He has joined together.

When Jesus told the people around him that a marriage and a family is created for life, he scared some people. They couldn't imagine how that was possible. So many of the people at that time were marrying, getting divorced, then remarrying and once again getting a divorce. Jesus also said it's very important to love one another and not look at others with lustful, impure thoughts. That's what it takes to have a happy family.

The commandment "Do not commit adultery" is for adult, married people, but it's important to know this commandment from an early age. Knowing what God teaches about this subject as you're growing up will help you not make mistakes in the future. I have one more warning for you, be careful when you're watching movies, surfing the internet, and reading books. Some may seem harmless and fun but, if they show sin in such a way that it corrupts the heart and mind, they cause people to have the wrong attitude about family and marriage. Don't watch such things and don't do anything that you wouldn't do if Jesus Christ was with you in the same room. The Bible says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

It's important to stay pure. Any sexual relationship before marriage and outside of marriage is forbidden by God because He knows what is best for us and what will harm us. After all, He is our creator and He is very clear when He says, "You shall not commit adultery."

Waldemar ZORN

Natasha BOYKOV

BE FAITHFUL

Sunset steals the colors,
Leaving cold blue-gray.
Standing by the window,
I watch the shadows play.

City life is noisy,
People everywhere.
One might be my daddy.
He's gone and it's not fair.

Mommy says he loves me.
Yes, I know it's true,
But we're not together.
I only wish he knew:

Love is kind and patient,
Love would not betray
Kids, a wife, a family.
Love is faithful day by day.

Even though it's painful
And I don't understand,
I know God still loves me.
He holds me in His hand.

He is our creator,
Of course He knows what's best.
His Word says, "No adultery."
Be faithful, you'll be blessed.

Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA





JOSEPH in the house of POTIPHAR

Waldemar ZORN

Illustrated
by Alexander BASS

You probably remember that Joseph's brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites, whose caravan was heading to Egypt. So there he was, standing with the other slaves, waiting to see who would buy him. A man named Potiphar noticed Joseph. Potiphar was the captain of Pharaoh's guards. After a little haggling, Potiphar weighed out the required amount of silver coins and handed them over. Joseph did whatever Potiphar told him to do and God gave him success in everything he did. Potiphar saw God's blessing on his house because of Joseph. That's why he put Joseph in charge of his entire household and all his slaves and servants. God continued to bless Potiphar's house because of Joseph.

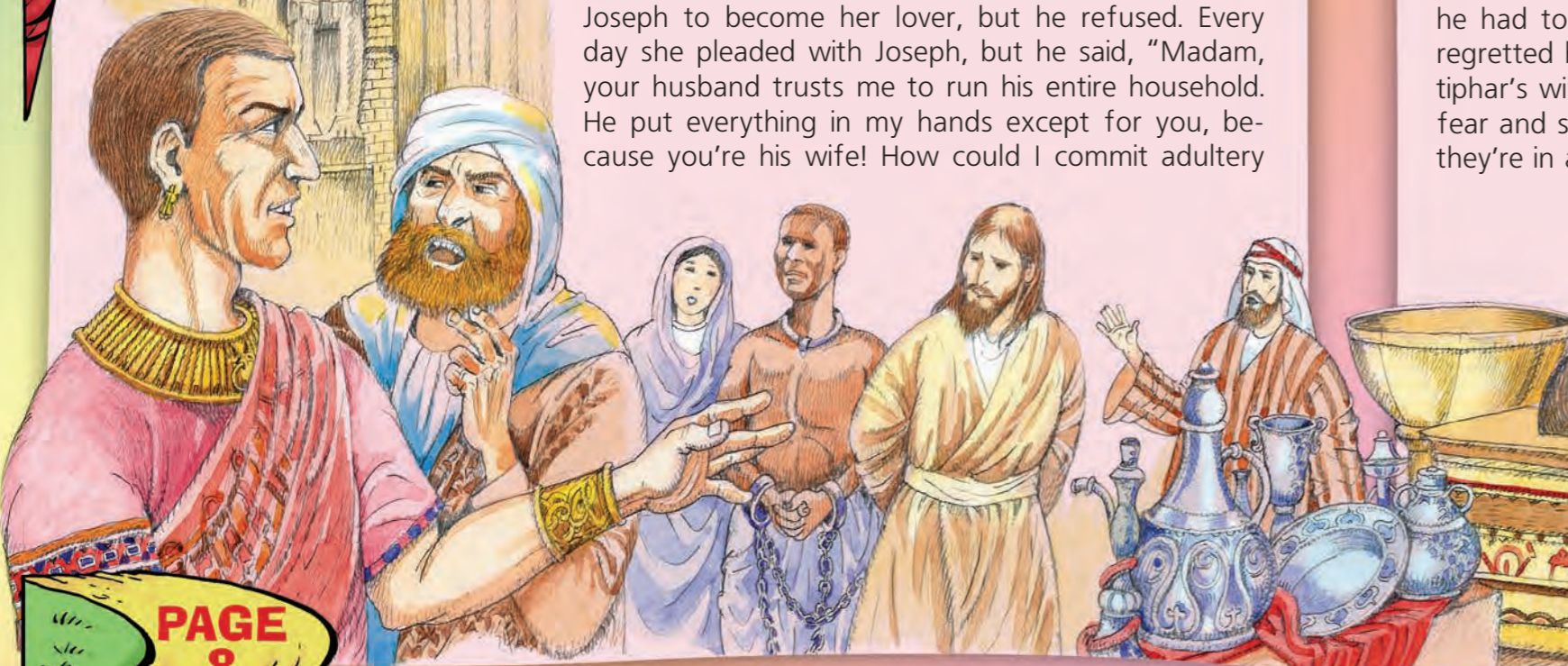
Good food, fresh air, and God's blessing did their work – Joseph became an attractive, well-built young man. Potiphar's wife fell in love with him. She wanted Joseph to become her lover, but he refused. Every day she pleaded with Joseph, but he said, "Madam, your husband trusts me to run his entire household. He put everything in my hands except for you, because you're his wife! How could I commit adultery

with his wife? How could I sin against God?" The days passed, but Joseph remained steadfast in his decision. He knew God and feared sinning against Him.

One day, Joseph entered the house and was going about his work. None of the other servants were around. Joseph and Potiphar's wife found themselves alone. Seeing her chance, Potiphar's wife said, "Let's go to my room, I want you to come to bed with me." She grabbed Joseph's clothes, but he tore himself out of her arms and ran out of the house. That left her holding the cloak he had been wearing. Joseph's wife started shouting, "Help! That slave tried to take advantage of me and force me to lie with him." The other servants heard her cries and came running. She showed them Joseph's cloak and said that he had tried to take her by force, but ran away when she screamed, leaving his clothes in her hands.

When Potiphar came home from work, his wife repeated her story saying, "Look! The Hebrew slave that you brought into our house tried to force me to do a terrible thing. I screamed and he ran out of the house, leaving his cloak in my arms." Potiphar was very angry and had Joseph put in the prison where Pharaoh kept all his criminals.

It didn't seem right. How could God let such an injustice happen? God was still in control and He had a plan. Even while Joseph was in prison, God was with him and blessed him. Soon the warden of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Even though he had to spend many years in prison, Joseph never regretted his choice to obey God and not sin with Potiphar's wife. He knew God would be with those who fear and serve Him in purity and holiness no matter if they're in a beautiful house or a dark, dirty prison.



MARRIED COUPLES

Did you know which of the people listed below are husband and wife? Who is married to whom? Each man has a number in front of his name. Write the husband's number in front of his wife's name to match up the married couples.



- 1 Abraham
- Sapphira
- 7 Xerxes
- 2 Aquila
- Hannah
- Deborah
- Sarah
- Priscilla
- 8 Ananias
- 3 Isaac
- 4 Adam
- Rebekah
- 6 Boaz
- Esther
- 9 Lappidoth
- Eve
- 5 Elkanah
- Ruth

GOOD NEWS!

PUZZLE PAGE

Adapted from puzzle by Lira ROMANUK

Solve the crossword.



WHO?

4 **WHO** sentenced Jesus to death?

1 **WHO** was stoned because of his faith in Christ?

b) **Thomas**

8 **WHO** hid the two spies sent to spy on Jericho?

d) **Stephen**

Created by Katya SHABALINA

5 **WHO** brought Nathaniel to Jesus?

e) **Pilate**

3 **WHO** was Moses' older brother?

f) **Philip**

2 **WHO** drowned in the Red Sea?

c) **Rahab**

g) **Judas**

7 **WHO** betrayed Jesus?

h) **Aaron**

6 **WHO** doubted Jesus had risen from the dead?

ACROSS:

- 2. "You are the ____ of the earth" (Matthew 5:13)
- 5. This man was told he would not die until he had seen the Christ (Luke 2:25-26)
- 6. Jesus wept over this city (Luke 19:28-44)
- 7. "____, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time" (Judges 4:4)
- 10. This son of David became king after his father (1 Kings 1:32-35)

DOWN:

- 1. The first leader of Israel (Exodus 3:1-10)
- 2. The Lord is my _____ (Psalm 23:1)
- 3. What has separated man from God? (Isaiah 59:2)
- 4. What was the name of the daughter whom Saul gave to David? (1 Samuel 18:27)
- 5. She was the wife of Abraham (Genesis 17:15-16)
- 6. Disciple who betrayed Jesus (Matthew 26:47-50)
- 8. The first bird Noah released from the ark (Genesis 8:4-7)
- 9. What did the five foolish virgins forget to bring? (Matthew 25:1-3)

Check your answers on page 31

Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA



I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

"Samantha, please bring the hymn books."
"Which ones?" asked the lively 11-year-old girl. "Can we use the red ones tonight? Please, daddy, can we?"

Mr. Nicholas nodded his head. The red hymn book had many children's songs that Samantha and her twin brothers loved. Soon the whole family was singing, "Do you know the Son of God? The Son of God? The Son of God? Do you know the Son of God who died and rose again?"

"How do we know he died and rose again?" asked little Daniel.

"Yeah, how can we be sure?" asked his brother.

"What happened to Jesus after he died?"

"First his body was laid in a tomb carved into the rock," Mrs. Nicholas told them.

"Why didn't they bury him in the ground?" Daniel wondered.

"His body was laid in a tomb because that's how the Jews buried their dead."

"And where was Jesus if they just put his body in the tomb?" Daniel asked.

"He was with His Father," answered Mr. Nicholas as he opened his Bible. Looking over his children, he continued his explanation.

"It says here that on Sunday Jesus' body was no longer in the tomb."

"The kids at school think it's because his disciples came and stole the

body," Samantha added. "Daddy, how can I prove that they're wrong?"

"Why do they say the disciples stole the body?" Michael asked.

"They don't believe the Bible," Samantha explained.

Mr. Nicholas nodded in agreement. "Everyone has to choose to believe God's Word. For me, the Bible is God's personal letter to mankind. I've seen that we can experience what it says."

"Is that enough to convince people that Jesus rose again?"

"No, Samantha. Even one of Jesus' disciples didn't believe. He wasn't with the other disciples the evening Jesus appeared to them while they met together in the locked room. Jesus suddenly appeared among them and spoke to them. When Thomas came, the other disciples beamed with happiness as they told him,

"We saw the Lord!" He just shook his head and answered, "Until I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were...I will not believe it." Several days later, Jesus once again appeared to the disciples and told Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands...Stop doubting and believe."

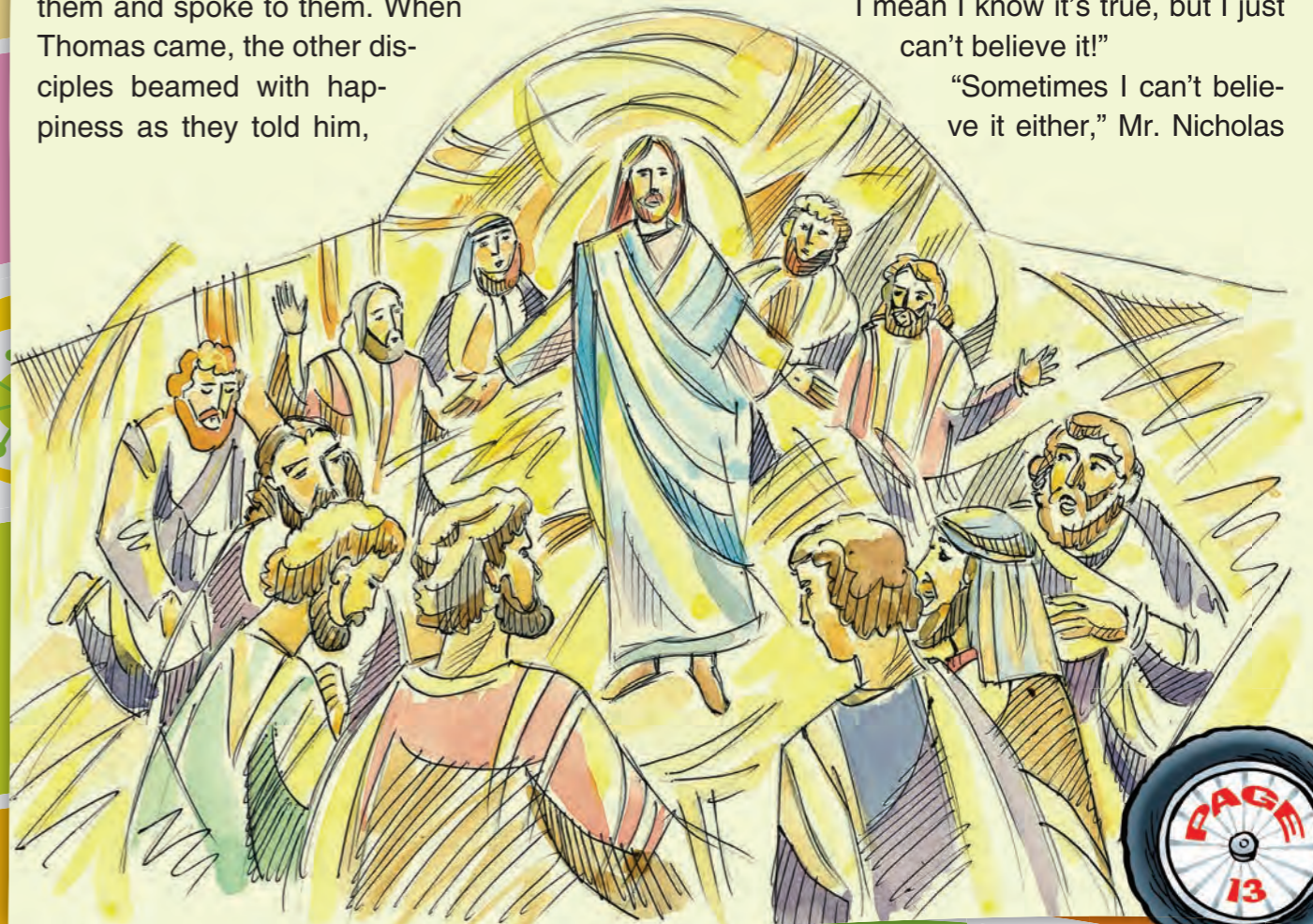
"That's great!" Michael exclaimed. "Maybe Jesus could come and say that to me!"

Mr. Nicholas smiled. "You know, Michael, these Bible stories were written so that we would know what happened and believe. When he saw Jesus, Thomas was completely overcome and cried out, 'My Lord and my God.'"

"Still, it would be cool if Jesus came and showed me His hands," Michael decided.

"Then I'd be completely convinced. I mean I know it's true, but I just can't believe it!"

"Sometimes I can't believe it either," Mr. Nicholas



calmly added. All the kids turned to look at their father.

"If that's so hard to believe, then how do we know the Bible is true?" Samantha asked. Her parents knew she had been having a hard time explaining what she believed at school and often came home very discouraged.

Mr. Nicholas thought for a moment. "It's because I've experienced the truths of God's Word. Like I said earlier, when I obey I can see that God keeps His promises. If Jesus Christ never rose from the dead, He wouldn't be able to do anything. I know I belong to God because I've asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. He gives me the courage to trust Him when I am alone and have to go against the current and not do what everyone else is doing. Samantha, sometimes I also get discouraged, but

then I talk to Jesus. He hears and answers me. He does it differently; sometimes He just gives me a sense of peace. Sometimes He makes it clear what I should do next. At other times, He helps me through your questions or brings different Bible verses to my mind. I don't always understand everything He says, but I see Christ's presence and the work He is doing in my life."

"That means we don't always have to understand everything, right Daddy? Lots of times I don't have all the answers and the other kids laugh at me when I say that Jesus is alive."

"You don't have to understand everything, Samantha. God is so great that we cannot understand everything He does, but He will influence others through you if you love and obey Him."



Illustrated by Inna KOZINA

Help the shepherd find the lost lamb.

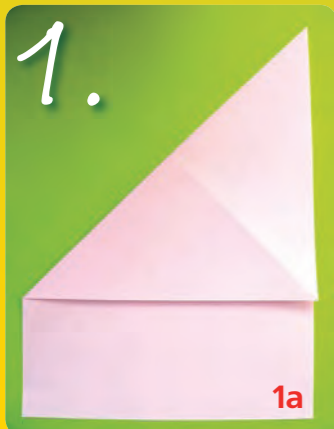
LABYRINTH



Illustrated by Elena MIKULA

CRAFT CORNER

Craft The Heart



1a

Take a standard sized (8.5 x 11 in.) piece of paper and fold it as shown in picture 1a. Unfold it and fold it as shown in picture 1b. Unfold it once again and fold the top edge down as pictured in 1c, folding it at the spot where the creases from the first two folds meet.



1b



1c



2.

Take the top, right corner and push it inside, into the middle as shown in the picture. Then do the same to the top left corner. You now have what looks like a "house."

3.

The "roof" of your house is a triangle. Take the left and right corners of the triangle and fold them up toward the top corner. Take the left "wall" of the "house" and bring it to the middle. Do the same to the right "wall".



4.



Flip your paper over. Take the top corner and fold it down.

5.

Fold the rectangular part in half by folding it up so that its bottom edge lines up with the long part of the triangle.



6.

Fold the bottom corners up and bring them to the middle.



8.

Flip the heart over and write a Bible verse on it!

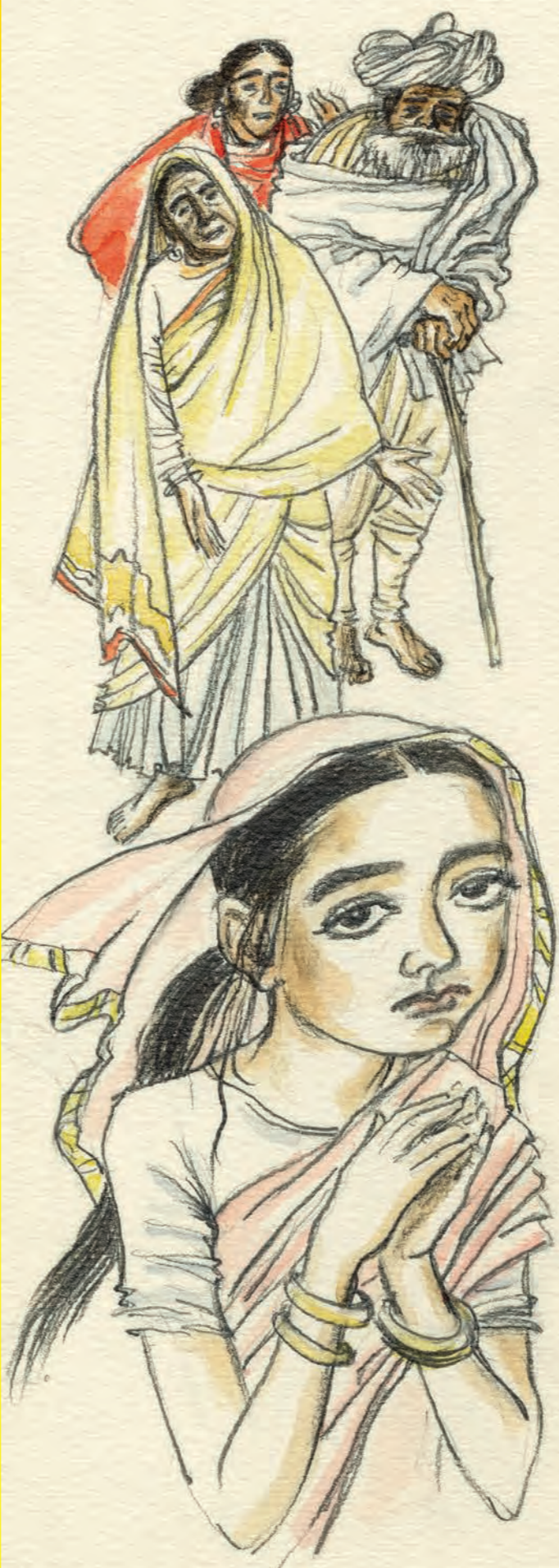
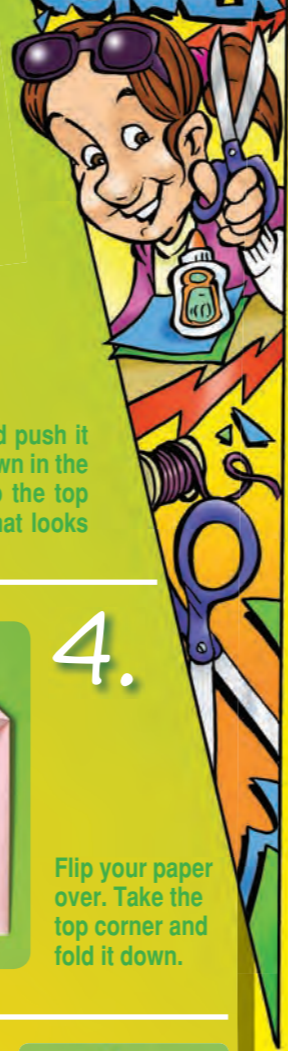


7.

Finally, take the top corners of your diamond, fold them down, and tuck each one into a "pocket" to make a heart shape.



Create in me a pure heart, o God
Psalm 51:10



M. ZEGESSER

SHANTI?

A true story

"Could you take in a poor, starving child?" The missionary who ran a school in Sarata, India read the postcard. It mentioned a starving child. Would they have room? The missionary knew they could find room if they all squeezed together and wrote back saying she would take the child.

Several days later she received a skinny, little girl. The girl's parents and several brothers and sisters had died of hunger. Only one brother was left and he lived far away.

Little Shanti easily adapted to the rules of the school and her new life. She did the housework, learned to bake bread, cook rice, and make curry – the national dish. She learned many other things, too. At school, she eagerly studied what she was given, and her voice rang out with the voices of the other children, as they sang songs about Jesus. When it was time to pray, Shanti also folded her dark little hands and spoke to the invisible God. More than anything else, she wanted to belong to Him.

Yes, Shanti really did want this above all else. Her lonely little heart clung with all its might to the One who lives forever and who promised to be with her always. Even death wouldn't be able to take Him away. Even though God was invisible to her eyes, she knew He was real. When Shanti prayed she didn't use big, flowery words. Instead, she told God what was in her heart.

Sometimes she thought about her brother. She wanted to know where he was and what he was doing. He was older – already an adult – and she was just eleven years old. He probably didn't have time for her. Maybe he had forgotten he even had a little sister.



One beautiful day, the missionary received a letter from Shanti's brother. In the letter, he said he missed Shanti and asked if she could come visit him for the holidays. He promised to bring Shanti back before the end of her vacation so she could continue her studies.

The missionary sent for the girl. After repeating the older brother's request, she asked Shanti if she wanted to go. Shanti beamed.

"Oh, Mama!" she cried, "I really want to go and see him. I want to know how he's doing. It's not far away. Soon I'll come back and tell you all about it."

This normally quiet girl suddenly came to life. She joyfully chattered on and on, telling the missionary about her plans.

"Mama, you know I'll definitely be back," she said, "because I still have a lot to learn, right? I'm not even twelve years old! Isn't it great that my brother wants to bring me back himself? Then he will know where I live and he'll be able to see you."

Shanti laughed happily. Her dark eyes shone. "I'm so glad I have a brother. I miss him so much! Except for him, I don't have any other relatives in the whole world."

When the holidays began, the children who were going home to see their parents went to the train station. People made sure they got on the right train so they could reach their destination.

Shanti also got on the train. Her face reflected the importance of this moment. How exciting to see another little corner of the world! She looked forward to sharing it with her brother for the next few weeks and being able to call it home.

However, when Shanti finally met her adult brother, he was not the person she expected him to be. The brother she met was cold and unfriendly. As soon as she arrived, he told her she had been sold! Her wedding with the unknown buyer was supposed to happen later that day.

"But I don't want to get married!" the poor girl exclaimed in despair. "I have to go back to school!"



Did you know...

that when pigeons choose their mates, they stay together for life? They care for each other and both help raise the young. If one of the pigeons dies then — and only then — will the other find a new mate to love and cherish as long as they both shall live.

Her words made no difference because her brother's heart was as hard as stone.

"In the letter you promised Mama you'd bring me back to Satara," Shanti cried. "If you don't take me back, you'll be a liar!"

Her brother looked down at her and shrugged to show he didn't care.

Shanti's eyes flashed with anger. "If I knew your plan, I never would have come! Is this how you repay me for loving you?"

Sobs shook the girl's body, but she forced herself to calm down and once again tried to reason with her brother. Stretching her arms out to him, she begged saying, "Please, dear brother, let me go back. Let me go to school. Don't make me think the worst of you."

However, Shanti's brother remained untouched by her grief. "I already received money in exchange for you," he answered coldly. "Everything is ready for your wedding and your future mother-in-law is coming to take you to the temple."

"But I don't want to go to the temple. I don't want to make the offering to the gods," the girl cried.

"You have to," he replied. "Now put on these wedding clothes. No one must see you're a Christian!"

Shanti did whatever she could to resist, but he forced her to change. Although he wouldn't listen, she kept repeating, "Don't make me worship Devi! I pray to Jesus and worship Him alone. I don't want to worship idols. I'm won't serve Devi!"

Her brother rudely interrupted her with threats and even started to beat her. Then her future mother-in-law arrived. She wanted to look at the bride-to-be. Shanti turned away from both of them and wept.

"It's time to go to the temple. Get dressed," the mother-in-law ordered.

They put the wedding ornaments on the helpless child and took her to the temple. At the temple, they stood before the priest as he waited for Shanti to make the offering to the gods.

"No, I can't make the offering. I'm a Christian. I belong to my Lord and Savior and I won't worship idols. I'd rather die!" Shanti cried.

Since they couldn't convince her or get their way with threats, they started beating the girl. Even that didn't work.

"Fine, you can go hungry until you come to your senses!" the groom's relatives shouted. Insults rained down on the girl's head. They dragged her off to their house saying, "We'll show you how quickly hunger changes your mind. You'll soon come back to the religion you betrayed."

Trembling with fear, Shanti looked at the angry faces and the clenched fists, but remained firm in her decision.

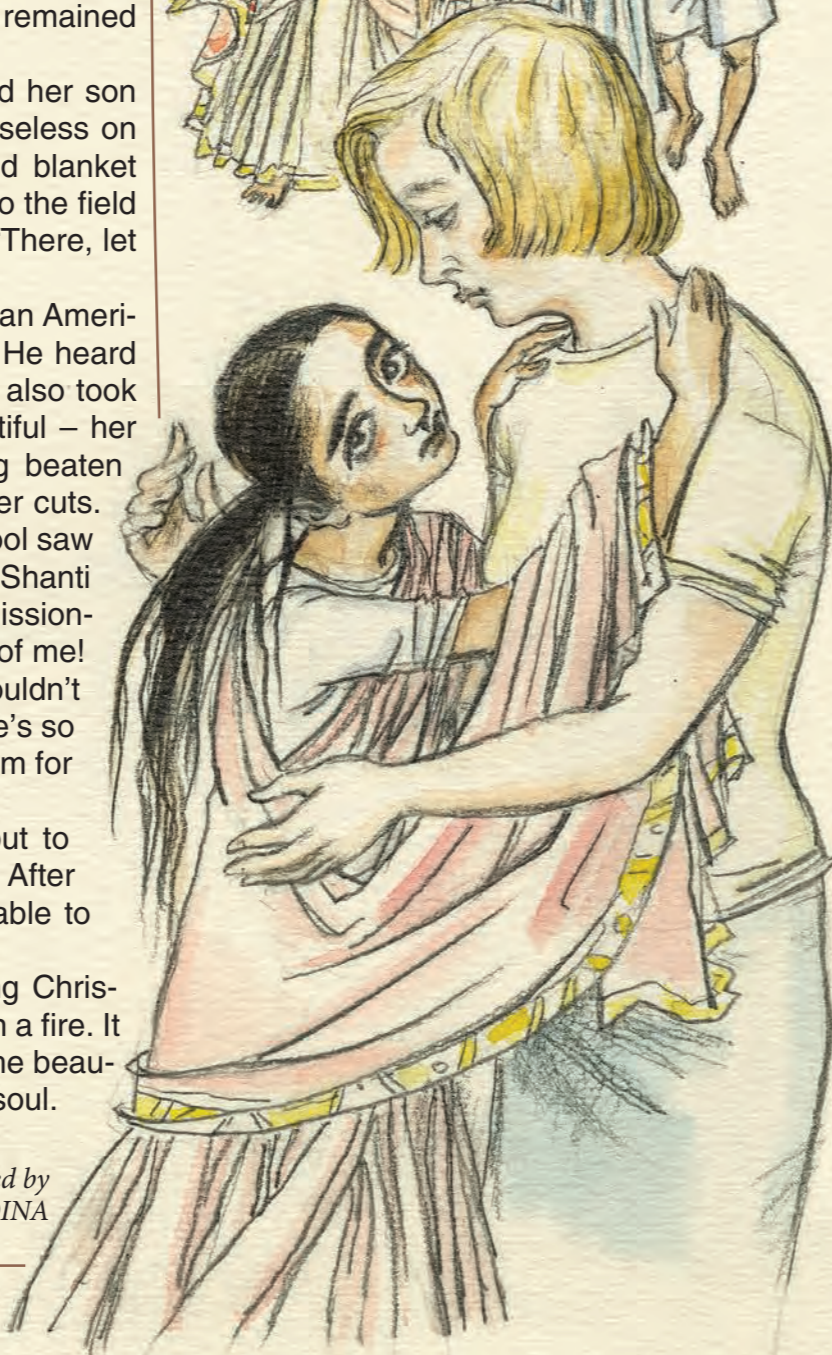
One evening, the mother-in-law and her son beat Shanti so badly that she lay senseless on the floor. They wrapped her in an old blanket and, when it got dark, carried her out to the field and threw her into a dried up cistern. "There, let the stubborn Christian die!"

However, God had a Christian from an American mission walk past that very spot. He heard the girl's moans and freed Shanti. He also took her back to school. She looked so pitiful – her back covered with stripes from being beaten with a stick and blood oozing out of her cuts. When the missionary who ran the school saw Shanti, her eyes filled with tears, but Shanti joyfully threw her arms around the missionary's neck. "Mama, don't cry because of me! Even if they had killed me, they couldn't have separated me from my Savior. He's so important to me that I wouldn't leave him for anything in the world!"

The wounded girl was washed, put to bed, and surrounded with loving care. After a little time, she recovered and was able to return to school.

The life and testimony of this young Christian is like gold refined in a fire. It is a perfect setting for the beautiful jewel which is her soul.

Illustrated by
Elena MIHALOVA-RODINA



The father
meets the son,
who has just come home.

Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA
Colored



Jordan valley

Elvira ZORN

Esther's family lived in Israel. One day, Esther's cousins and their parents flew in from Chicago and came to visit Esther's family. Mark and Rita were twins, a year older than their cousin, Esther, and all three couldn't wait to see each other. Ten year old Esther looked forward to the sightseeing trips she and her family would take to show their guests the wonderful country of Israel. She knew her cousins would love seeing the land they had read about in the Bible.

On their first day, the two families walked around Tel Aviv, the city where Esther's family lived, and the ancient city of Jaffa.

After that they drove to Jerusalem, located about 34 miles from Tel Aviv, and saw all the "holy" places that tourists visit.

The next day at breakfast, Esther's father announced, "Today, we're planning a trip to the Jordan Valley. First, we'll go to the Sea of Galilee, and then to the Dead Sea."

"We'll take a boat and go out on the water, right Dad?" Esther asked.

"Of course!" Esther's father answered. "I already ordered a boat. Its owner is a Christian and a good singer, so I'm sure it will be an interesting trip."

On the way to the Sea of Galilee, Esther's father pointed out the different sights and answered Mark and Rita's questions. The boat "Faith" took them out on the water. Music and singing accompanied the sound of the waves as the two families ordered "Peter's Fish" at a small restaurant and ate lunch before continuing their journey.

"Now we're driving along the Jordan Valley," Esther's father explained. "It's part of a rift that runs through the entire country of Israel from north to south. The rift is where the African plate of the earth's crust meets the Arabian plate. The Jordan Valley is the largest of the valleys of Israel. It includes the Hula Valley, the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, and the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba. We'll only travel down the part of the Jordan Valley that's between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, which is a distance of about 75 miles. The valley itself is only two to twelve miles wide."

"I just read some verses in the Bible that said Lot lived in this area!" Mark exclaimed.

"That's right," Esther's father answered, as he continued his explanation. "In the North, the Jordan Valley is a beautiful, fertile region and in the South it's almost a desert. The Jordan River flows along the fault line between the two plates that make up the Jordan Valley. This 223 mile long river is the largest river in Israel. In the rainy season, the Jordan River spills out of its banks, but for the rest of the year it is quite shallow and narrow. The Jordan Valley is famous for its scenery, its farmlands, and its historic sights. There are many ancient cities, castles, and monasteries. For example, Beit She'an (called Beth Shan in the Bible) is one of the oldest cities in the Middle East. It is located 12 miles from the Sea of Galilee, at the place where the Jordan and Jezreel Valley meet the Harod River. The inheritance of Manasseh included the city of Beit She'an, an important trade and military point for the entire country. You may remember that the Philistines hung the bodies of King Saul and his sons on its wall.

After wandering around the ruins of Beit She'an, Esther's family and their guests went to another important spot – the Mount of Temptation, found northwest of Jericho. Climbing up this mount usually takes half a day, but they traveled by cable car and quickly reached the top. From there, they had a great view of Jericho and the Jordan Valley. About 100 yards up a winding road, they reached the Qarantal monastery. Words can hardly describe the landscape that spread out before them as they stood on the wall of the monastery.

Then Esther's father took the guests to Qasr Yahud, the place where the Israelites crossed the Jordan River and entered Canaan. Jesus was also baptized here. This spot is east of Jericho, in the southern part of the Jordan River.

"Recent archeological discoveries have suggested Jesus was actually baptized on the east bank of the river, which is now the Jordanian village of Wadi El-Harar," Esther's mother explained.

"I think this matches what the Bible says," Mark and Rita's father added. "In the 10th chapter of John, Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing."

"This remote little place grows spices, herbs, fruits, vegetables, and the most delicious figs in the world!" Esther's father said. "Most of the people in the Jordan Valley are farmers, but Bedouin tribes also wander through the valley. My, it's hot today! I think it's time for a swim. Let's go to a spot I

know on the shore of the Dead Sea – it's a favorite among the tourists. There's a spring nearby and a stream that ends in a spectacular waterfall."

After a long day filled with adventures, everyone was happy to take a dip in the water, even if it was especially salty.



The Jordan River, not far from the spot where it flows into the Sea of Galilee

On the Sea of Galilee

8. Can we escape from the world?

Alex was a known troublemaker and bully. When Mother came home from work she often asked, "Did you fight with someone today?" Although Alex was used to the question, his face still got red. Stammering, he'd start to explain how he almost fell because Franklin stuck his leg out to trip him. Every day he had a similar story.

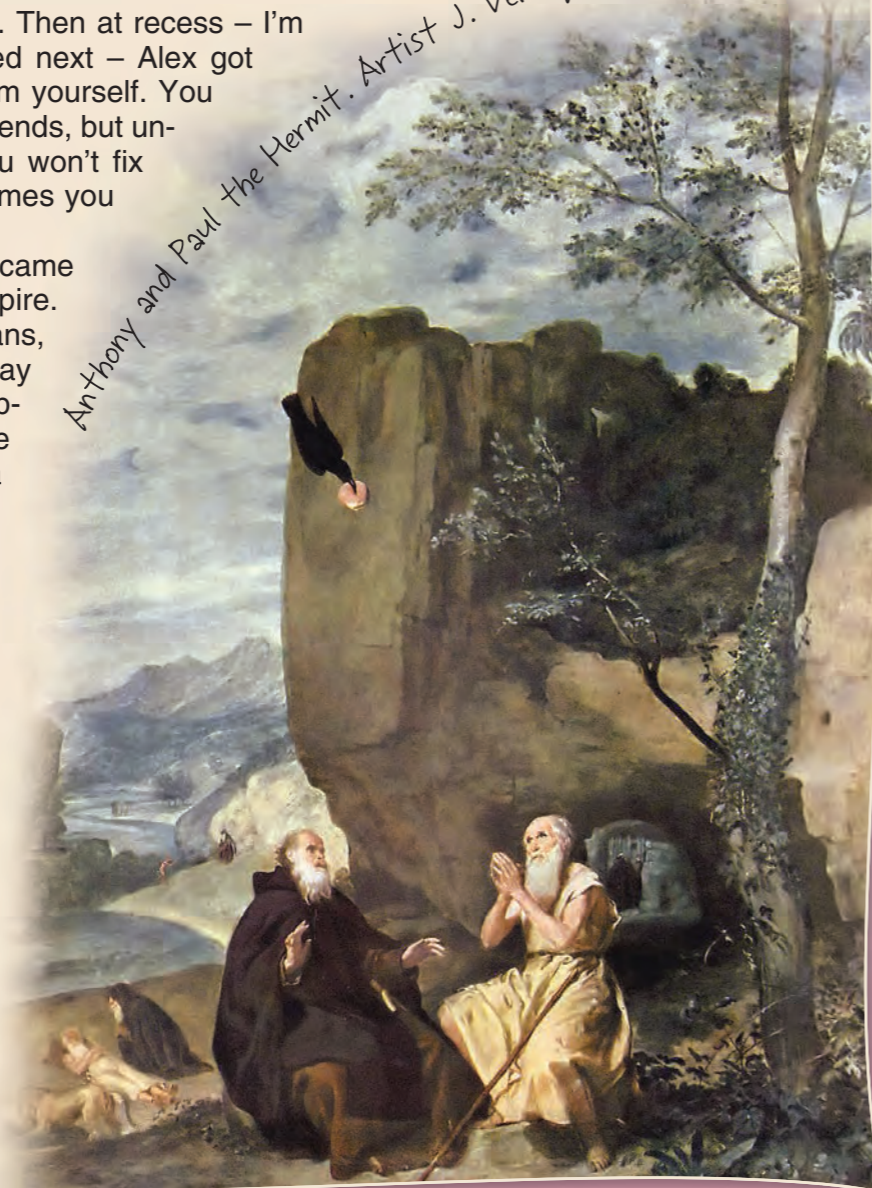
Alex was ashamed. Several times he promised himself he wouldn't answer the other kids when they teased him, but he couldn't stick to that promise for more than a week. Then he heard his family might be moving

to America and secretly dreamed of starting a new life after the move.

His dream came true. Alex's family moved to Sacramento, California and, after three months, Alex went to his new school. For two weeks, he kept his mouth shut. Then at recess – I'm sure you can guess what happened next – Alex got into a fight. You can't run away from yourself. You can change your school and your friends, but unless you change on the inside, you won't fix the problem no matter how many times you promise to be good.

In the IV century, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Many people said they were Christians, but for them Christianity wasn't a way of life, it was just an idea or a couple rules to follow. This saddened the genuine believers. They wanted a real, meaningful life with Christ. Just going to church wasn't enough for them. They lived out Christ's commands and did not focus on the mistakes of the church leaders or copy the unchristian behavior of the supposedly religious people around them. Unfortunately, other Christians were distracted and distressed by how far Christianity had wandered from its Teacher and Founder. Out of this group came the people who wanted to escape from a world that called itself

Anthony and Paul the Hermit. Artist J. Velasquez. 1635.



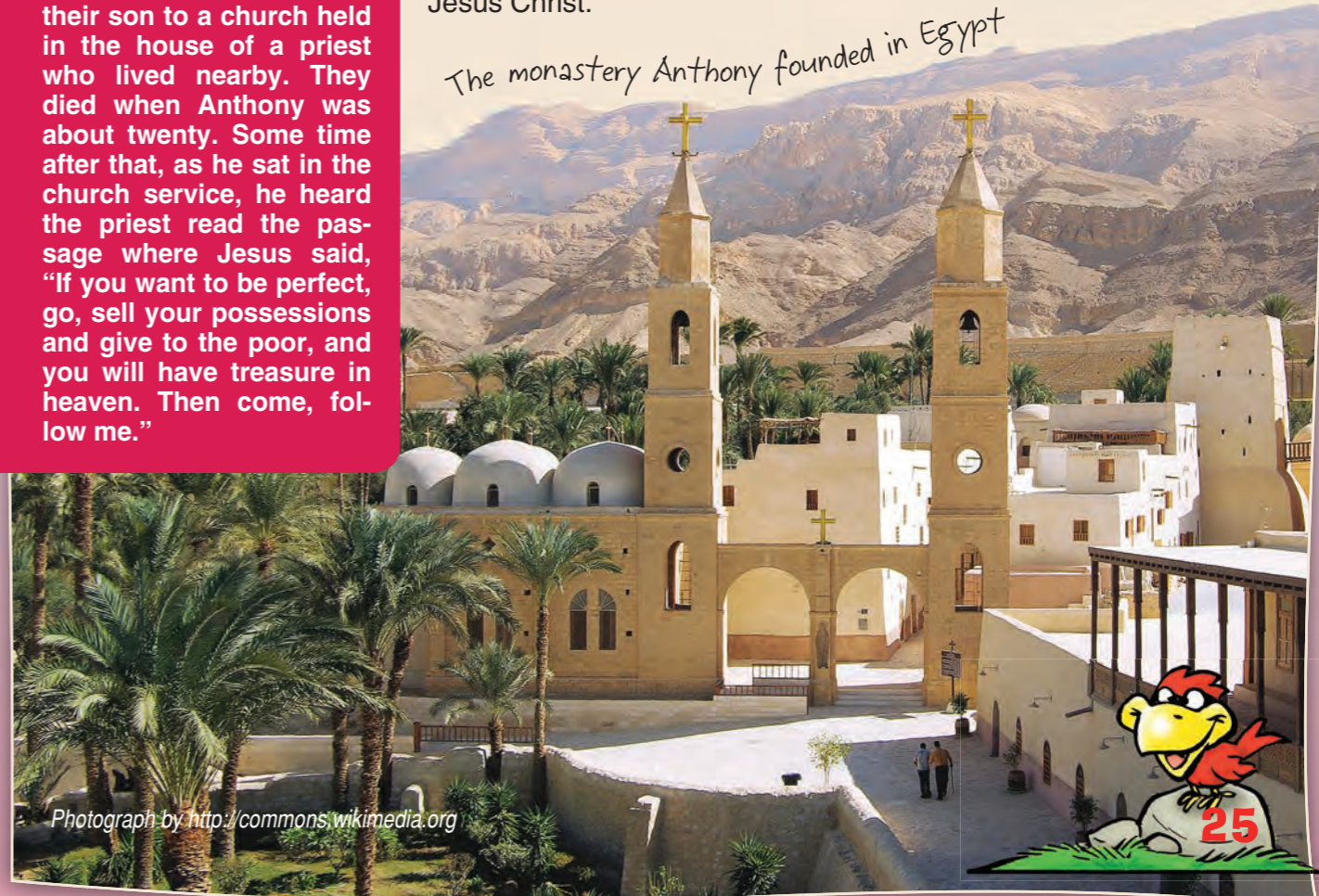
Anthony was born in 251 A.D. in Egypt, not far from the desert. This desert scared and attracted him at the same time. His parents – wealthy landowners who considered themselves Christians – took their son to a church held in the house of a priest who lived nearby. They died when Anthony was about twenty. Some time after that, as he sat in the church service, he heard the priest read the passage where Jesus said, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Christian, but was actually full of sin and evil. One of the first who decided to escape from the world and its temptations was Anthony.

The words pierced Anthony's heart like a sharp knife. "If you want to be perfect..." Yes, he wanted to be perfect. He wanted to be free from sin and to be with God. Right away, he made a decision and determined to go through with it. A few weeks later, he sold all his land, his house, and the farm. Then he gave the money to the poor. When Anthony himself became poor, homeless, and without family or possessions, he understood what depending on Christ alone really meant.

Anthony went into the desert and lived by himself, eating whatever he could find. Other Christians who wanted to be holy and not be polluted by the world followed his example. Later, people who followed this way of life became known as monks. They played an important role in the history of Christianity. Monks wanted to be perfect and holy. Those are wonderful goals, but monks could never get away from sin by leaving the busy city and hiding in the desert or behind the thick walls of the monastery. The early desert-monks used to say, "When you're in the world, the demons are like lambs. When you're in the desert, the demons are like lions." Human nature is sinful and Christians will struggle with their sinful nature for the rest of their lives. You can't escape from sin by hiding in the desert or the monastery, but you can overcome sin through the power of Jesus Christ.

The monastery Anthony founded in Egypt



Photograph by <http://commons.wikimedia.org>



Song of the Swans

2

Did you know that swans are also a symbol of faithfulness and loyalty in marriage? In the spring, after returning from the south, swans begin their wedding season. Young girl-swans float next to their families – their parents, brothers and sisters. The boy-swan has to deal with a strict dad who pecks and chases the boyfriend away to keep him from coming too close. To win the heart of the young beauty, the boy-swan has to circle around his girl for a long time, puff himself up, call to her, and show himself off in every way. Basically, he has to make sure he looks good. This courtship may last for several weeks. Perhaps the girl's father finally stops driving the patient boyfriend away after he realizes the boyfriend is serious. In the end, the young bride answers the groom's call, leaves her parents, and swims over to join him. The two swans are then mated for life.

A swan won't confuse his wife with another swan. The husband and wife swim side by side. Together they build their nest, raise their young, and fly south. The young stay with their parents and siblings for one to three years. These birds are a good model of family relationships!

1

Do you know why swans are mentioned in poems, songs, and fairy tales? It's because these birds are simply beautiful! With their long, curved necks, sail-like wings, elegant plumage, and graceful movement on the water, swans aren't just birds – they're more like bird-kings! Try reading "The Ugly Duckling" by Hans Christian Anderson or "The Swan Princess" and you'll know what I mean.

3

Did you know that there are many myths and fantasies about swans? For example, some believe swans live for 300 years! Let me be the first to tell you that's not true. Swans can live for about 40 years, which is a long time for a bird! The lifespan of a goose is only about 25 years. Another myth is that a swan sings a beautiful farewell song as it is dying. That is also not true. Hissing is the most common sound made by swans.



Illustrated by Julia PRAVDOHINA



4

Did you know that not all swans are white as snow? Snow-white swans are only found in northern countries. The farther south you travel, the darker the swans become. Swans on the lakes and rivers of South America have a black head and neck while the swans in Australia are black with white on their beaks and wingtips.

Did you know...

that the swan is the largest of the waterfowl? The largest swan of all is the Trumpeter Swan. These birds can have a wingspan of 10 feet and weigh up to 38 pounds. God designed swans with a great muscular system and they're able to migrate and travel hundreds of miles each year. However, some species of swans, like the Black Swan, don't migrate..

Compiled by Marina AVDOSHIINA

WHICH IS THE RIGHT ANSWER?

1. WHICH MAN LOST SEVEN SONS AND THREE DAUGHTERS IN ONE DAY?

- a) Job
- b) Moses
- c) Nehemiah

2. WHO WAS THE WIFE OF XERXES?

- a) Tabitha
- b) Naomi
- c) Esther

3. WHO WAS SOLD INTO SLAVERY BY HIS BROTHERS?

- a) Judah
- b) Joseph
- c) Ruben

6. HOW MANY MITES DID THE POOR WIDOW PUT INTO THE TEMPLE TREASURY?

- a) two
- b) three
- c) four

4. WHO DIED BECAUSE THEY LIED?

- a) Isaac and Rebekah
- b) Ananias and Sapphira
- c) Adam and Eve

5. WHO WAS THE SON OF AMOZ?

- a) David
- b) Samuel
- c) Isaiah

7. HOW DID JESUS HELP BARTIMAEUS?

- a) healed his arm
- b) healed his eyes
- c) healed his feet

You'll find the answers on page 31.

Did you know...

that the Black Vulture is a very social bird? It often roosts in large groups. Although it's normally a scavenger, groups of Black Vultures have been known to attack and kill newborn calves. Unlike other vultures, the Black vulture does not have a good sense of smell and has to depend on its eyesight to find food.

Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA

Любовь ЛАЗЬКО

RIDDLES

1

He kept track of all the money
And he stole, which wasn't funny.
Though he walked beside the Savior,
He chose greed and not God's favor.
He sold Christ. He had no shame
_____ was his name.

2

Though he said, "My hands are clean..."
He pleased the crowd that made a scene
And gave the word to crucify
God's son, who came to earth to die.
He questioned Christ. Now don't forget,
This man whose name is _____.

Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA

The Swallows are here!

Find eight differences!

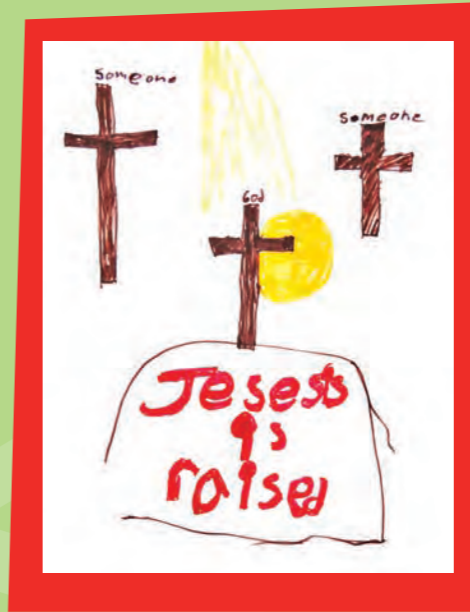




Maria KRAVCHUK, 12 years old, Ukraine



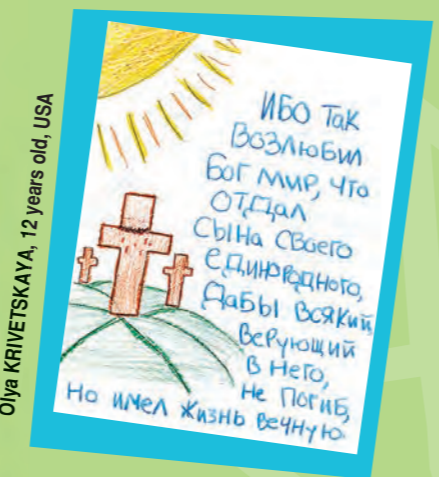
Nastya PUSHINA, 11 years old, Russia



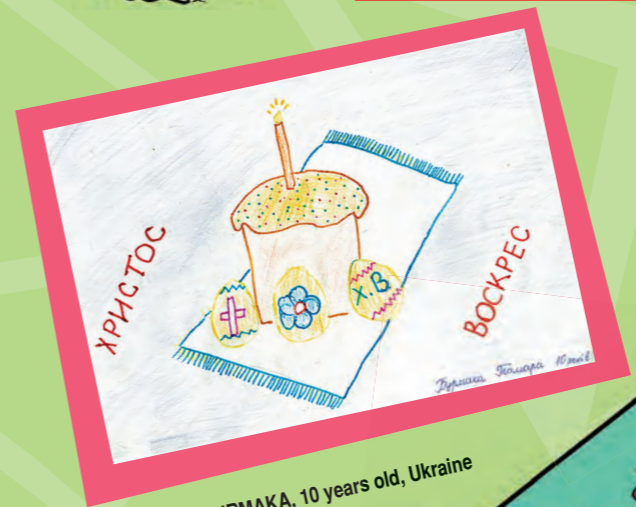
Amy KUZNETSOV, 7 years old, USA



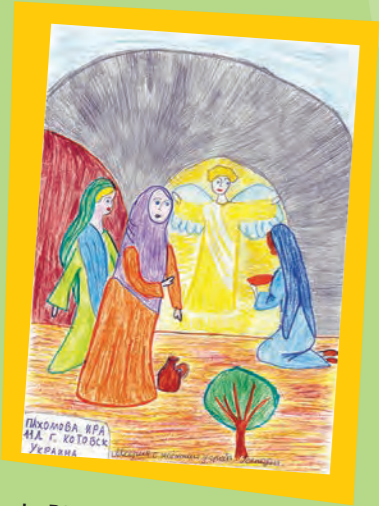
Roma REMIZOV, 8 years old, Russia



Olya KRIVETSKAYA, 12 years old, USA



Tamara BURMAKA, 10 years old, Ukraine



Ira PANOVA, 11 years old, Ukraine

BRAIN TEASER

Find 10 words from the story of Christ's death and resurrection.

M H T A E D E L P
 A N G E L N L E M
 J A J H O N S V S
 B A L T D S R I K
 M R S I O T N G Q
 O O E R V F N R R
 T S C V T E W O N
 B E R M O Y N F R
 X B R Z T L N T Q

Created by Natasha BOYKOV

death
 stone
 sin
 arose
 forgive

tomb
 cross
 angel
 love
 alive

Answers

- Page 10: MARRIED COUPLES: 1. Abraham and Sarah; 2. Aquila and Priscilla; 3. Isaac and Rebekah; 4. Adam and Eve; 5. Elkanah and Hannah; 6. Boaz and Ruth; 7. Xerxes and Esther; 8. Ananias and Sapphira
- WHO: 1-d 2-a, 3-h 4-e, 5-f, 6-b, 7-g, 8-c
- Page 11: CROSSWORD: ACROSS: 2. salt 5. Simeon 6. Jerusalem 7. Deborah 10. Solomon DOWN: 1. Moses 2. shepherd 3. iniquities 4. Michal 5. Sarah 6. Judas 8. raven 9. oil
- Page 28: WHICH IS THE RIGHT ANSWER: 1-a, 2-c, 3-b, 4-b, 5-c, 6-a, 7-b
- Page 29: RIDDLES: 1. Judas; 2. Pilate
- Page 30: BRAIN TEASER:

M H T A E D L P
 A N G E L N L E M
 J A J H O N S V S
 B A L T D S R I K
 M R S I O T N G Q
 O O E R V F N R R
 T S C V T E W O N
 B E R M O Y N F R
 X B R Z T L N T Q

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Tropinka
 USA, Light in the East,
 P.O. Box 214582
 Sacramento, CA 95821

Visit: www.tropinka.org
 E-mail: liteusa@lio.org
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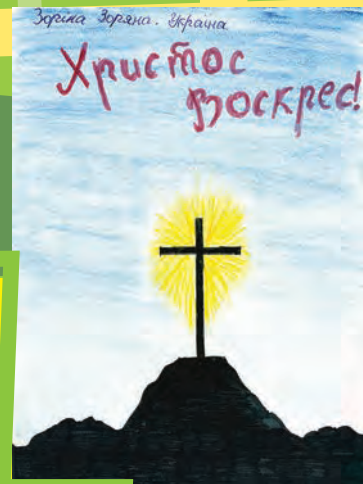
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For elementary and middle school age children.



He is risen!

Ruslan SYASKEY, 11 years old, Ukraine



Zoriana ZORINA, Ukraine

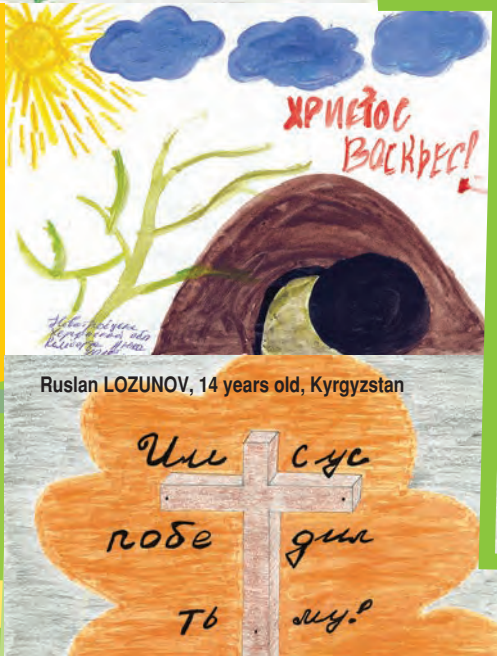
REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST RAISED FROM THE DEAD DESCENDED FROM DAVID THIS MY GO SPEL 2 Timothy 2:8

Nellie GOLOVINA, 9 years old, Kyrgyzstan



Alexandra TKACHENKO, 12 years old, Kyrgyzstan

Anna KALIBERDA, 10 years old, Ukraine



Ruslan LOZUNOV, 14 years old, Kyrgyzstan

They came from afar,
Following a bright star.
They searched for a king
In infant's clothes swaddling.
They bowed before the child
So tender, meek and mild.
They offered expensive gifts
- gold, myrrh and frankincense.
They had found God's treasure
And left amazed beyond measure.
They returned to their home,
Expecting He would take the throne.
They then heard the sad news:
Dead was the King of the Jews.
They mourned such a brutal loss.
The babe had paid the highest cost.
They had another divine dream;
The day was not as dark as it seemed.
They rejoiced over a resurrection,
Then in forty days an ascension.
They set out on another journey,
Longing again the royal Heir to see.
They entered heaven's narrow gate,
Offering their Lord a sacrifice of praise.
They found sanctuary under His wings.
The Christ Child lives as King of kings.

Inna TSYMBALYUK, 8 years old, USA



Rita LUNCHENKO, 10 years old, USA

Chele CAUGHNOR
Chang Mai, Thailand

He is risen indeed!