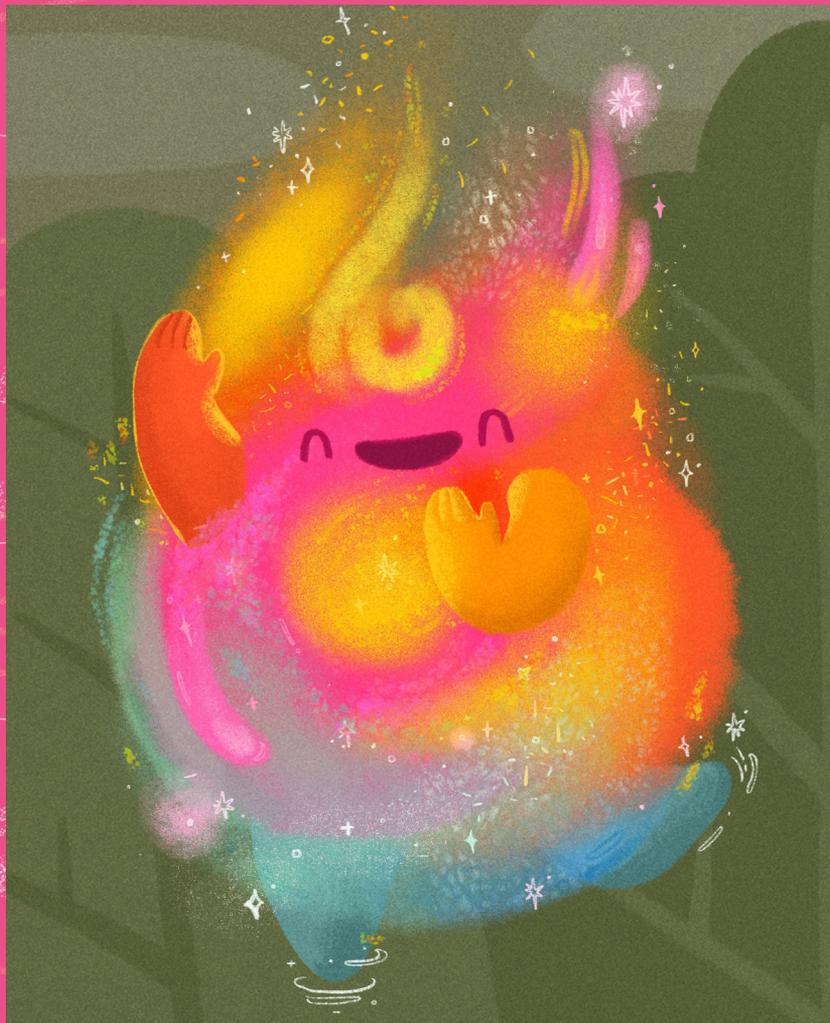


storymakers

NYC



easter

guide

**“For I am about
to create new
heavens and
a new earth; the
former things
shall not be
remembered or
come to mind.”**

Isaiah 65:17



creative director

MELINA SMITH

editor

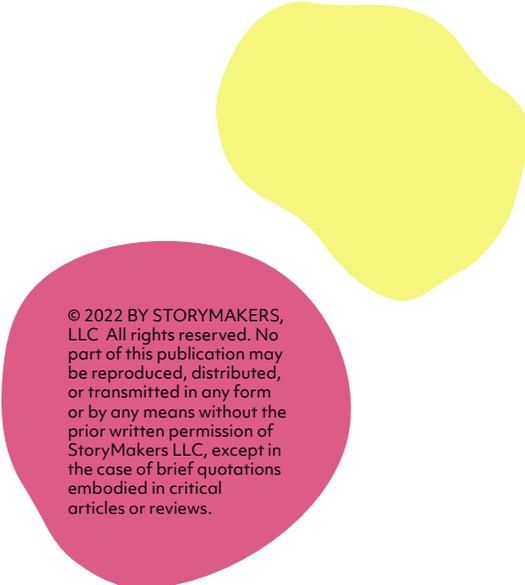
REBEKAH WALLIN

art director + designer

KAREN WEBER

illustrator

ECHO CHEN



© 2022 BY STORYMAKERS, LLC All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of StoryMakers LLC, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

special thanks

SPECIAL THANKS TO MOCKINGBIRD MINISTRIES FOR ALL YOUR GUIDANCE, EDITORIAL SUPPORT, AND LOVE. OUR TEAM IS FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP



Hello

WELCOME TO STORYMAKERS, A PLACE CREATED JUST FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR IMAGINATIONS! EACH EDITION OF THE ZINE FOLLOWS AN EPIC BIBLICAL ADVENTURE, CREATIVELY INVITING THE CHILDREN WE PARENT AND TEACH TO BECOME STORYMAKERS ALONG THE WAY WHILE EXPLORING GOD'S BIG STORY. GROWN-UPS PLAY THE ROLE OF GUIDES WHO DELVE INTO GOD'S NARRATIVE ALONGSIDE STORYMAKERS, ENCOURAGING THEIR DISCOVERY OF GOD AS CREATOR AND REDEEMER.

The Guide

When kids dive into a Bible story, they are amazed by the audacious promises God makes. Sometimes the stories in scripture can feel confusing at first—and this is where grown-ups come in. That's you! Your role is to help your StoryMakers discover how God works out the big promises he has made to us.

God has given us the ultimate hope—the Easter season highlights the story of Jesus after the resurrection. There are many characters, miracles, and an important new friend on the scene: the Holy Spirit. We want kids to know that when Jesus left earth, he didn't leave us all on our own, but gave us the Holy Spirit to assure us of God's faithfulness to all creation.

Our job as guides is to open our own imaginations and place ourselves in the story alongside our StoryMakers. This means allowing our minds to move beyond what we see in front of us. Sounds a lot like faith, doesn't it?

This guide contains fun facts and deeper thoughts to share with your children or class. Think of yourself as a boutique curator, identifying and tailoring different aspects of the content for your specific audience. As a guide, your role is to encourage a creative connection to the story through play, fun facts, and imagination.

Sometimes grown-ups feel intimidated by this kind of role, and we worry that we won't "do it right." That's not how we think at StoryMakers. We believe that all the children we work with and love belong to the Creator of all. God is working out a redemption plan for each of us, so our only role is to share what has been given to us in love and mercy. We can leave the heavy lifting to God.

Let's get started!

Elements of the Zine

Hook:

Each visual is to be used as a way to catch the attention of your StoryMaker. This is a prompt to get our minds ready to engage in God's story.

Story:

Our Bible story will be told in the form of a play. Your StoryMakers can use the script to play the parts and dive into the biblical narrative.

Field Notes:

A place to consider the meaning and implications of each story, these informative notes help guide StoryMakers along the way.

Thoughts to Ponder:

The Bible often leaves us thinking, and these prompts help StoryMakers process social-emotional details and empathize with characters in each chapter.

Fun Facts:

Humans love information and making new discoveries, so these facts are built in to help your StoryMakers dig deeper.

Activity:

Each activity is intended to help children exercise their imaginations. Remember: there are no rules, only guidance and support. We want each child to feel successful and to express themselves in a unique way.

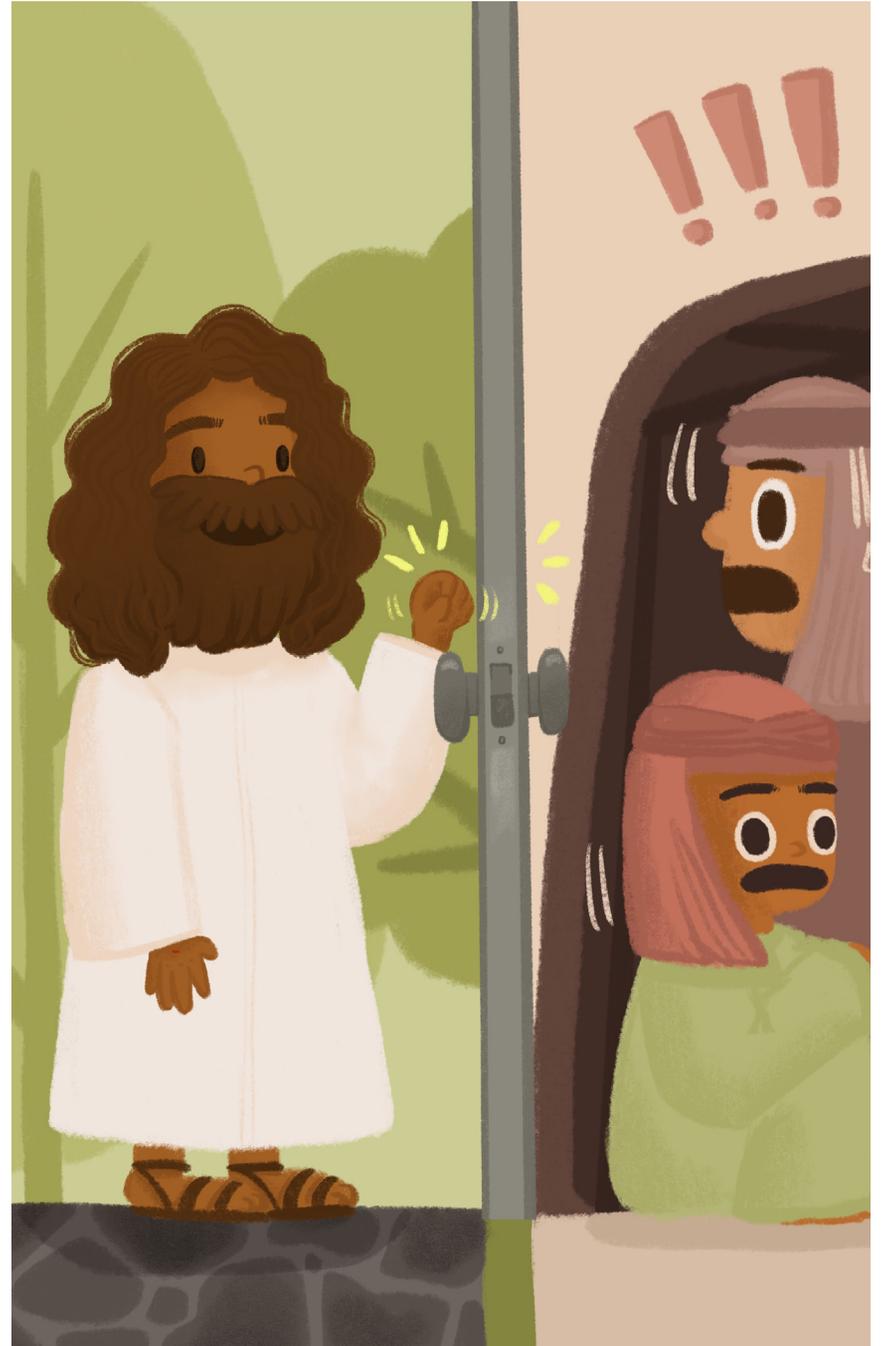
Toolbox:

You will need to fill your toolbox for this adventure with the following supplies: crayons, colored pencils, pastels, gel pens, scissors, washi tape, craft sticks

Chapter One: Knock, Knock . . .

John 20:21

"Peace be with you."



Hook

Ask your StoryMakers to take a good look at their visual hook. After they have a moment to examine the image, ask them to share their thoughts.

1. What do you see?
2. What do you think our story is about?

A Little History

In our story today, we hear about how Jesus appeared after the resurrection to those who were closest to him. Jesus first appears to Mary near the tomb where he had been buried. He then appears to the disciples, who were hiding out together in a locked room. After Jesus's death, the disciples were fearful of being arrested for being followers of Jesus.

We know that John was known as the "beloved disciple." We might think of the word "beloved" as a simple term of endearment, but if you break it down, it is so much more! BE- meaning "all around or on all sides" and -LOVED, a verb meaning "to love." Jesus loved John so deeply, like a brother or best friend. Isn't it great to know that Jesus calls us beloved also!

Field Notes

When Jesus appeared, people were shocked and confused. They must have thought Jesus was just there in their imaginations. But guess what? Jesus appeared to them FULLY alive, not as a ghost, but just as real as you are in your body right now.

John, the disciple and author of the Book of John, wrote about Jesus's appearance so that the whole world would know that life comes through believing in him. He wanted the world to know that just as Jesus had risen from the dead, anyone who believes in him will also have life forever. We can put our trust in Jesus.

Thoughts to Ponder

1. Imagine you are Thomas . . . how would you react? (Shocked? Scared? Mad?)
2. Imagine you are Peter, what do you think his BIG emotion was?
3. What do you think Jesus looked like when the disciples saw him?

Fun Facts

1. Did you know that Jesus appears to the three women before anyone else? You see, the Bible is telling us something about God, who takes a special interest in regular people who might not be considered important in their culture.
2. The Bible tells us that Thomas was so unsure of what he was seeing with his own eyes that he wanted to TOUCH the wounds in Jesus' hands and side from being nailed to the cross.

Activity: Knock, Knock

Invite your StoryMakers to imagine they were one of the ladies at the tomb or the gents in the locked room. As they place themselves in the story, ask them to stop and think about how they would react to seeing Jesus. (Excited? Scared? Shocked) Think about what those feelings look and feel like. Once they are ready, they can retell the action-packed story for themselves in their comic strip . . . and remind them to feel free to be silly!

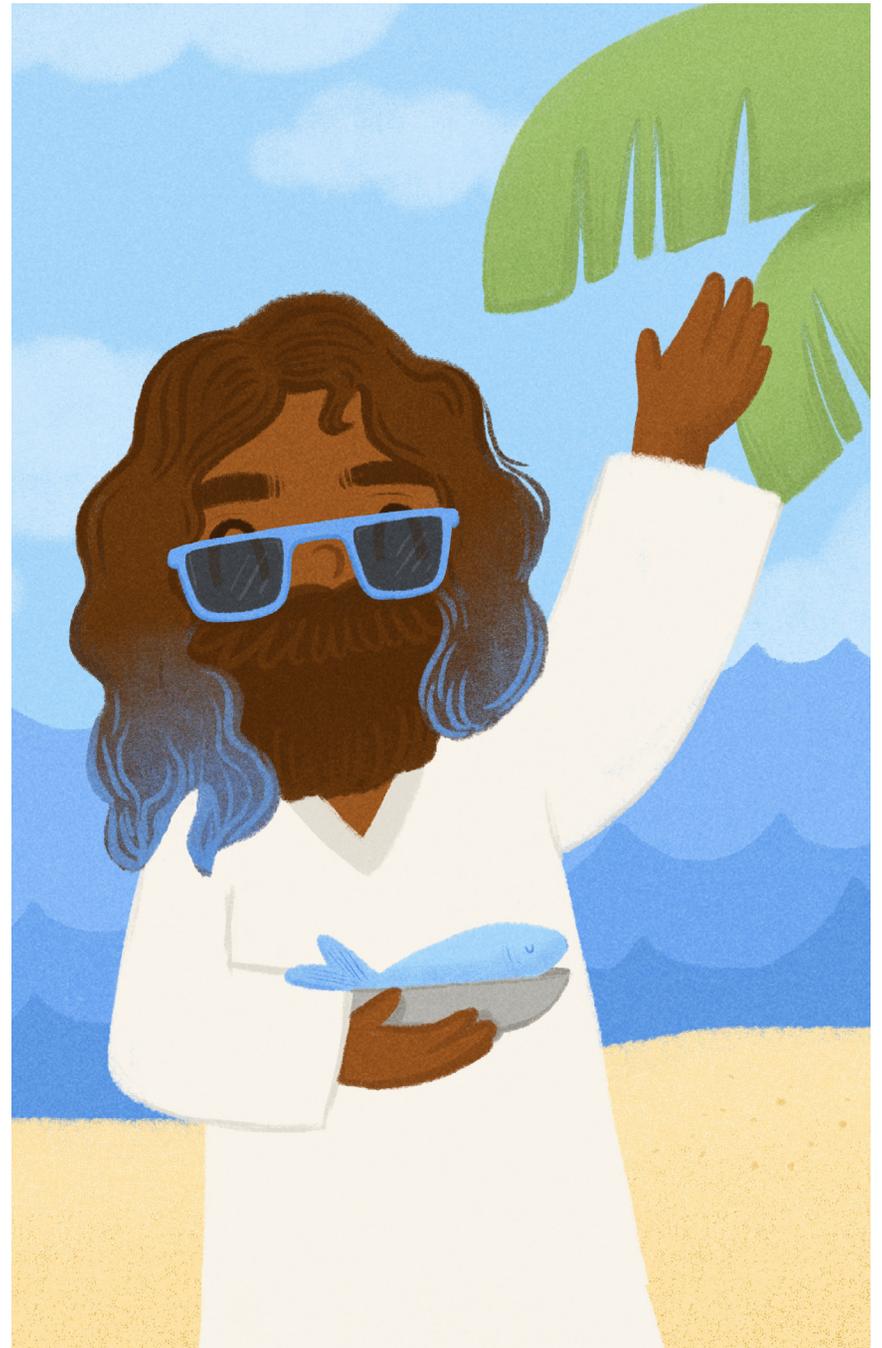
TOOLS: crayons, colored pencils, pastels

DEEPER MEANING: Guide your StoryMakers as they use their imaginations. While the children doodle, this creative time is a good time to connect by asking more questions and listening to how your StoryMakers have processed the story. While you doodle and discuss, remind them that God's love is for EVERYONE . . . those who are quick to believe and those who still have some questions.

Chapter 2: Do You Love Me?

John 21:1-19

"Follow me."



Hook

Ask your StoryMakers to take a good look at the image.

1. What do you think happened?
2. Who is the main character?
3. What clues do you see?

A Little History

Sometime after Jesus first appeared to the disciples in that locked room, he surprised his friends again. They had been out all night with no success. As dawn was breaking, Jesus appeared on the shore and called to them to try again. They couldn't really see who is calling from shore in the dim light of dawn, but they did what Jesus said and netted a miraculous catch . . . but this wasn't really about the fish, was it?

We see the number three a lot throughout the Bible. It is a special number that illustrates completeness. In this story, it is significant that Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him, because it was Peter who denied knowing Jesus three times the night of Jesus's death. We see Jesus giving Peter a chance to now declare his love three times.

Field Notes

Jesus is trying to tell Peter something very important here. Anytime Jesus repeats himself, we know what he has to say is very important. Here Jesus is telling his disciples that when we love God, we love one another.

When Jesus told his disciples where to fish, he was giving them a clue of what would be ahead. You see, the disciples worked as fishermen, but God would change that. Peter and his friends would soon cast out their "nets" into the world so that the whole world would be "caught" by God's love and mercy. The Good Shepherd was calling his disciples from their lives as fishermen to care for his flock of sheep (God's people!) throughout the world.

Thoughts To Ponder

1. We usually think of kings having servants to wait on them. But here the King of Kings, Jesus, is making breakfast for his disciples. Can you think of a time someone did something unexpectedly kind for you?
2. On the night of Jesus's death, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. On the beach, Jesus gives Peter three chances to say out loud how much he loves Jesus. Can you think of a time someone has given you a second chance?

Fun Facts

1. The number 3 shows up more than 400 times throughout the Bible!
2. The lambs and sheep represent God's people.
3. Fishermen were not very important people in their culture, but that didn't matter to Jesus. We see Him picking unlikely people to share his story over and over throughout the Bible.

Activity: Do You Love Me?

Imagine you were on the boat with Peter . . . it is early in the morning, and you are just waking up. Then all of a sudden, your boat is completely filled with fish!

TOOLS: colored pencils, pastels

DEEPER MEANING: Through Peter, we see how Jesus forgives all of our sins, the ones we do on purpose and the ones we don't even realize we do . . . and then Jesus offers us, imperfect people, the most important job in the world of sharing his story.

Chapter 3: Tabitha

Acts 9:36–43

“Tabitha, arise.”



Hook

Wow! Take a look at the details in the illustration.

1. What do you think this is an image of?
2. What expressions do you see on the faces?

A Little History

The Book of Acts, our ancient text, is full of important details about early Christians. The account of Tabitha was very important for TWO reasons: First, Tabitha, a woman, was a disciple of Jesus, and in those days, women did not often have the same jobs as men. So it is important to note that women were disciples too! Second, Peter prayed and called Tabitha back to life, which means that God has power over death itself.

Your StoryMakers may have heard of the city of Joppa before if they are familiar with the Old Testament story of Jonah. When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, Jonah tried to run away to Joppa instead. Joppa is modern-day Tel-Aviv. Show your StoryMakers on a map or globe.

Field Notes

Did you catch one other important detail about Tabitha's story? When the news spread that Peter had called her back to life, people began to believe in Jesus. The Book of Acts tells us that when Tabitha was brought back to life she was "presented to saints and widows." These two words are specifically used to tell us that some of the people who witnessed this miracle were not yet believers of Jesus. God used this miracle to plant seeds of faith and spread the story of Jesus throughout the neighboring towns. You see, nothing that happens in the Bible is random. Jesus has the power to heal and bring life, even where there seems to be none left.

Thoughts to Ponder

1. Tabitha's friends were so sad when she died, they sent for Peter. Have you ever lost something you loved?
2. Can you imagine what Tabitha's face looked like when she awoke from death?
3. Have you ever witnessed something so amazing or inspiring that you couldn't wait to tell someone? What was it?

Fun Facts

1. Did you know the name Tabitha means "gazelle" in Aramaic and Greek? If your name was connected to an animal, which animal would it be? _____
2. Tabitha lived in Joppa and had great faith.

Activity: Tabitha

Tabitha was loved in her village because she was kind, generous, an amazing seamstress (meaning she made amazing clothes), and she gave to the needy. Tabitha was the type of friend anyone would want to have.

Ask your StoryMakers to imagine they are in the story. Which character would they be? Tabitha? Peter? Or maybe . . . a camel? Ask them to choose their character and retell the story from their point to view.

TOOLS: colored pencils, pastels, crayons

DEEPER MEANING: Jesus has the power to heal and bring life, even where there seems to be none left.

Chapter 4: Who's Invited?

Acts 11:17

"If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"



Hook

Ask your StoryMakers to take a look at the image quietly for one minute. Then ask them the following questions:

1. What did you see?
2. What do you think the image represents?

A Little History

Throughout the Book of Acts, we see stories of the starting of the church. This happened as news of Jesus spread throughout the land, thanks to the Holy Spirit working through the disciples and new believers. Since the church is made of people, and people are not perfect, we see story after story of Jesus's followers having disagreements about how to share the story of Jesus and who should hear it. In today's story, we see people trying to add extra rules about what people eat that Jesus has not given to his followers. These were leftover from the old rules, before Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. God doesn't want us to make it hard for people to hear his story. God is interested in EVERYONE.

Field Notes

Wow . . . so much is happening here! Let's recap:



1. Peter's friends are mad at him.
2. Peter explains his epic dream. God was telling him it is okay to eat _____.
3. Peter has dinner with some unlikely new friends, the Gentiles.
4. Peter connects the dots and explains: John was baptized with water, people will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

What does this all mean?

1. The Gentiles and the Hebrews are ONE in Christ. This was shocking news!
2. God isn't worried about what we eat. God is interested in our hearts.

Thoughts To Ponder

1. Share a time you have been surprised with a new friend.
2. Have you ever had your mind changed about something because of what a friend said? Like . . . trying peanut butter and pickles on a cheeseburger? Or reading a book you didn't think you would like? What was it? Were you slow to change your mind or eager to consider something new?

Fun Facts

1. Did you know that Israel, where our story takes place, is the home to the soft shell turtle, also known as the pancake turtle? Israel is full of fun animals.
2. The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity. Some call the Holy Spirit "the helper," the part of God that reminds us that we can trust in him no matter what.

Activity: Who's Invited?

Invite your StoryMakers to imagine they are Peter and God is speaking to them in a dream. Using the comic strip, they can retell their story. Remind them to include the important details like . . .

1. Peter in his PJs.
2. Peter dreaming about animals.
3. Peter attending a dinner party.

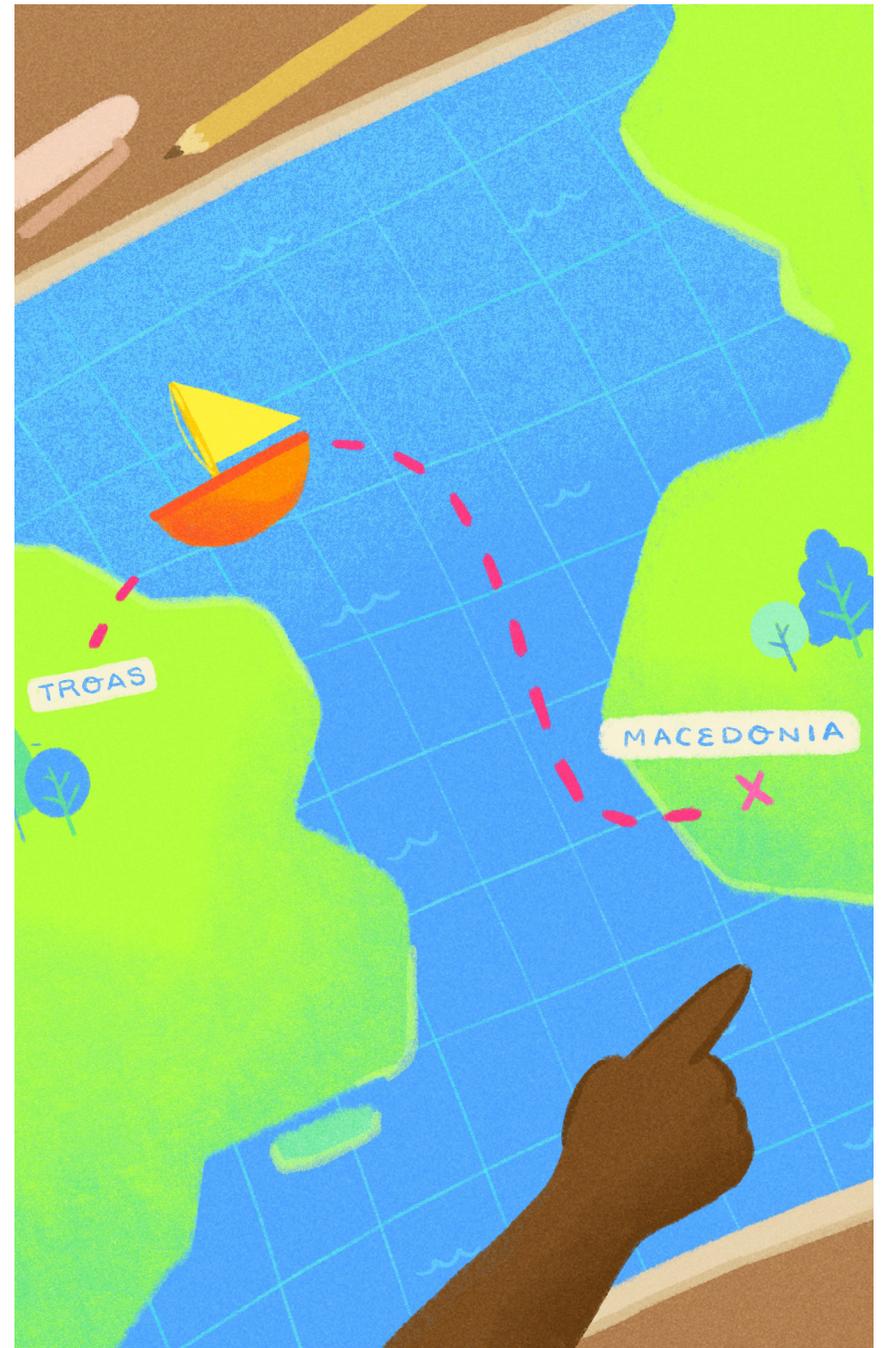
TOOLS: pastels, colored pencils, crayons

DEEPER MEANING: This story reminds us that it isn't our job to choose who gets to hear about God. God is interested in EVERYONE. It also reassures us that the Holy Spirit will help us in sharing the good news about Jesus . . . we are not alone!

Chapter 5: Paul Meets Lydia

Psalm 67:1–2

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.”



Hook

Ask your StoryMakers to take a close look at the chapter image. Then ask them the following:

1. What details do you see?
2. What is the longest trip you have ever been on?

A Little History

Today we travel with our StoryMakers to the city of Philippi, named for Philip of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. Philippi was in a region referred to as Macedonia, which was a huge area that includes modern-day Greece, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, and Bulgaria, covering over 25,000 square miles.

In our story today, StoryMakers will read about how Paul waited for instructions from God about where to go next. Paul went wherever God told him to go, and he didn't stay in one place for very long. He traveled ALL OVER THE PLACE, telling the story of Jesus and baptizing people before moving on to the next place God sent him. God used Paul to grow the early church in a BIG way. Paul inspired 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.

Field Notes

You have just met two important apostles, Paul and Timothy. Paul traveled throughout many countries, telling the world about Jesus. One day, Paul was visiting the town where Timothy lived. Timothy loved Jesus and studied scripture, so he became a perfect companion to Paul on his journey. They taught and traveled together wherever God led them.

Today's story takes place in modern-day Greece, and Paul would have traveled by boat to Macedonia. Paul was directed there by God in a dream so that he would meet Lydia. Have you ever been so excited about news that you HAD to tell your entire family? When Lydia heard about Jesus, she couldn't keep the news to herself. She brought her whole family into the story!

Thoughts To Ponder

1. Have you ever thought to yourself: "Dear Jesus, please give me a sign?" (Guess what? He does! Some people call them "signs of grace.")
2. Have you been baptized or seen a baptism? What did that experience mean to you?

Fun Facts

1. God knows humans are forgetful from time to time, so he gives us signs to remind us we are covered in his goodness. Baptism is one of those signs passed down to us.
2. Timothy was the first Christian bishop of Ephesus.

Activity: Voyage Map

Imagine you are sailing on the Mediterranean Sea. The sun is out, the breeze is cool, and you have the most delicious treats with you on board . . . Now that you and your StoryMakers have placed yourself in the story, invite your StoryMakers to doodle on their ship. What would their sailboat look like? What would they name their boat?

Keep the conversation going . . . If they were lost at sea and had to tell someone about Jesus, what would they write in a message in a bottle?

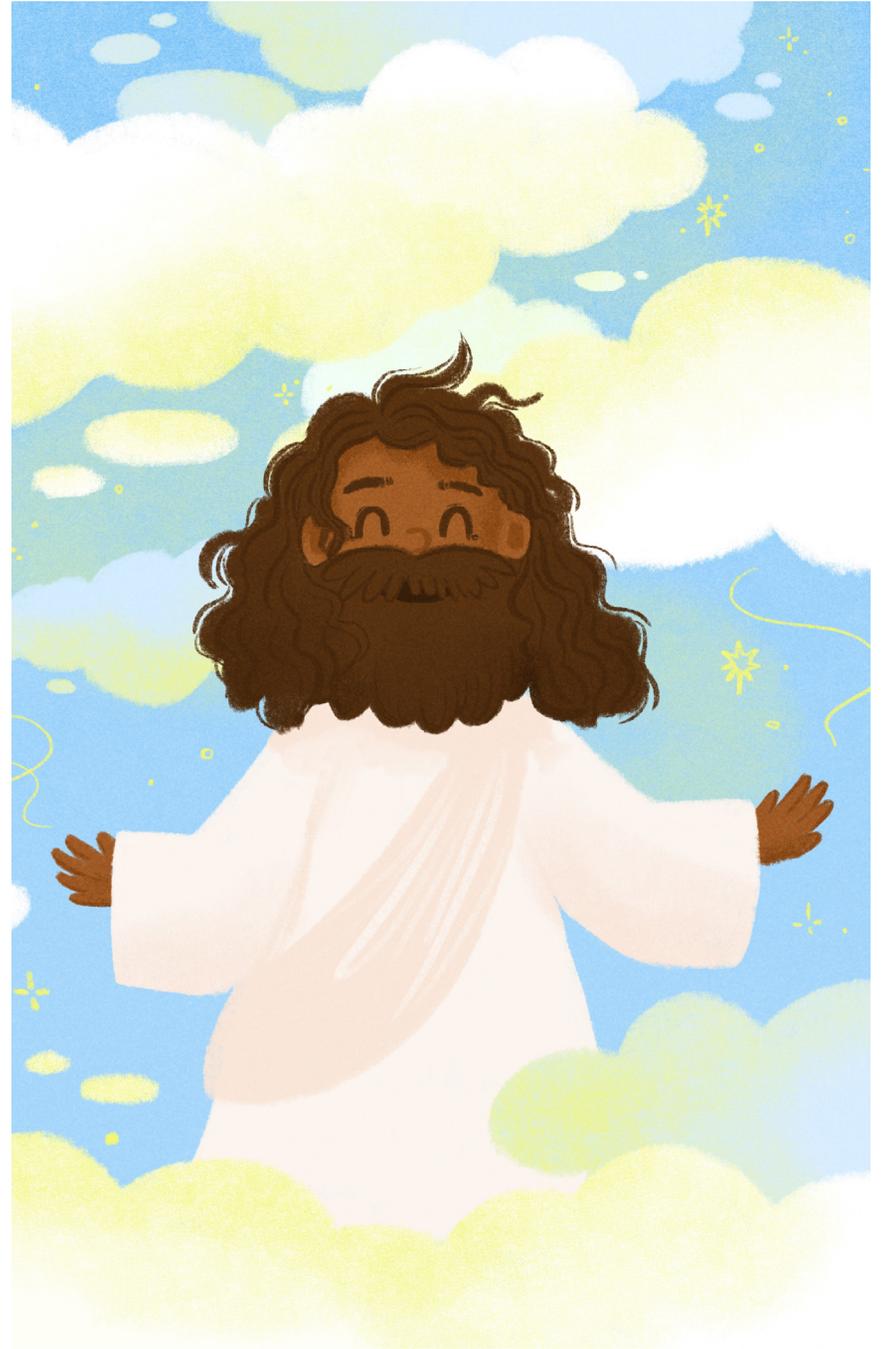
TOOLS: crayons, colored pencils, pastels, gel pens

DEEPER MEANING: God loves EVERYONE and wants every person in the whole world to receive the gift of baptism as a reminder of that love.

Chapter 6: Going Up!

Acts 1:11

“This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”



Hook

Wow! This new image is very interesting. Take a deep look as we think about it together.

1. What is happening in this picture?
2. What expression do you see on Jesus's face?
2. What images are used to show the Holy Spirit?

A Little History

In our story today, we are going back to the beginning of the Book of Acts to hear about Jesus returning to heaven. The Book of Acts is all about how the church grows as people hear about Jesus. It wasn't always safe or easy to share the story of Jesus in ancient times, but the Holy Spirit helped people tell about Jesus. The Holy Spirit is mentioned 57 times in the Book of Acts alone!

The Book of Acts was written by Luke, the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke. Luke was a doctor, and he knew it was super important to write down all the facts about what Jesus did and said. You see, just like today, there are many stories and teachings about Jesus, which can be a little confusing. Luke took care to be as detailed as possible and get all the facts straight, so the world would know the truth about Jesus, the disciples, and the church.

Field Notes

After forty days of traveling and being with the disciples, Jesus returned to heaven. He didn't just disappear, but he was called up to heaven to take up the throne alongside God the Father. Ask your StoryMakers if they caught the detail about the two gents who appeared by his side in the sky . . . who do you think they were? You see, Jesus had to leave according to God's plan, so our Helper (the Holy Spirit) could be with us. But first Jesus came back to life on earth to let all of creation know that he beat death, so we can all have life forever with God! Isn't that amazing?

Thoughts To Ponder

1. Imagine you were with the disciples when Jesus beamed back up to heaven. What facial expression would you have?
2. Now imagine God gives you peace. What would your face look like then?
3. If you witnessed a miracle like this, who would be the first person you would tell? Why would you tell that person?

Fun Facts

1. Luke, a doctor and disciple, wrote the Book of Acts.
2. Did you know Luke was in a shipwreck during his travels?

Activity: Going Up!

Invite your StoryMakers to imagine they were one of the disciples there the day Jesus went up to heaven. Ask them to think about what their day would look like from start to finish . . .

- 7 AM - Wake up
- 8 AM - Go fishing
- 9 AM - Eat breakfast
- 10 AM - Hang out with Jesus
- 11 AM - Jesus beamed up to the sky
- 12 PM - Chat with friends
- 1 PM - Everyone goes home

Remind them to add more fun details along the way!

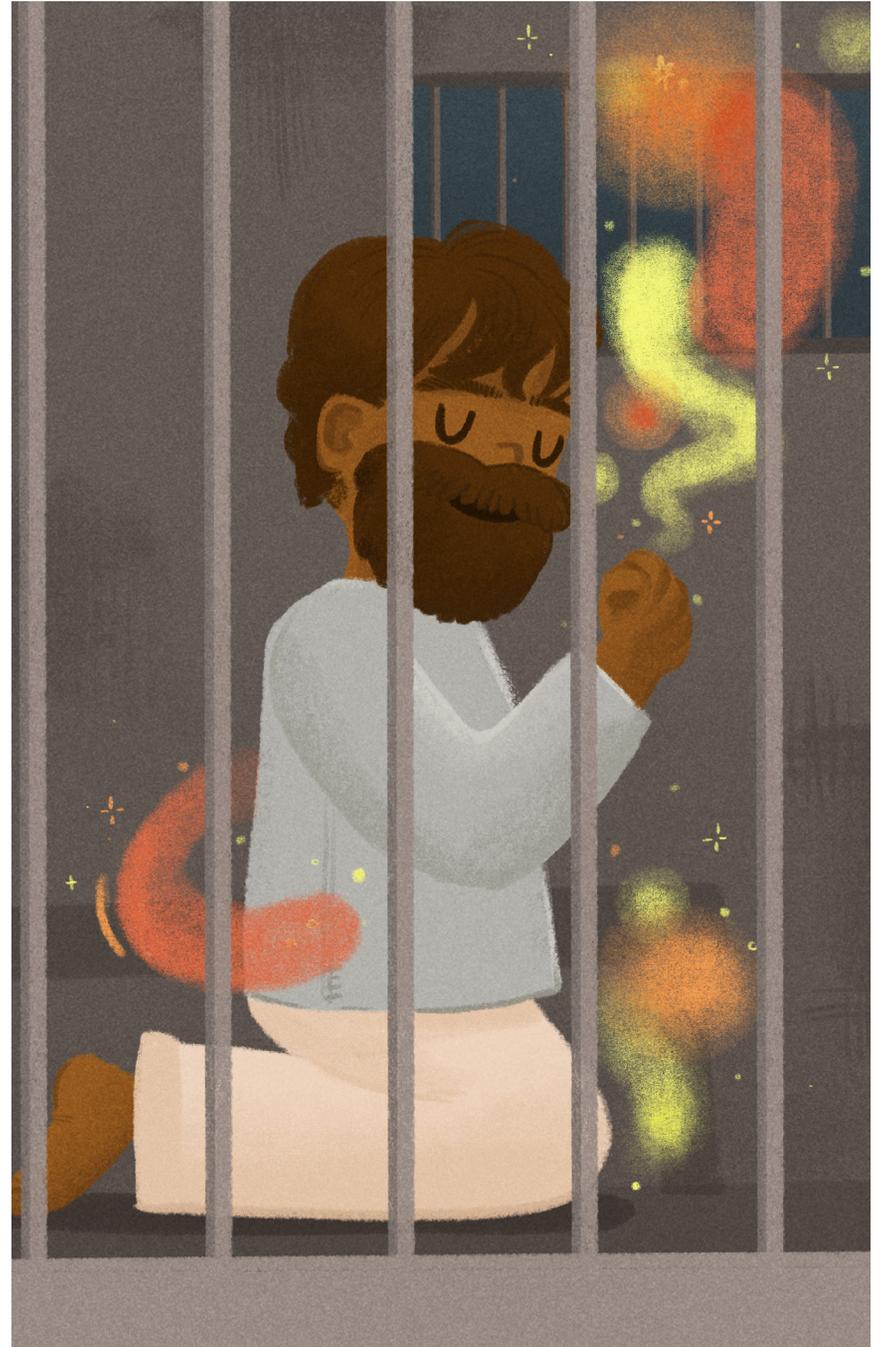
TOOLS: crayons, colored pencils, pastels, gel pens

DEEPER MEANING: God has a perfect plan for us, his beloved people. Remind your StoryMakers that even when confusing things happen in our lives—and we feel full of big, mixed-up feelings—we know that we can find peace in God's perfect plan. We can also find comfort in the reminder that we have been given a Helper, the Holy Spirit!

Chapter 7: Jailbreak

Psalm 97:9

“For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.”



Hook

Examine the image. Ask your StoryMakers the following questions to get started:

1. What do you see?
2. What are some interesting details that caught your eye?
3. How do you think the character in the story feels?

A Little History

Paul and Silas are two of the main characters in the Book of Acts. Remind your StoryMakers that Paul and Silas aren't just looking at a giant map and deciding where they would like to go next—they are waiting for God to tell them where to go. Often those directions took Paul and Silas to places where the message of Jesus wasn't welcomed by everyone. Even when Paul and Silas may have felt confused or in danger, they knew that God had a really important reason for each direction he gave them.

Field Notes

Wow! The New Testament is full of twists and turns. First, Paul received a message to travel. When he got where he was going, he met a young girl, who wasn't any ordinary child. She was a fortune-teller who was enslaved by greedy people who wanted to profit from her bad spirits that allowed her to see the future.

Then Paul was arrested for helping the young girl, and he and Silas were sent to jail. And just when you thought there couldn't be any more drama left, things got a little wild in the jailhouse. You see, God had a plan for Paul, which no one else could mess up.

Thoughts To Ponder

1. Did you catch that the jailer was afraid when he realized the prisoners had been set free? But guess what? Something unexpected happened . . . God set him free instead!
2. Humans all need to be set free from time to time. Maybe you need to be set free from a physical situation, or maybe you need to be set free from some negative thoughts or big feelings that seem to take over your life. Has there been a time you felt afraid? Can you think of another time you needed to be set free?

Fun Facts

1. Paul and Silas were set free, which is a reminder that God is in the habit of setting humans free from those things that hold us captive . . . just like the enslaved girl.
2. Did you know the Book of Acts takes notes about the first 30 to 35 years of the Christian church?

Activity: Jailbreak

Today's story is full of unexpected twists and turns. There are two big events that happen in our story: First, a young fortune-telling girl is healed, and then Paul is set free from jail. Now ask your StoryMakers to imagine they are one of the characters and ask them to doodle their character in the space provided in their zine. Then invite them to retell their story. After they add all the details, encourage them to share the story with a friend or their grown-up. Remind them to include as many details as they remember.

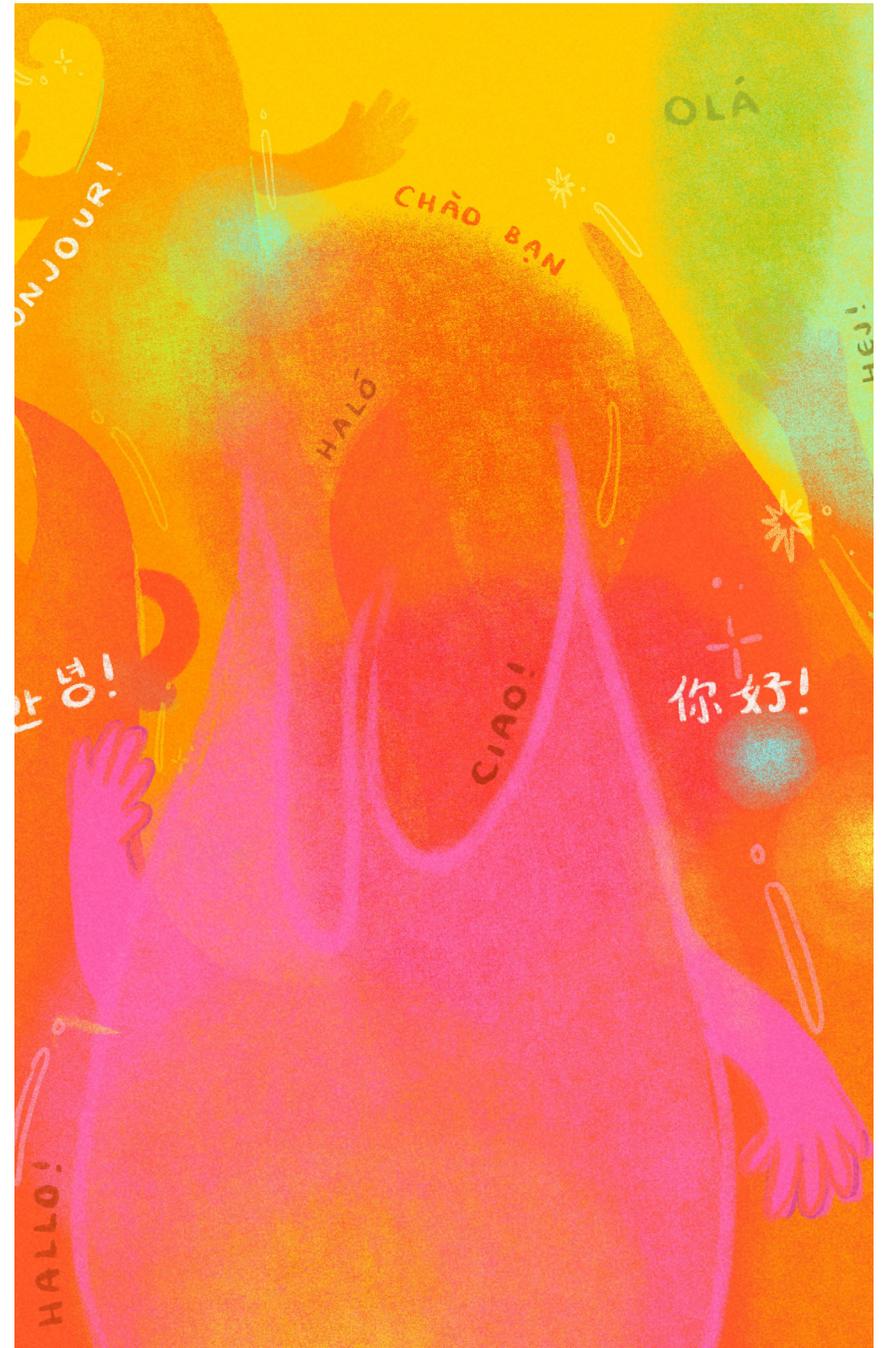
TOOLS: crayons, colored pencils, pastels, gel pens

DEEPER MEANING: Good news: The gift of being set free is FREE. God doesn't tell us to act nice or put on our fanciest clothes or say sorry for all the bad choices we've made BEFORE he will save us . . . He just saves us!

Chapter 8: Pentecost

Acts 2:4

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”



Hook

Take a look at the visual for one minute, then tell your StoryMakers to close their eyes and think about the image. Ask them the following questions:

1. What was the smallest thing you saw? What about the largest?
2. Did you notice the colors?
2. What images are used to show the Holy Spirit?

A Little History

The story of Pentecost is important because it shows us that God will make a way for the entire world to hear the story of Jesus. God will make a way for the whole world to know who God is!

Jesus repeatedly promised his followers a Helper. While the people in this story couldn't see the Holy Spirit like they could see Jesus, there were physical signs of the Holy Spirit . . . the wind, the flames above the disciples' heads, and the ability to speak in languages they didn't know were all special signs that the Holy Spirit was present in that place and working through the disciples to share the story of Jesus to EVERYONE.

Field Notes

Just when you thought the story might start to get a little boring, Pentecost happens! A wind comes upon the disciples, which represents God's gift to bring faith where there is none. Flames appear over the heads of the disciples, which means that just as Jesus was the Light of the World, the disciples would share that light too! The disciples could speak so many languages, which showed that God's story is for the whole world.

Thoughts To Ponder

1. Have you ever been to a place where you didn't understand the language people spoke?
2. How did you feel? A bit confused? Nervous?
3. If you could speak any language what would it be?

Fun Facts

1. "Pentecost" means 50, and this event takes place 50 days after the Passover.
2. Pentecost confirms the words of the Prophet Joel and Saint John.
3. Isn't it amazing that God comes to us in whatever language humans speak? God doesn't wait for us to come to him, but God comes directly to us! What an amazing gift.

Activity: Pentecost

This account is epic! It is important to remember because it tells us that . . .

1. God comes to us.
2. God didn't abandon humanity, but the Holy Spirit is with us.
3. God's story is for the entire world.

Invite your StoryMakers to imagine they are a disciple and they get to choose any country to visit and any language to speak to share God's story. Then ask . . .

1. Where would you go?
2. How would you get there?
3. What would you speak?

Share your adventure in the comic strip. Don't forget the details!

TOOLS: crayons, colored pencils, pastels, gel pens

DEEPER MEANING: God loves each and every one of us and wants us to have the gift of eternal life. His love for us is so big that he will go to extreme measures to make sure we get to hear the GOOD NEWS of Jesus. Whenever you feel alone or like life feels too big or hard, remember that God loves you and sent the Holy Spirit to help you.

Easter tells us . . .

God comes to us!

God gave us the Holy Spirit.

God is full of surprises and is always at work to set us FREE.

God's story is for the **WHOLE WORLD.**

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God." —Romans 8:14



Guide Notes



