

A dynamic comic-style illustration of Moses parting the Red Sea. Moses, with a beard and wearing a green and yellow robe, stands on a narrow path of dry earth, holding a staff aloft in his right hand and gesturing with his left. The sea is split into two massive, curling walls of blue water, with white foam at the top. In the background, other figures in robes are visible on the path. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The overall style is energetic and dramatic.

THE ACTION BIBLE™  
**ANYTIME  
DEVOTIONS**

DAVID **C** COOK™  
*transforming lives together*

# WHEN YOU'RE LONELY

*SO GOD CREATED MANKIND IN HIS OWN IMAGE ...  
MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.*

*GENESIS 1:27*

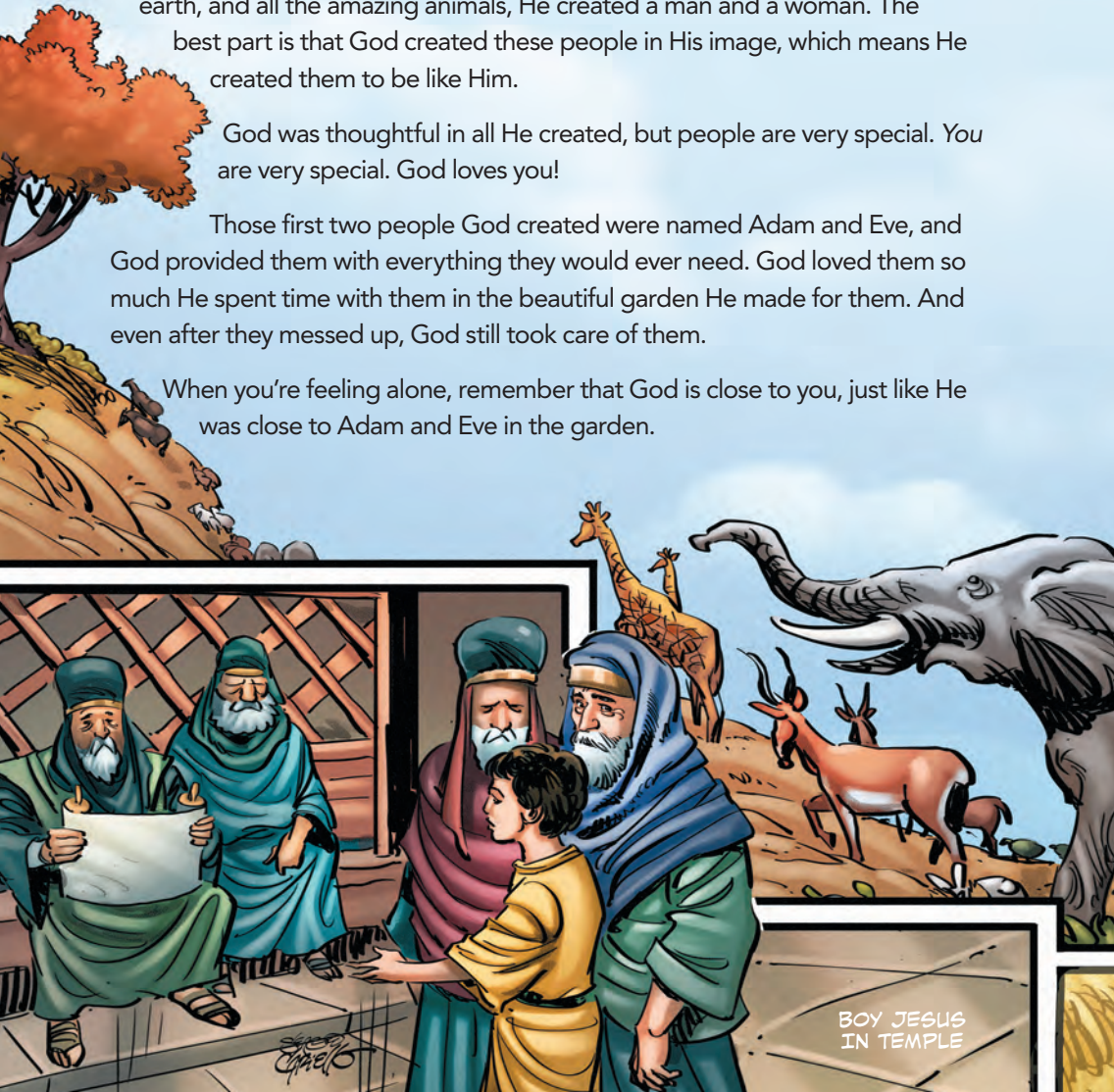
Do you ever feel lonely? Sometimes—even with family, friends, or a pet with you—you may have days when you feel all alone. Everyone feels like that sometimes. You might not get invited to a party, you might be left out of a game, or maybe you come across a group photo and realize no one invited you. That feeling stinks, right?

Here's something to think about: the very first words of the Bible are, "In the beginning God created ..." (Genesis 1:1). After God created light, the sky, the earth, and all the amazing animals, He created a man and a woman. The best part is that God created these people in His image, which means He created them to be like Him.

God was thoughtful in all He created, but people are very special. You are very special. God loves you!

Those first two people God created were named Adam and Eve, and God provided them with everything they would ever need. God loved them so much He spent time with them in the beautiful garden He made for them. And even after they messed up, God still took care of them.

When you're feeling alone, remember that God is close to you, just like He was close to Adam and Eve in the garden.



BOY JESUS  
IN TEMPLE

- God created you to be exactly who you are, and He loves you very much. Tell God how you are feeling. He loves to hear from you!
- There are many ways to pray. Greet God and tell Him how your day is going. HI, GOD! SO FAR, MY DAY IS .... He wants to hear it all: your worries, joys, fears, and thanks. Open a Bible and read some verses as a prayer. Psalms is a great book of the Bible for this. You may know a familiar prayer like the Lord's Prayer. Do you know that people all around the world know and say some of the same prayers? When you pray like this, remember that you are not alone.
- In the next week, notice others who might be feeling lonely. If you get a chance, talk with them. Let them know God made you, He wants to be with you, and He helps you when you're feeling lonely. If you can't speak with them, pray for them and ask God to bring them comfort.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

You can read about the story of creation in "In the Beginning" in *The Action Bible*. Or read about someone who felt lonely in Psalm 25:16–17. Even though David was a king, he still felt lonely and sad sometimes and wrote many songs and poems to God about his feelings.



# WHEN HOPE IS HARD TO SEE

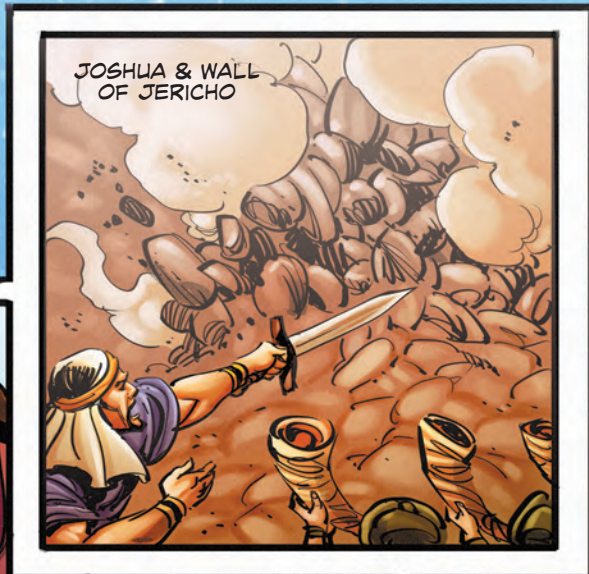
*"YOU ARE THE GOD WHO SEES ME," FOR SHE SAID,  
"I HAVE NOW SEEN THE ONE WHO SEES ME."*

GENESIS 16:13

Jocelyn was feeling down again. Her friends excitedly chatted over lunch about their plans for the upcoming holiday. She knew she should be happy too, but she just couldn't shake this sadness she felt since her grandma died a few weeks ago.

Her friends wanted to help. They wanted her to be happy again! But only her mom and dad understood and told her that these feelings of sadness were normal. Jocelyn hoped she would feel better ... but when?

In the Bible, Hagar was someone who was short on hope. She was being mistreated so she ran away. She couldn't see any way out! But God sent an angel to remind her that she was important to Him. Hagar listened and knew that God noticed her in her time of sadness. God had seen her fears and worries. God gave Hagar hope because she realized that He saw her and was looking after her.



*Steve Meyers*

Here are some things that might help when you're feeling sad:

- Talk about your feelings with your parents or a trusted friend. Sometimes sadness can stay with us a long time. Some people get angry when they are sad or just feel numb—like they don't want to do anything. Long-lasting sadness can be something called depression. It's important to talk to an adult if you have sadness that you just can't move past.
- Close your eyes and think about three things that make you happy, or that you are thankful for. Focusing on being grateful is a way to feel better when you are sad.
- Talk to God. Here's one idea for how to do that: *GOD, I'M SO GLAD YOU ARE ALWAYS WITH ME. IT GIVES ME HOPE TO KNOW THAT THROUGH YOU SADNESS CAN END. THANK YOU FOR ALWAYS LISTENING TO ME. I LOVE YOU! AMEN.*
- A dove is a bird that represents hope. Find a family member or a friend and go outside. Sit in a comfortable place or lay down in the grass and watch for birds. While you're watching, talk about things that make you happy or hopeful.

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

Read the story of Hagar in "Insufficient Sons" in *The Action Bible*. Read Genesis 8 to learn more about how the dove is a symbol of hope and Romans 15:13 for some encouragement when you are feeling sad.



ABRAHAM, SARAH,  
& ISAAC

# FOR IMPOSSIBLE TIMES

*"WATCH ME," HE TOLD THEM. "FOLLOW MY LEAD. WHEN I GET TO THE EDGE OF THE CAMP, DO EXACTLY AS I DO. WHEN I AND ALL WHO ARE WITH ME BLOW OUR TRUMPETS, THEN FROM ALL AROUND THE CAMP BLOW YOURS AND SHOUT, 'FOR THE LORD AND FOR GIDEON.'"*

*JUDGES 7:17-18*

Kara couldn't believe what was happening. Her favorite teacher just accused her of cheating on the science test. Kara was crushed! Now she was being sent to the office to talk to the principal. How would she explain what happened? Could she convince them to let her retake the test to prove she knew the material? Would she ever regain her teacher's trust?

Has anything in your life ever seemed impossible? How did you overcome it?

Gideon did not feel at all like a great warrior when God sent him to fight against His people's enemies, the Midianites. Before the battle, God spoke to Gideon and told him he had too many soldiers. Too many sounds just right! But God gave Gideon specific instructions to send certain soldiers home and, although Gideon has started with 32,000 men, he ended with only 300. Gideon was nervous, but God encouraged him. Just as God told them to do, the army surrounded Midian and blew trumpets—all at the same time. The Midianites panicked and fled or turned on one another.

Gideon and his soldiers won a battle that seemed impossible. Gideon trusted and courageously listened to God in the midst of an overwhelming conflict.

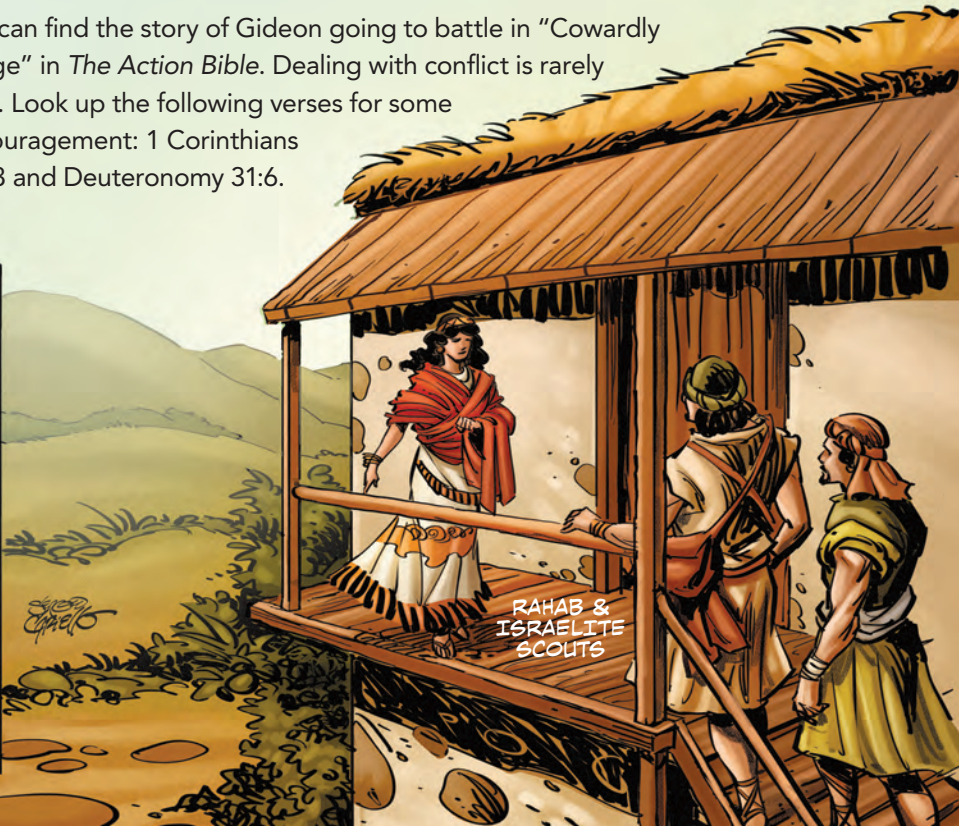


God still talks to His people—to us—and gives courage.

- To have courage means to be brave, to do a good thing that you might not be fully comfortable doing. When you are in a conflict, an argument, or a disagreement, remember that God will give you courage when you ask for it, but He wants you to turn to Him.
- Remember: you can pray out loud or quietly. You can pray anywhere, and God will hear you. Open your day with a prayer: **GOOD MORNING, GOD! TODAY IS GOING TO BE HARD FOR ME. I HAVE TO TALK TO ... WILL YOU HELP ME REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE WITH ME AND GIVE ME THE RIGHT WORDS TO SAY? PLEASE HELP ME TO BE BRAVE. AMEN.**
- Do you need God's help today? List the things that are on your mind. Maybe you have problems with a friend, your sibling, or a parent. As you write, ask God for courage to face each issue. Save the list. Go back later and write down how God helped you.

### TAKE IT FURTHER

You can find the story of Gideon going to battle in "Cowardly Judge" in *The Action Bible*. Dealing with conflict is rarely easy. Look up the following verses for some encouragement: 1 Corinthians 16:13 and Deuteronomy 31:6.



# WHEN YOU'RE ANXIOUS

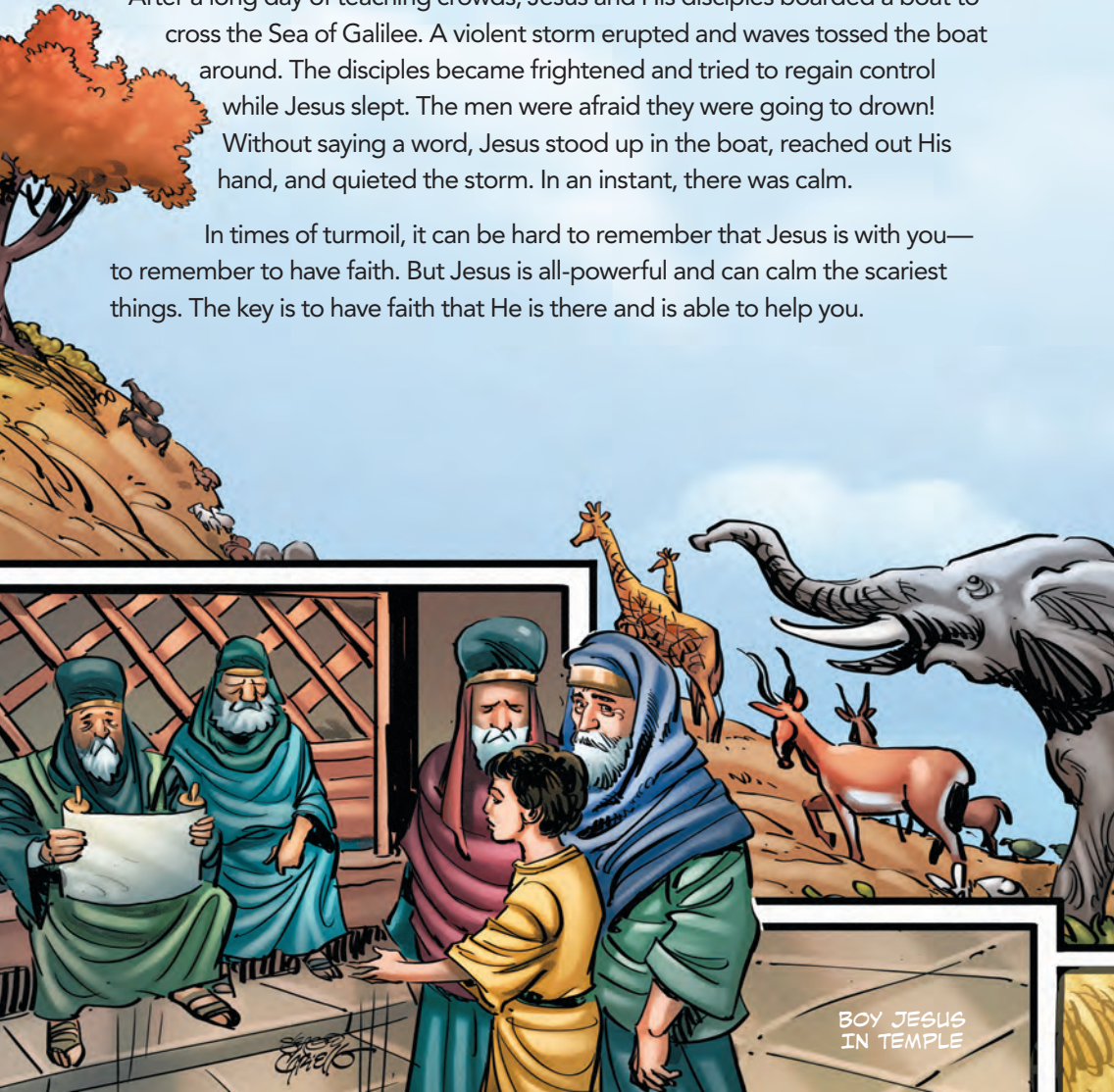
*HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID? DO YOU STILL HAVE NO FAITH?" THEY WERE TERRIFIED AND ASKED EACH OTHER, "WHO IS THIS? EVEN THE WIND AND THE WAVES OBEY HIM!"*

*MARK 4:40-41*

Maddie was getting that weird feeling again. She couldn't explain it, but she felt stressed, panicky, and afraid. It started when she heard the forecast at breakfast—more storms were on the way with possible flooding. Then they practiced a lockdown at school. It always made her anxious just to think about something bad happening in her school! She and her friends talked about it at lunch. It's easy to feel out of control—like that storm in the Bible.

After a long day of teaching crowds, Jesus and His disciples boarded a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. A violent storm erupted and waves tossed the boat around. The disciples became frightened and tried to regain control while Jesus slept. The men were afraid they were going to drown! Without saying a word, Jesus stood up in the boat, reached out His hand, and quieted the storm. In an instant, there was calm.

In times of turmoil, it can be hard to remember that Jesus is with you—to remember to have faith. But Jesus is all-powerful and can calm the scariest things. The key is to have faith that He is there and is able to help you.



BOY JESUS  
IN TEMPLE



- God is in control and has a plan for you. As your day gets busy with family demands, friend drama, tests, and practices, it might feel like a storm is brewing all around you. Jesus is with you, in your boat. Look to Him to take control. The best way to do this is to practice it. Invite Him into your life every day. The more you practice, the easier it will be to remember that He is in your boat.
- God always hears you, so tell Him: **GOD, YOU ARE ALL-POWERFUL AND I AM THANKFUL! THANK YOU FOR BEING IN MY BOAT, READY TO STAND UP WHEN I AM AFRAID. PLEASE HELP ME TO REMEMBER YOU ARE CLOSE TO ME IN SCARY TIMES AND YOU CAN CALM MY STORMS. AMEN.**
- Grab some paper and something to write with. Draw a simple boat, filling up most of the paper. Inside the boat, write down things that have been or are overwhelming to you. Say them out loud and pray for God to stand up and help you through the scary things.

## TAKE IT FURTHER

You can read about Jesus quieting the storm in "Storm at Sea" in *The Action Bible*. Read Joshua 1:9 and Philippians 4:6 for more encouraging words.



# WHEN YOU FEEL ANGRY

*BE KIND AND COMPASSIONATE TO ONE ANOTHER, FORGIVING EACH OTHER, JUST AS IN CHRIST GOD FORGAVE YOU.*

*EPHESIANS 4:32*

Seriously? Did that really just happen? Katie made a special effort to include Jess at the lunch table, moving over to make room, but when she got up to get a napkin, Jess shoved her lunch aside and let Chelsea have her seat when she showed up late. Katie felt tears of anger welling up. Why were they being so cruel? She was thinking unkind words in response when Jess called out, "Come squeeze in, Katie! Chelsea has some exciting news for us!" Katie let out a sigh of relief and prayed a quick thank you for her friends and that she hadn't given in to her initial angry reaction.

Jesus came to earth to bring salvation through His death and resurrection. After His resurrection, His remaining disciples traveled and brought the good news of Jesus and His teachings to all the regions they could reach. Jesus' journey had highs and lows just like yours. Because He was human Jesus felt all the emotions you feel: He felt betrayed; He felt sad; He felt angry.

Everyone has high points and low points on any given day. As you journey through each day, pay attention to the good and the bad. Stay in communication



with God, through prayer, and share with Him how things are going. He will be faithful to help you get through the hard times.

- Anger is a very real emotion and it can be a hard one to know what to do with. How do you react when you are angry? Are you quick to use words to lash out at people? Do you hold your emotions in and let them simmer until you blow up? Even though emotions can come on you quickly, you can choose to handle them thoughtfully.
- Here's a way to pray: **FATHER GOD, WHEN I GET ANGRY, I CAN FEEL OUT OF CONTROL. I WANT TO BE ABLE TO RELEASE MY ANGER AND LEARN HOW TO FORGIVE. PLEASE SHOW ME THE BEST WAYS TO SHOW KINDNESS AND COMPASSION. FORGIVE ME FOR THE TIMES WHEN MY ANGER WAS OUT OF CONTROL. AMEN.**
- Create a playlist of worship songs. At times when you feel hurt, wronged, or angry, play your songs to remind you of who God is and His faithful love for you.

### TAKE IT FURTHER

You can read about one of the times that Jesus was betrayed in "Passover Problems" in *The Action Bible*. Read James 4:1–11 and see more benefits of turning to God in times of trouble.



# WHEN YOU GET TIRED OF THE RULES

*LET EVERYONE BE SUBJECT TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES, FOR THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EXCEPT THAT WHICH GOD HAS ESTABLISHED. THE AUTHORITIES THAT EXIST HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BY GOD.*

ROMANS 13:1

Let's admit it: it's not always fun being a kid. There are so many rules. At home, at school, at church. You have adults and leaders everywhere telling you what you can and can't do. It'd be nice if you could just do your own thing and enjoy life, right?

The thing is, there will be rules all your life. If we lived in a world without rules or laws, it'd be chaos. Rules and laws are there to make sure we do the right thing, and they protect us and give us clear direction when we aren't sure what the wise choice may be. Here's what's important to know: this verse from Romans says that God made the world this way!

While we may not always like or agree with who's in charge, God expects us to honor and respect our leaders. You may not like your parents' decisions about video games or what you can look at online, but you still need to respect them and their rules. You may not enjoy the rules your teacher has for the classroom, but God is the one who allowed your teacher to be *your* teacher. He has a reason for it, so you need to trust Him and honor your teacher.

When you feel like ignoring a rule because it's unfair, remember that God knows what is best for you. Talk to Him about what is bothering you and trust Him. (If

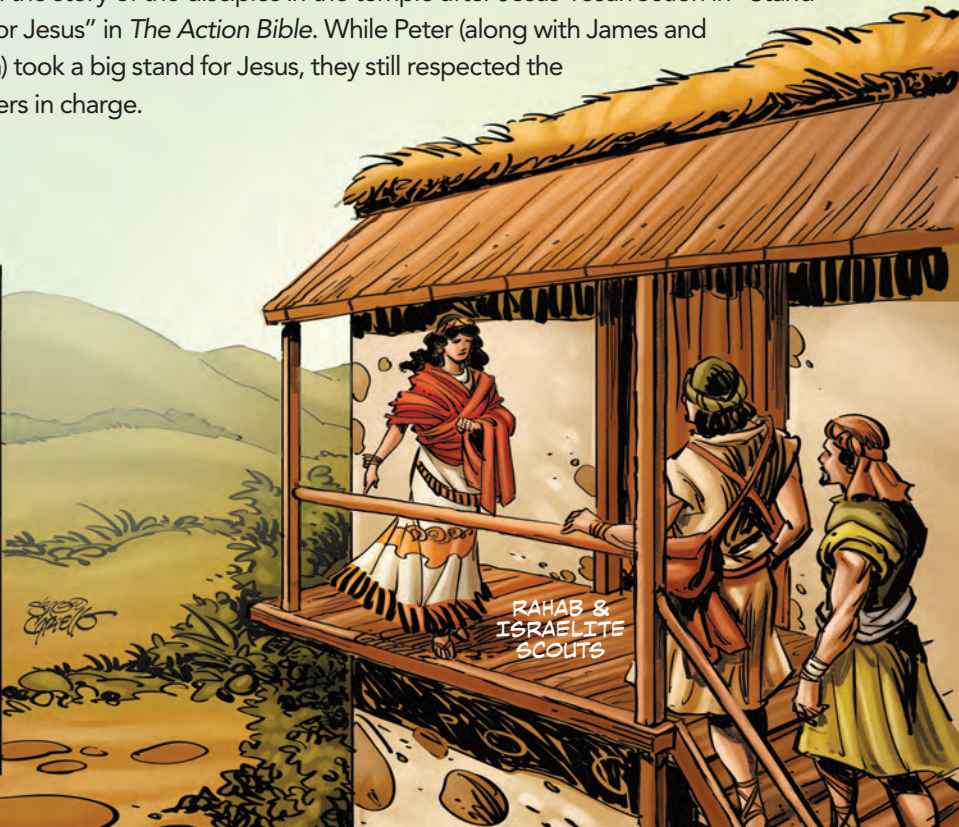


you are being abused by anyone in authority over you, talk to a trusted adult immediately.)

- You probably hear people talking about political leaders at home. Even if you don't like the people who are in government, God wants you to show them proper respect and appreciation—with your words and your attitude.
- You could pray like this: **DEAR JESUS, HELP ME RESPECT MY TEACHERS AND PARENTS. REMIND ME TO SHOW THEM HONOR BECAUSE YOU PUT THEM IN MY LIFE FOR A REASON. THANK YOU FOR THEM AND GIVE THEM WISDOM! AMEN!**
- Encourage your friends and siblings to show honor and respect to the people in charge around you. Write your teacher a thank-you note, make your mom a card, or just follow directions with a good attitude. Showing honor to leaders will spread to those around you!

### TAKE IT FURTHER

Read the story of the disciples in the temple after Jesus' resurrection in "Stand Up for Jesus" in *The Action Bible*. While Peter (along with James and John) took a big stand for Jesus, they still respected the leaders in charge.



RAHAB &  
ISRAELITE  
SCOUTS

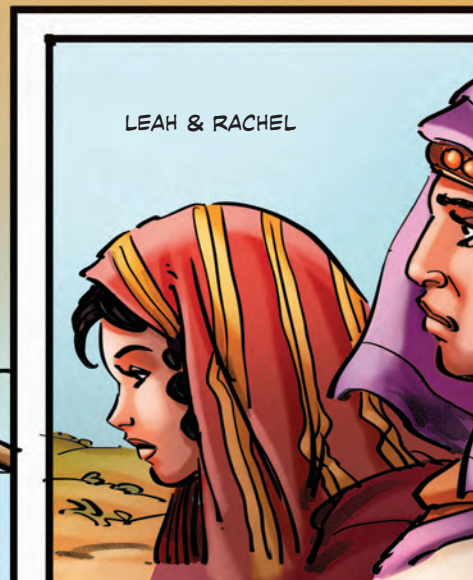
# WHEN YOU FEEL TRAPPED

*MOSES ANSWERED THE PEOPLE, "DO NOT BE AFRAID. STAND FIRM AND YOU WILL SEE THE DELIVERANCE THE LORD WILL BRING YOU TODAY,... THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU; YOU NEED ONLY TO BE STILL."*

*EXODUS 14:13-14*

Mark was a quiet boy and was often teased because his classmates thought he looked different. One day a group of kids chased Mark to the edge of the park and were saying awful things and calling him names. Mark felt trapped, but he knew the story of Moses and God's people. Mark took a deep breath, said a quick prayer, and asked God to give him strength to handle the situation. Mark looked at the kids and simply told them that their actions and words were hurting his feelings and it wasn't okay.

Moses knew the feeling of being trapped. He led God's people to flee Egypt and make it all the way to the Red Sea where the Lord told Moses to camp. Pharaoh and his entire army were in chariots chasing them and God's people felt trapped. They cried out to Moses and Moses shared the words from Exodus 14 with them. He told them to be strong and trust that God would take care of them.



- Has anything in your life seemed so desperate that you felt you were trapped or under attack? Sometimes kids like to gang up on others, teasing them or pushing them around. That's a form of bullying, and it's not okay. When things feel like they are closing in, remember that "the LORD will fight for you; you need only be still" (Exodus 14:14). If you are experiencing bullying, be sure to talk to a trusted adult and ask for help. God puts people in your life for a reason, and it might be to help you through a tough situation.
- God hears you when you talk to Him: **FATHER, YOU WERE WITH MOSES AND ALL YOUR PEOPLE WHEN PHARAOH CHASED THEM. YOU PROVIDED THE WAY OUT FOR THEM WHEN THEY PATIENTLY TRUSTED YOU. I NEED THAT SAME STRENGTH. I AM GLAD YOU ARE ALWAYS WITH ME. AMEN.**
- Pay attention in the coming days to the people around you. Look for someone who might need a friend because she is being left out, made fun of, or bullied. Make an effort to include that person so she doesn't feel trapped in her situation.

### TAKE IT FURTHER

For another story about someone feeling very trapped and needing strength to wait, read "20,000 Egyptians Under the Sea" in *The Action Bible* or Exodus 14.



# WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT OTHERS

*DO NOTHING OUT OF SELFISH AMBITION OR VAIN CONCEIT. RATHER, IN HUMILITY VALUE OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELVES, NOT LOOKING TO YOUR OWN INTERESTS BUT EACH OF YOU TO THE INTERESTS OF THE OTHERS.*

*PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4*

Have you ever heard the story of Snow White? In that fairy tale, the evil queen looks in a mirror each day and asks who is the fairest (or most beautiful) in all the land. The mirror always answers that she is ... until one day when it doesn't. She has been replaced by Snow White, who is now the fairest of them all. This makes the vain queen so angry that she focuses all her energy on killing Snow White.

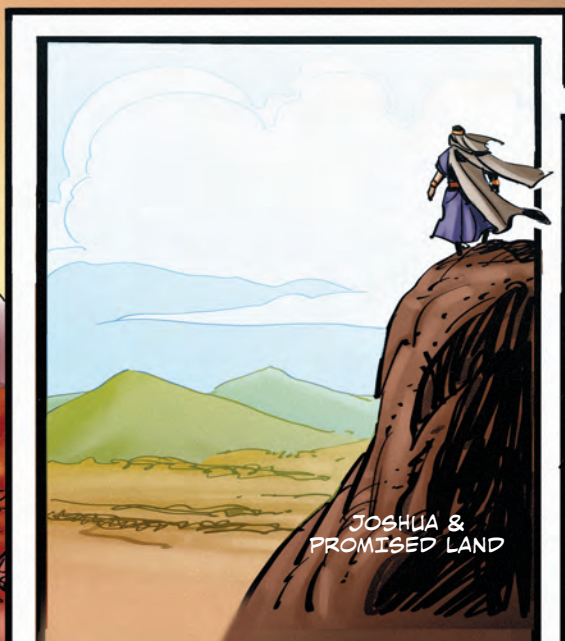
We live in a world where it's easy to become selfish or conceited. It's a natural result of sin for people to look out for themselves. You've probably seen people try to be more popular, funnier, prettier, or feel better about themselves even if it takes putting down others. The message of our world is to get ahead and do whatever is best for you.

But when you enter the family of God, things change. The way Jesus lived was the exact opposite from how the world lives. Jesus served others, loved others, and showed humility. He didn't boast about what He was doing. In fact, He cared

JESUS, MARY,  
& MARTHA



JOSHUA &  
PROMISED LAND





so much about other people—including you—that He sacrificed His life on the cross for your sins!

- One of the main things the Bible says makes us more like Jesus is being willing to serve others. Jesus lived a perfect life that represented God's character. He served others all the time. When you put others above yourself, showing humility and love, it will help you grow into a young man or woman of God with Christlike character.
- Finish this prayer silently: *DEAR GOD, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SENDING YOUR SON WHO SERVED OTHERS. HE EVEN GAVE HIS OWN LIFE! HELP ME BECOME MORE LIKE YOU AS I THINK ABOUT SERVING THOSE AROUND ME BY ... AMEN.*
- Who in your life can you serve instead of thinking about your own needs? What could you do? Watch for someone you can serve each day by showing the love of Jesus.

### TAKE IT FURTHER

Jesus told a parable about a man who served someone in need, even though no one would have expected him to. Read more about the Good Samaritan in "A Good Neighbor" in *The Action Bible* or read Luke 10:25–37.

