



Learning with Jesus

-Book 2-

Learning with Jesus

Stories 6-10

—Imaginary stories of children
living around and learning from Jesus
during His younger years

By Chariane Quille

Cover photo by: Naomi
Illustrated by: Fleur Celeste

www.nurture-inspire-teach.com

Story Titles

♥ **Little Sunrays (Pg. 5)**

♥ **The Sparrow in the Tree (Pg. 10)**

♥ **The Harp (Pg. 17)**

♥ **Peaceful Moments (Pg. 24)**

♥ **Flowers Fade—Love is Forever (Pg. 29)**

Introduction

Did you ever wonder what it would be like to be living in times past, at the time when Jesus was a boy?

Did you ever wish you could have been one of His friends?

Let's take a trip back to those times, and imagine that we are there, living in Nazareth.

What might it have been like? What might He have helped to teach and show you, as you played and grew up together?

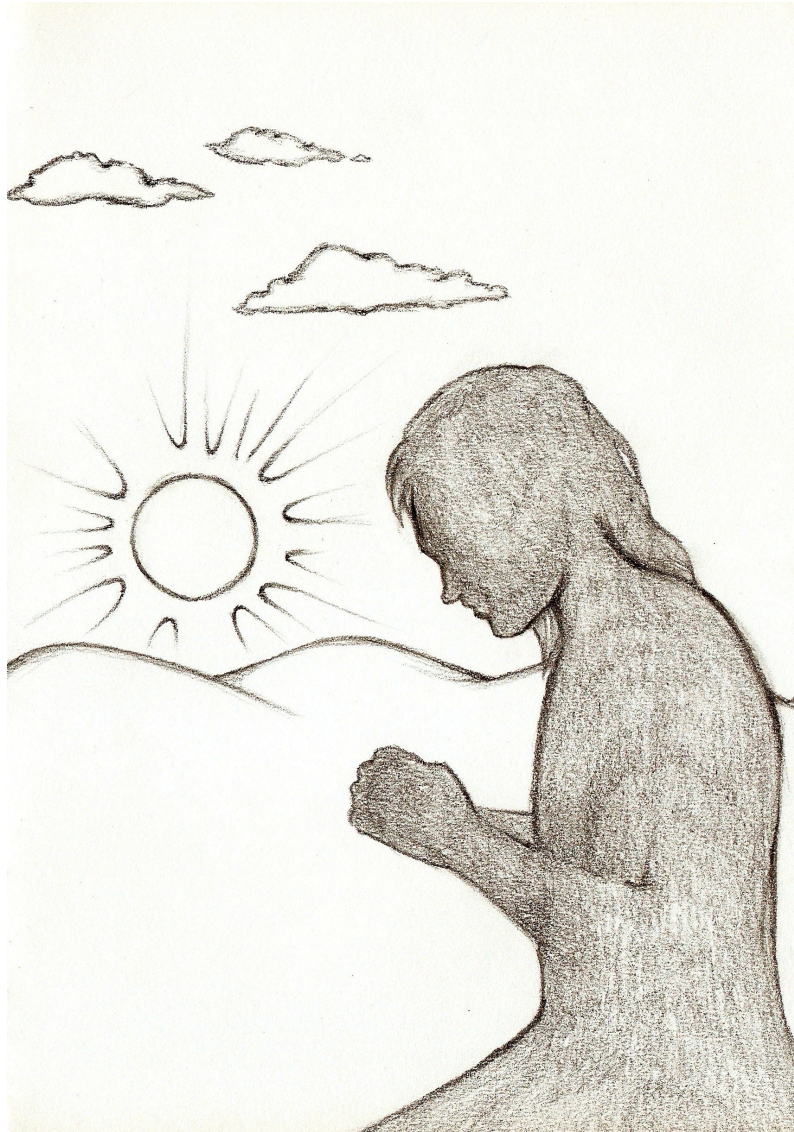
Little Sunrays

It was a cold and frosty morning. Jesus sat outside to see the sunrise, His cloak pulled around Him warmly. He was a young man now, 14 years of age.

He rubbed His cold hands, and then folded them in prayer. His breath could be seen as He whispered a prayer for His day.

As the sun peered over the horizon, it was time to get on with the jobs of the day. Making sure the fire was going so His mother could start the cooking was the first task, followed by bringing water from the cistern into the house for washing.

“You look peaceful—yet pensive—today,” said His mother, giving Him a hug, knowing there was probably a lot on His mind.



“I watched the sun rise, and had time in prayer with My Father in Heaven,” Jesus replied.

Just then a knock came at the door. It was Ezra, a kind elderly neighbour.

“I brought you some fresh bread that my wife baked,” he said, handing a small basket to Mary.

“That’s so very kind of you,” she said.

“Your boy has been a wonderful help to us too.” Ezra added.

“Oh?” Mary wondered.



“Whenever He passes our way, He stops to help if there is a need. He doesn’t take long, as to not keep you and your family waiting for Him. But He seems to spare time every so often to lend a hand. He does it cheerfully and with a kind heart. I wanted to repay you all for your kindness,” Ezra explained.

Mary put her arm on Jesus’ shoulder and smiled, like she was real pleased.

“Mummy, can you help me?” came the morning pleas from the younger children. There was much to do.

“I’ll go,” Jesus said, leaving His mother to chat, and prepare breakfast.

“Jesus,” said His little sister. “I always like it when You come to help me. You are the best big brother in the whole world!”

Jesus smiled. It felt good to be appreciated. It wasn't always that people thanked Him for all that He did throughout the day. But He tried to do whatever He saw needed to be done, when He had the time and felt it was the right thing to do. The town around Him was a happier place because of it.

“Little deeds of kindness and care,” He told His brothers and sisters, “are like rays of sunlight. They make the plants of our lives to grow and bear fruit for us and others. When you share the sunshine of care with others, you'll reap the benefits sooner or later.”

Everyone nodded, as they shared the bread their neighbour Ezra brought—as a result of Jesus' kindness to him and to his wife. ■

The Sparrow in the Tree

Esther was a cute little girl, with curly dark brown hair. She had a smile ready to share with those who passed her way.

She couldn't get around like others; she had to sit or be carried around from place to place. She couldn't walk. But that didn't steal away the happiness in her soul, like a bubbling stream sparkling in the sun's rays.

One day she told her friend Dilliah, who'd come to spend some time with her now, under the shade of the tree, "Do you know why I'm content, even though I can't walk and get around as you do?"

Dilliah had often wondered about this.

"You always seem to find your smile, even on the hottest days, or when people around you are too busy to even notice you are there.

“What keeps you content, and filled with praise to God, even though things aren’t easy for you?”

“Look up in this tree!” Esther said.

“See that little bird on that branch, way up high?” Esther continued.

Dilliah looked hard, and then at last spotted it, “Ah, yes, there it is! How cute!”

“Well, one day I was sitting here, watching everyone moving here and there. I saw how they were able to walk and get whatever they needed, without having to wait for others to help them.

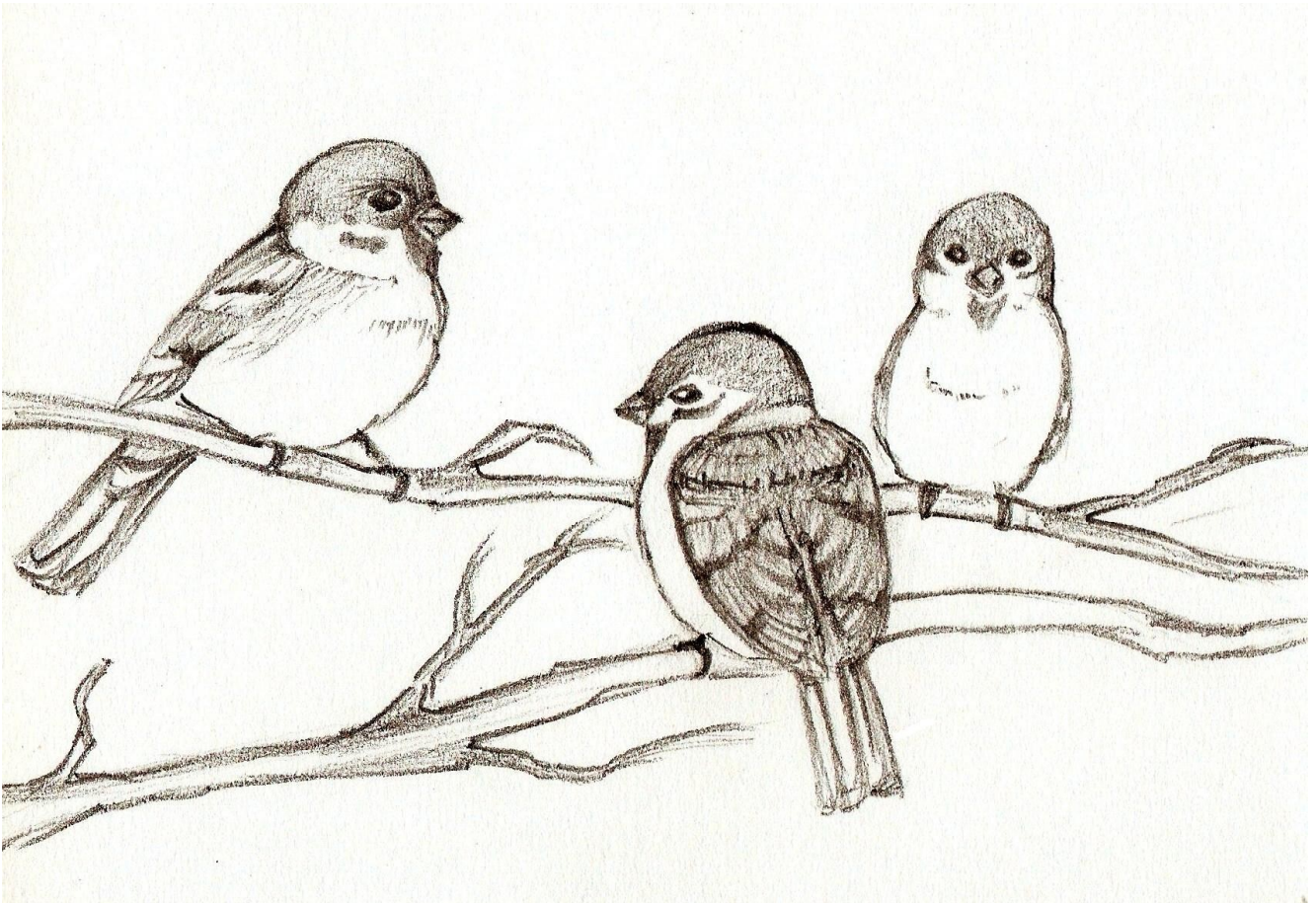
On that day, Jesus came to visit me. He has the friendliest nature, and such a kind heart.

“I think He must have sensed that I was starting to feel sad about my situation. We sat here under this very tree and looked up. That day we noticed ten sparrows in it.



“We played a game of finding and counting them all, as well as watching them flying here and there to gather food. And Jesus reminded me about how special we all are to God. He knows each one of us.

“We can’t fly like the birds—that’s their job. It’s what suits them. I can’t walk, but I can be content with how I have been made. I can do what God has made me to do.”



“And what is that?” Dilliah asked. “What has God made you for, and how can your being crippled help you to do it?”

“Jesus told me that there isn’t a single person on this world that doesn’t need prayer, or a kind word, or a look that will cheer them.

“And most people are too busy going here and there, and doing this and that, in their active lives, to remember to help each other in these important ways. But he said, I could do just that!

“If I pray for each person I see; if I smile at each one that looks my way; if my words are filled with hope and kindness when talking with those who stop by, then it will give them joy, strength, and courage to carry on.

“This town will be filled with laughter instead of tears. Instead of struggling with the heavy load of

work, people will do it with joy, knowing that God sees and cares for them. I can talk to the children. I can tell them about God's love and care.

“Oh, Dilliah, don't you see there is so much that I can do, and that needs to be done? I may be the only one today that has the time to do these things. See, we each have our place, and each can do a big and important job for God.”

“So every time you see a sparrow, it reminds you of what Jesus told you?” Dilliah asked.

“Yes, it helps me to smile, to sing a song of praise, and to cheerfully do what I can do—and it does make a difference. Did you notice the neighbour over there, the one who used to always be angry about something? He now has a smile as he whistles about his work.

“God blessed his crops, and his family, and those around him are also starting to cheer up more. I am helping! And it feels wonderful. So that’s why I can smile. God made me to be just what I am, and I am glad He can use me to help others.”

“Thanks for talking to me,” Dilliah said. “You’ve helped me too,” she said, wiping a few tears from her eyes. “You’ve warmed my heart and reminded me of God’s special love and care for me as well.”

Esther gave her a hug, and waved as Dilliah ran off to help fill her place as well, with more joy than before. Esther smiled. It felt good to encourage a friend, just as Jesus had encouraged her too. ■

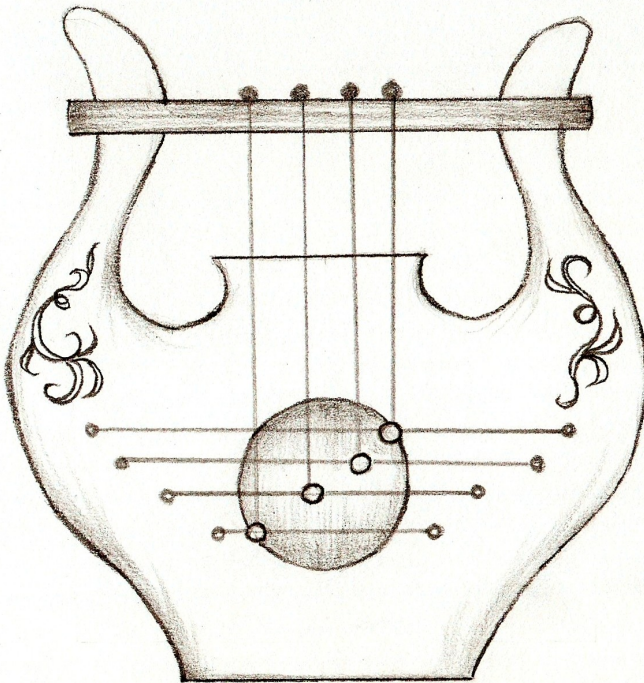
The Harp

The harp plays such beautiful music, that the listener almost feels it's singing to them the melodies plucked from its strings.

On one particularly hot afternoon in Palestine a boy came into the house of his aging uncle, who

was a skilled musician. He sat at his uncle's feet, while he played a longing yet beautiful type of song.

It told of a coming Healer and Saviour, a Shepherd, a King, the Promised One.



The notes of the harp rang out with joy and wonder, as if announcing or celebrating the present arrival of such a one, though the words expressed the yearning, the desire, for this, God's chosen One, to come and soothe, heal and save mankind.

When the song ended, the boy asked, "Uncle, when will this One come?"

And with a far-away look on his face, his uncle said, "I don't know, my boy." Then he looked down and smiled with a ray of hope, "Maybe in your lifetime..."

Not too long after this boy's family had to travel. There was to be a census, a time of taxing. Everyone had to go to the birthplaces of their fathers.

It was a difficult time for all. Travel wasn't easy and they were without the comforts of their home and village; father's couldn't continue their trades as usual and mothers had to find new places for securing food and water for their families.

Jonas' family had to go to a place called Bethlehem, along with the many others who travelled there too. His family stayed there for awhile with relatives before returning home.

On one dark night when they were in Bethlehem, as they were sitting around a fire, a group of lively shepherds came running nearby, proclaiming something incredible. Could it be true, what he heard them say?

They were telling everyone about a vision of angels announcing the arrival of the promised Messiah!

This is what his old uncle was often singing about, putting to music ancient prophecies and scriptures describing the event.

Could it be so, here and now, right where they were? He had to find out. Jonas ran to catch up with this happy bunch of men, asking them exactly who they had seen.



The shepherds told of the angels, and of the baby they were honoured to see that very night. Jonas' older brother had run to catch up as well.

“Let's go and peek in to see this Baby!” Jonas suggested, and off they ran, in the direction the shepherds had spoken of. And it was just like they'd been told.

Not wanting to disturb Mary and the Baby, the boys found a small window, and by the light of the dim lantern light they saw little Jesus sleeping, snuggled in the manger.

The boys waved, and then returned joyfully to their family.

Jonas knew that at that moment it had finally come to pass. A smile beamed on his face that he just couldn't hide.

He felt a wellspring of joy inside. He knew now that no matter how difficult things in his and other's lives were, they were all going to get better, from this day onward.

Maybe not everything would change in all the ways that would make life more comfortable. Jesus wasn't here to give out riches to each person, or to force everyone to behave in the kind and loving ways that would be best.

But somehow Jonas knew that Jesus' mission of saving and healing both hearts and bodies, would affect the lives of multitudes the world over, from that day forward. And he was glad to be around at the time of Jesus' arrival.

It was many years before Jonas heard the happy news, that Jesus was travelling around, doing just that: helping, healing, encouraging, and bringing forgiveness to all who asked.

One happy day he saw a large group of people travelling up a mountain, he wondered just where they were going. Then he saw a man, who he found out was Jesus. That's who they were all going to hear speak.

“His words are amazing!” the people were saying. They all wanted to hear what He had to say. And that day there was a very special talk that Jesus gave, ending with a great free meal of loaves and fishes.

Jonas was there that day, so glad to have had the opportunity to hear Jesus speak and get to partake of a miracle too!

Later on, after Jesus had given His gift of love and life, and had risen from the dead and then ascended up to Heaven again, Jonas was among another crowd listening to an important message.

He heard when Peter stood up and told them all of Jesus' life, and how He rose from the grave, and would forgive and save them all, if they accepted His gift of love.

Jonas received this news gladly, and became part of the new team of disciples, bringing the news of His arrival, His love, and salvation to many. ■

Peaceful Moments

The sun was starting to set, and Mary was busy trying to finish grinding some wheat. It was hard work. Joab was standing nearby hoping to catch a few moments of play with Jesus' younger brothers. He liked playing with them.

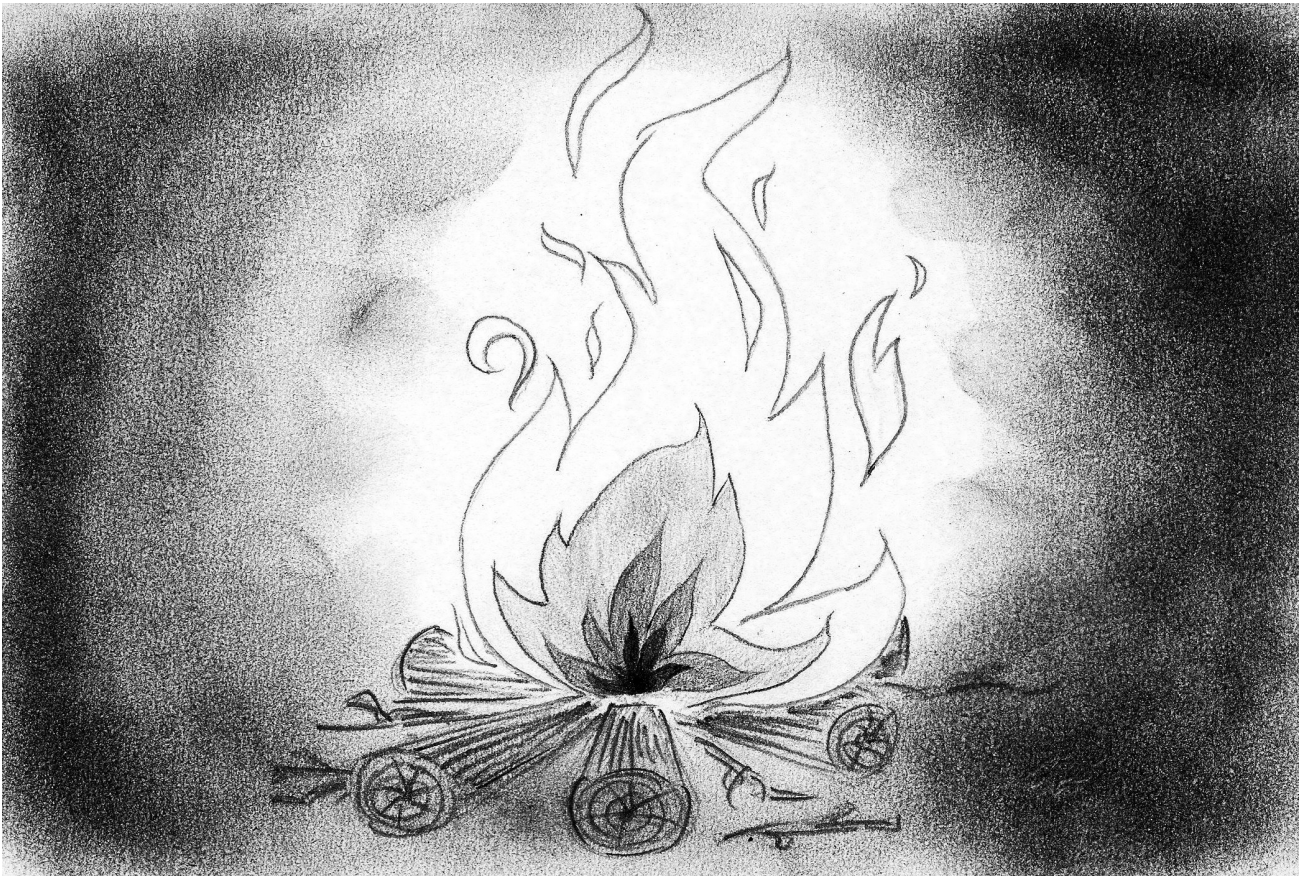
“I'll see if any of them can come,” offered Jesus. It was the time of day when most children were either playing or busy helping with the preparations for the meal at the end of the day, and doing evening chores.

A few boys bounded happily off in Joab's direction, enjoying what was left of the sun's light.

Jesus took the rest of His young siblings for washing and a story, giving his mother a chance to finish up her work.

“Can you please tell us a story about someone who lived long ago?” asked one of His little sisters.

“All right,” said Jesus. “But first you must wash your face, hands, and feet, and get your little cloak on. It will be dark and cold soon.”



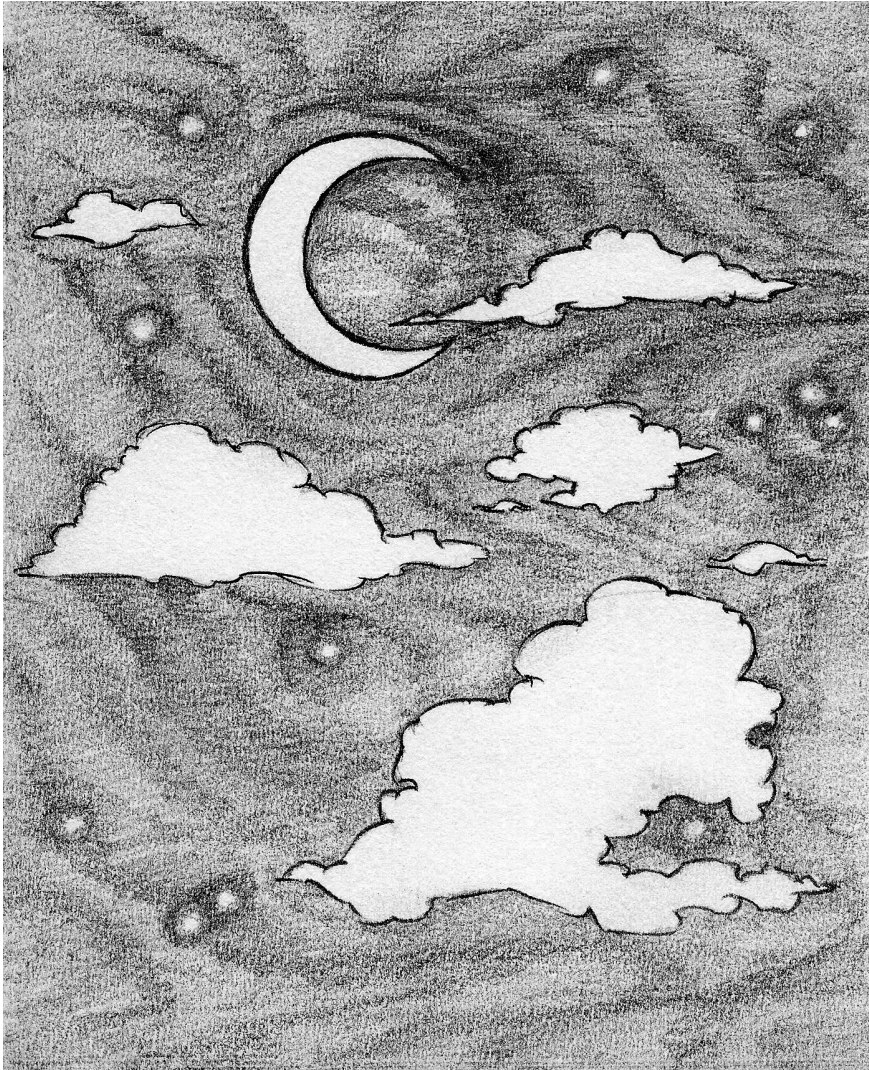
The happy and eager children did just as their older brother asked, and were back within minutes, settling down for a good story.

“Long ago, before you ever set foot on a grassy hill...” Jesus began, and told of the creation of the world, the first people to live on earth, and what the world was like in the beginning. Each one sat listening with rapt attention.

Their brother Jesus had a way to tell stories that captivated their attention each and every time. He spoke in such a way that, even if it was a story they knew well, it was as interesting as if it was the first time they heard it.

Before long Joab and the others were back. Seeing that a story was being told, they quietly and eagerly joined in, listening intently and laughing along with the others.

Jesus kept them all interested for long enough that by the time the story was over there was a simple meal prepared.



After saying a prayer, they ate with grateful hearts, before going to bed for the night.

Before going to sleep, Jesus first said good night to each of His brothers and sisters, and then spent a bit of time sitting out under the stars, to pray and commune with His Father in Heaven.

It wasn't always easy being the eldest. It required a lot of work to care for everyone, as well as learning the trade of a carpenter. But the moments spent alone in prayer, in quietness of heart, gave Him the reassurance that everything would work out well.

And the peace He received during those times alone with His Father in Heaven made a difference to His family as well. He passed on the faith and peace that was given to Him in those moments. ■

Flowers Fade—Love is Forever

Jesus' sister came running to Him happily, bringing a wild flower she'd picked. She showed it to her big brother and He smiled at her, then she skipped off happily to set it in the house.

The next day, however, it had withered.

“What happened to my flower?” she asked sadly, noticing that it was not as bright as it had been the day before.

“Flowers don't last—not like you do! You are like a wonderful flower. And God loves you so much. He made



you and you will last a long time—much longer than a pretty little flower.

“More flowers will grow, and you can pick them again. But all flowers, and all grass and plants will have a time to live and a time to fade,” Jesus explained.

It was nice to have a big brother to go to when things were difficult or made her sad, His little sister thought. Jesus had faith and didn't get too worried about things that were lost or gone.

Somehow He seemed to know that the best things would last forever. —Like God's love and care, and His Words and promises! And the people God made who loved Him would keep on living with Him, forever, no matter what happened on Earth.

“It’s time to go!” they heard their mother Mary say. The family was off for a picnic with some neighbours.

They’d planned to walk to a nearby hill, play on the hillside, and eat some of the fresh foods they had harvested from their gardens.



“I have more flowers!” Jesus’ sister exclaimed later as she came running to Him with a handful of freshly picked flowers she’d collected while on their picnic. Jesus smiled and said,

“There’s always something else to cheer us. When something is gone, something else comes and takes its place. We have room then in our heart for new joys.”

His little sister skipped happily off in the sunlight.

“Children grow and time passes. It’s nice to enjoy them while they’re here—before adulthood takes them on to new challenges.” Mary was saying, looking in Jesus’ direction.

It seemed she knew that one day He too would be on a different path, doing new things, and bringing to the World salvation, healing, and

God's Words of love and life. Jesus understood what His mother was saying and was trying to prepare herself for. He knew it wasn't easy to have people you love move away, or move on from your company, or pass away.

People want to believe that those they love will be with them forever. It's hard to let go of something special to you—like a friend, a brother or sister, a parent, or a child.

Jesus came and put His arms around His mother and said. "My love for you will be forever." He reassured her that no matter what happened for awhile on Earth, He'd always love her.

What happens on Earth is only for a very short time, compared to the wonderful things those who love God will get to experience for eternity. Life with God will go on forever, and those we love or miss will be near us again.

Mary shed a tear. She knew one day she would miss her big boy Jesus. He would be a grown man, and have a big job to do. But she also knew that what He said was true—love would go on and on. It was something that would never fade or come to an end.

Love is from God, and He never ends. And because she would share Jesus with others, and He would one day go and teach, preach, heal, and bring God's forgiveness to everyone, in the end she'd get so much more in return. —Great rewards in Heaven, as well as God's special love forever. She'd be able to see Jesus then in Heaven, and be with Him always.

Giving up someone you love to do a job God wants them to do will bring you great rewards—and you'll get to be with them again, too—for eternity one day! ■