

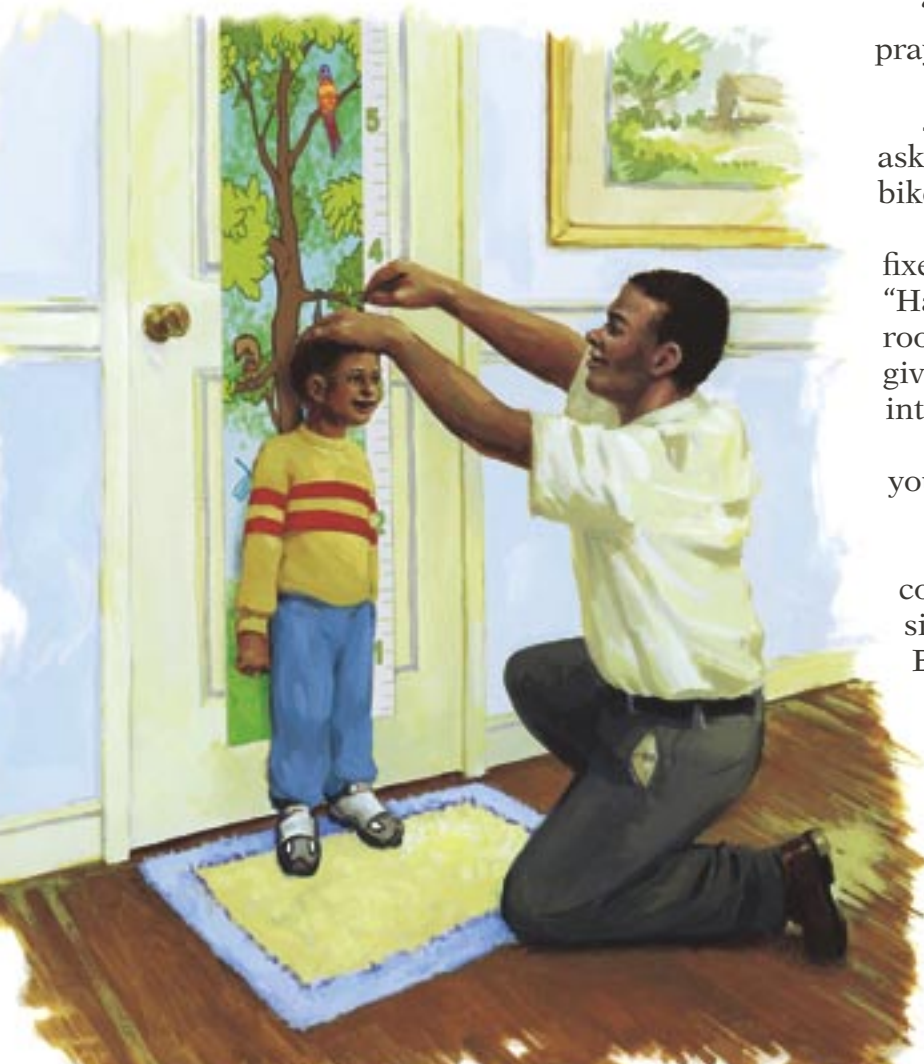
The Birthday Surprise

Elmina Richardson

Daddy," said Joey. "Do you think I look bigger?"

"I sure think so," said Daddy. "Either those jeans are shrinking, or else your legs are getting longer, one or the other. Come with me and I'll measure you."

Just outside the family room, right on the growth chart, Daddy had a special spot where he measured the children. He started measuring them when they could stand up by themselves. Joey and his sister would often check to see just how tall they were getting. Sometimes it would seem that they were catching up with each other; then all of a sudden, one of them would get taller.



Today, as Joey stood in the doorway, he stood up as tall as he could stretch himself. Daddy marked the spot and wrote Joey's name by it.

"Well," said Daddy, "it looks like you have grown about an inch and a half."

Joey looked up at Daddy, "Do you think I have grown tall enough to get a new bike? My birthday is coming soon."

"Yes, it is," said Daddy. "It seems like only yesterday you were toddling around the house like your sister."

"Oh, I know I'm big enough now," said Joey as he looked back at his spot on the door frame.

"I'll pray about it," said Daddy, "and you pray, too."

"Oh, I will," said Joey. "I will."

Joey did just that. He prayed and prayed, asking God to let Daddy give him a bigger bike.

Finally, Joey's birthday came. Mother fixed his favorite breakfast, and they all sang "Happy Birthday" as Joey walked into the room. Daddy prayed and thanked God for giving Joey to them and for helping him grow into a big strong boy.

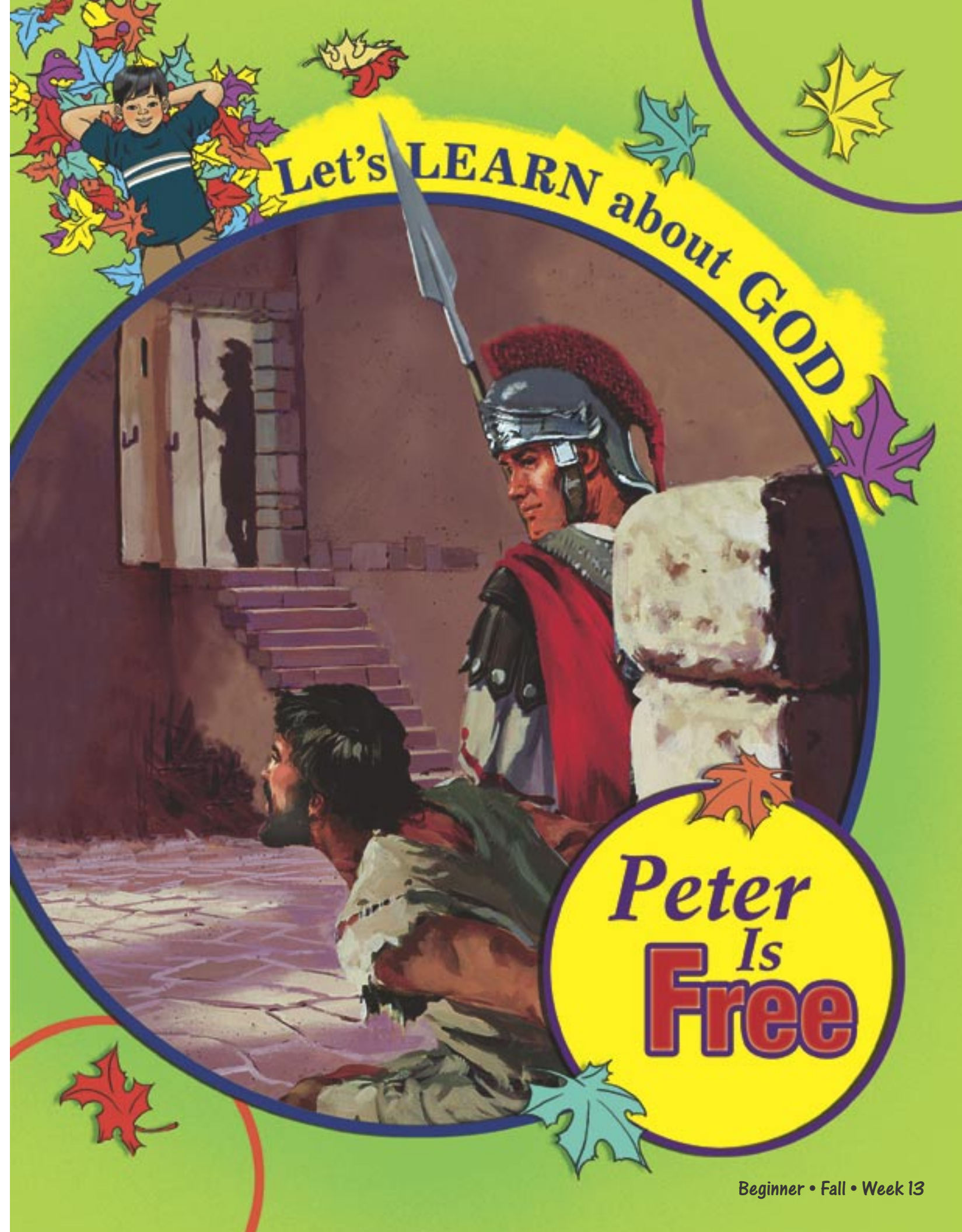
After breakfast, Mother said, "Joey, could you take this bag of trash out, please?"

"Yes," said Joey as he reached for the bag.

When Joey opened the back door, he couldn't believe his eyes. There stood his sister holding a big poster that said, "Happy Birthday, Joey!" And standing there beside her was Daddy with a brand new red bike. What a surprise! Joey dropped the bag and ran to his new bike. "God has answered my prayers!" he said to Daddy.

Joyful Life

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**Peter
Is
Free**



Acts 12:1-17

Something we can do

Talk with your child about his friends. If possible, take some pictures of his friends, cut them out, and put them on a piece of construction paper. Each day take time to pray for a specific friend.



Let's Talk about It

Peter Is Free

Jesus had gone back to Heaven to live with God the Father. Peter and the other disciples were going about telling people about Jesus. Many of the people did not want to hear about Jesus, so they had Peter put into prison.

When Peter's friends found out that he was in prison, they were very sad. They all gathered together at Mary's house and began to pray that God would send Peter back to them.

God heard and answered their prayers. He sent an angel to Peter's prison.

"Get up," said the angel. The chains that were locked around Peter's ankles fell off. The angel told Peter to put on his coat and shoes and follow him.

Peter obeyed and followed the angel right past the guards. All this time Peter did not really know what was going on; he thought he was dreaming. He followed the angel right through the gate and down the street. Suddenly the angel disappeared.

Peter knew now it was not a dream. God had sent His angel to set him free. He hurried off to Mary's house and knocked at the door. Inside the house, the people were praying for Peter. Peter kept knocking. Finally a little girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. She was so excited to hear Peter's voice that she did not even open the door! She ran to tell the people, "Peter is at the door!"

"How can that be?" they asked. They were certain that Rhoda was hearing things.

"He's here, he's here!" Rhoda said. "I really heard his voice; he is at the door. We prayed that God would set him free, and God has answered our prayers. Come! Come with me and see."

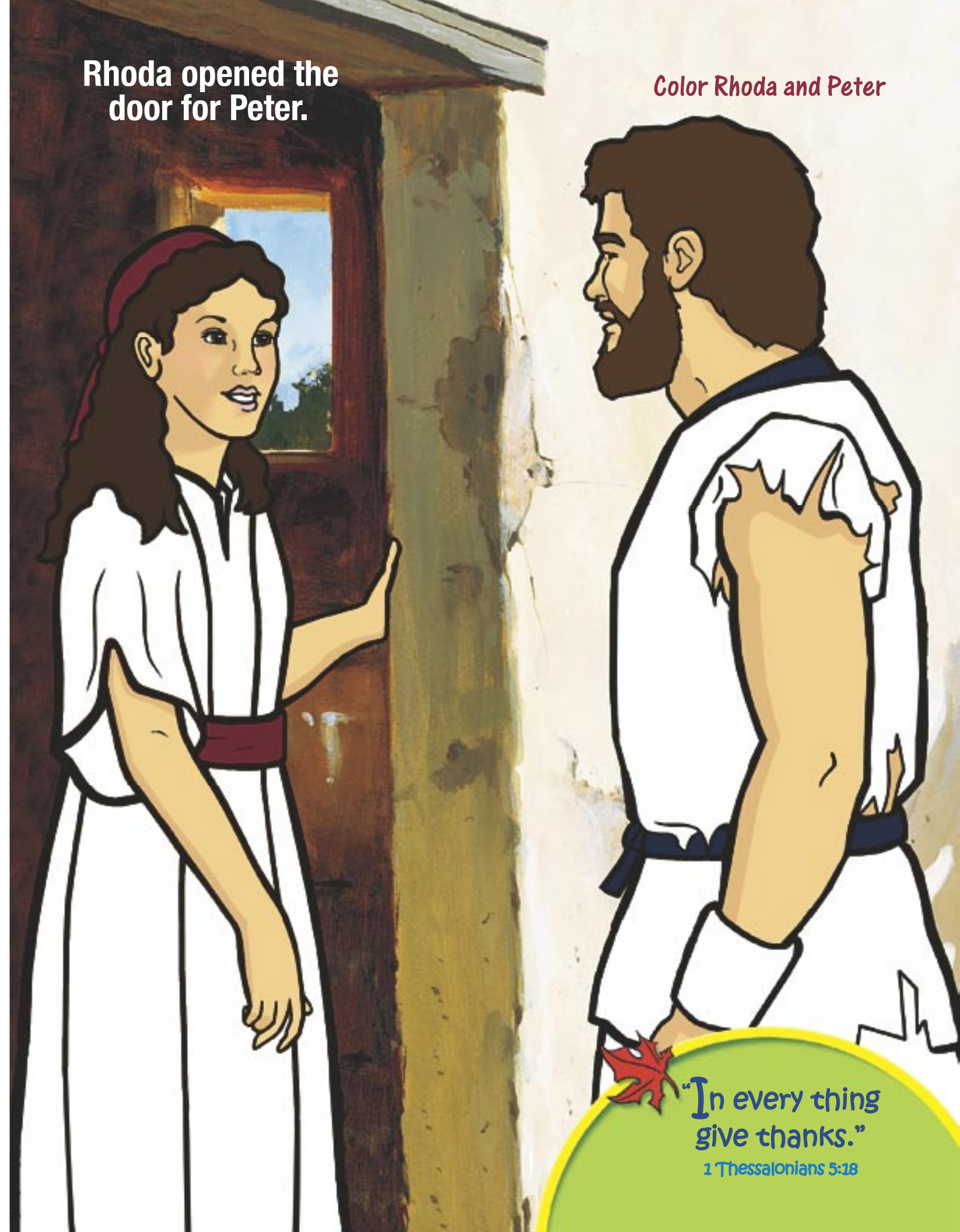
They followed Rhoda to the door, and sure enough, there was Peter still standing there knocking. They opened the door. When they saw Peter, they were really surprised. Peter told them what had happened to him that night; how God had taken care of him and sent the angel to set him free.

Peter's friends cared for him and asked God to set him free from prison. And God answered their prayer and set Peter free. Our God can do anything. He is a wonderful God.

- Who was in prison? *Peter*
- What were Peter's friends doing? *praying*
- Who freed Peter from prison? *an angel sent from God*
- Who answered the door when Peter knocked? *Rhoda*

Rhoda opened the door for Peter.

Color Rhoda and Peter



"In every thing give thanks."

1 Thessalonians 5:18