

I AM THE GATE

JOHN 10:9



DRAWING CLOSER

Exploring scripture through art



Music and
Creative Arts



Family
Ministries
Having faith in the family

USING DRAWING CLOSER

This volume of Drawing Closer explores each of the 'I Am' statements that Jesus makes in John's Gospel. Salvationist writers and artists have reflected on these passages and created their own original responses.

For those who are artistically gifted, these statements alone may be enough to inspire visual responses. However as Drawing Closer is

designed as an accessible resource, these additional resources are provided for those who need a little more inspiration:

⑥ Colouring sheet(s)

⑥ Sheet(s) with the 'I Am' statement printed on

⑥ A sheet of doodles which can be traced, stuck on or used as inspiration

Participants can use the sheets, bring their own sketch books or even draw straight onto the pages of their Bible.



THE SESSION

1. Read the selected passage and thought aloud together.
2. Give participants time to create, using the included resources or their own imagination.
3. While creating, encourage conversation and gently discuss what the statement means to participants.
4. At the end of the session, ask participants if they want to show their work to the group, or explain what their thoughts were when creating.
5. Finish with the prayer provided.

Helpful Questions

What image jumps out at you from these verses?

Are there any words/ideas that you don't understand from this passage?

What do you think Jesus meant by this statement?

Does anyone have a translation of the passage that is different?

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Art: Becky Billard Thoughts: Michael Alford

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.'

(John 6:35, ESV)

Have you ever been 'over the top' hungry? I mean like you can't concentrate, you're moody, you 'just can't think of anything else' hungry? For me, I remember a time after a mammoth hillwalk in the Scottish mountains when I had only taken water with me and had no food all day. I've never known hunger like it and I absolutely demolished a Fish Supper when we got down!

Well, let me just set the scene. People flocked to see Jesus because of His amazing teaching, and had followed Him across the sea into the wilderness to hear Him speak. They had been there for a long time, and they were hungry. I mean really HUNGRY! Jesus, with just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish, prays and that small amount of food becomes an abundant feast to feed everyone - with plenty left over!

So Jesus had just fed 5,000 people. An amazing unexplainable miracle!

Of course the people were hungry, and of course feeding 5,000 people is an amazing gift of God. But the next day Jesus now says this - "I AM the Bread of Life."

PRAYER

Dear God, I admit that I have a hunger that only You can satisfy. Please be everything that I need. Fill my heart with Your love. Satisfy me in a way that only You can, knowing this is achieved only through the wonder of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I trust You for everything I need. Amen

I'm sure the miracle of the day before was fresh in everyone's mind. Now Jesus is telling people that He is actually far more than just the provider of the practical things.

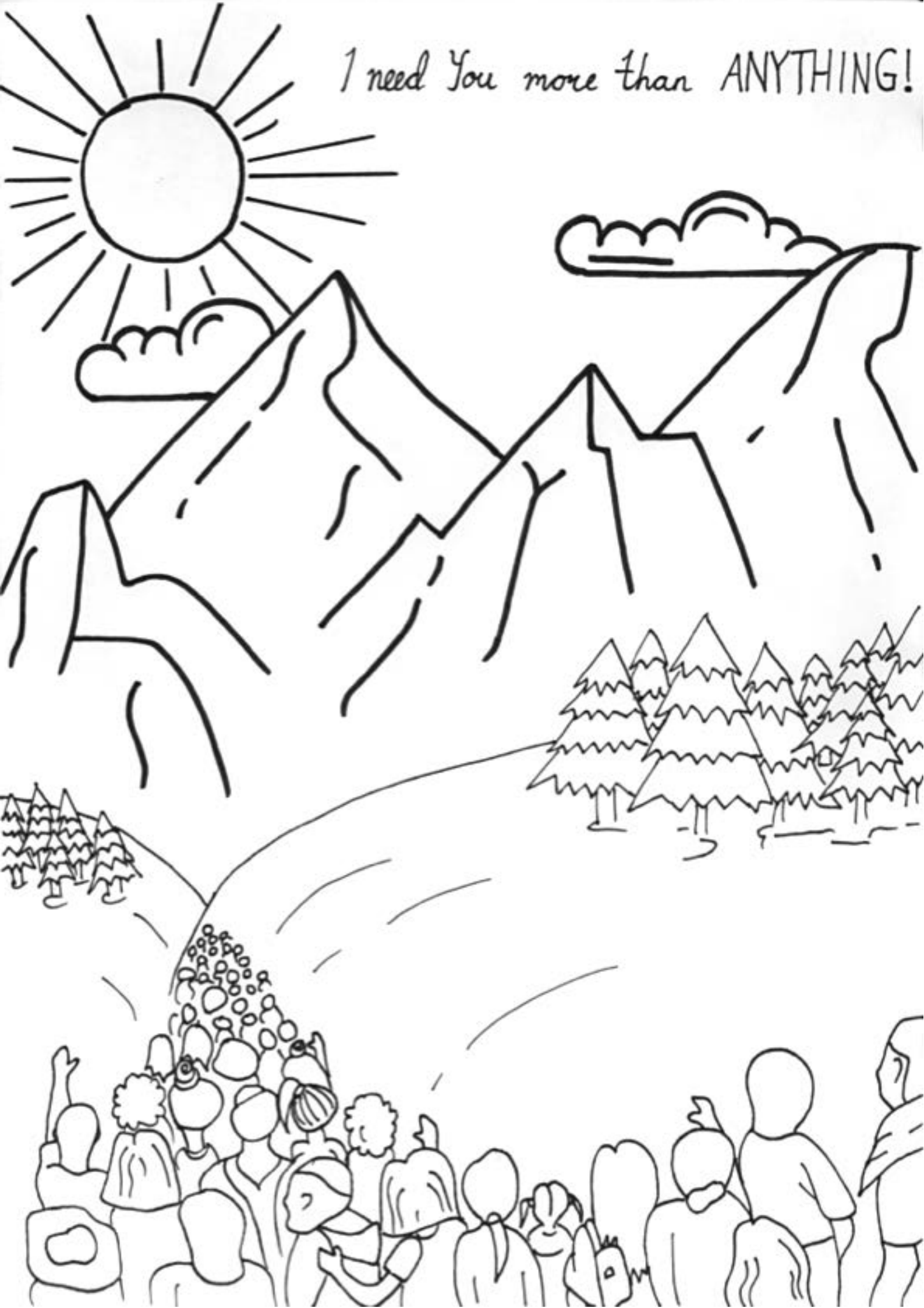
Jesus is saying - I have just done this amazing thing and yet I am worth far more than physical bread. I can satisfy you in ways you can never imagine. Those who are filled with bread will always be hungry again tomorrow, but those who are filled with Me will have their deepest hunger satisfied. I AM the Bread of Life.

The people didn't quite understand. They liked the amazing signs and wonders, but didn't really see past these to what Jesus was really saying. The question is - do you?

Do you just want help from God or do you want God? Do you just want things from His hands or do you truly want to seek His face?

Jesus is the Bread of Life, only He can satisfy our deepest needs and longings, far more than any meal ever could.

I need You more than ANYTHING!

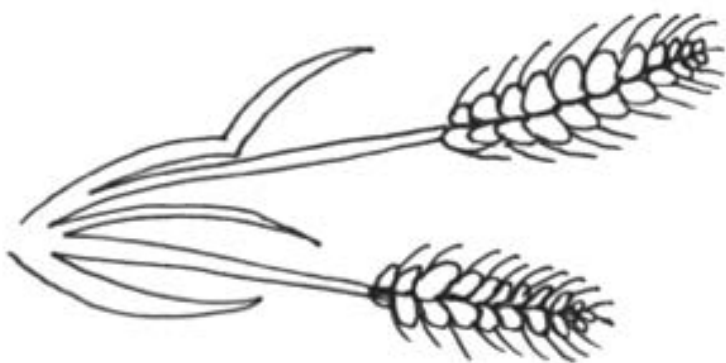
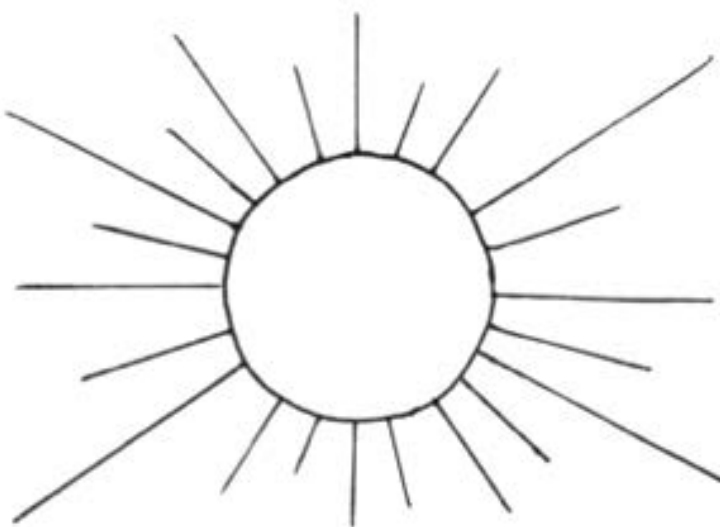
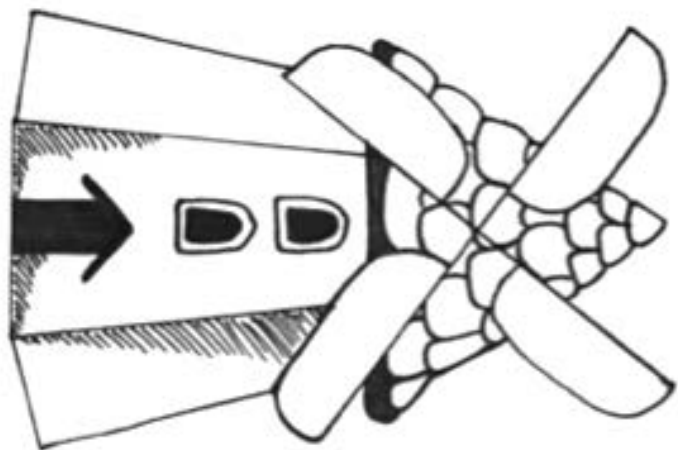
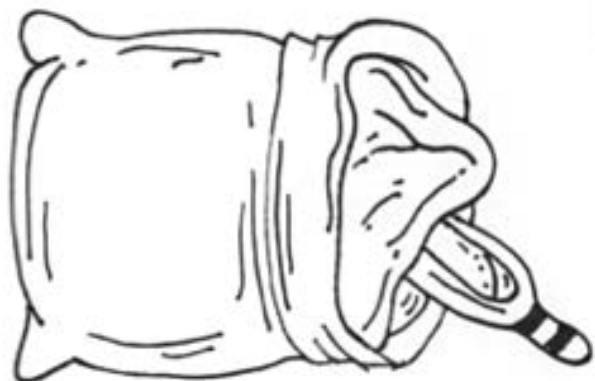
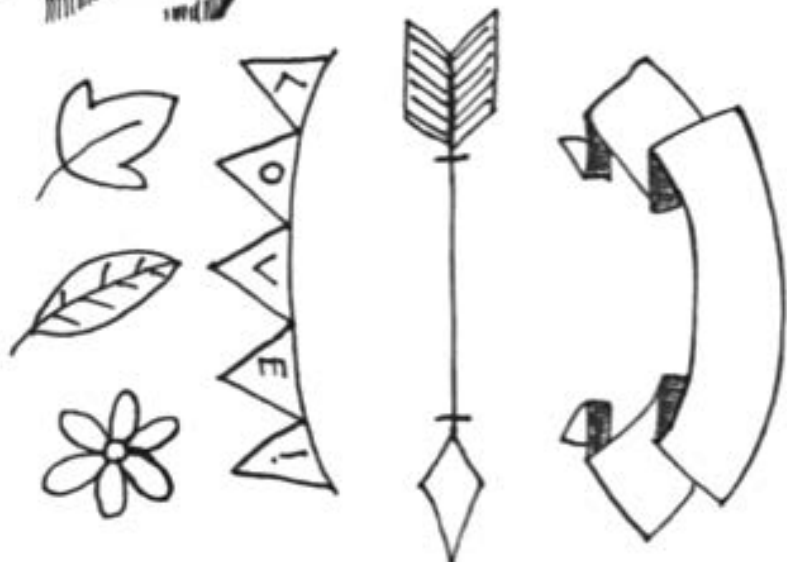
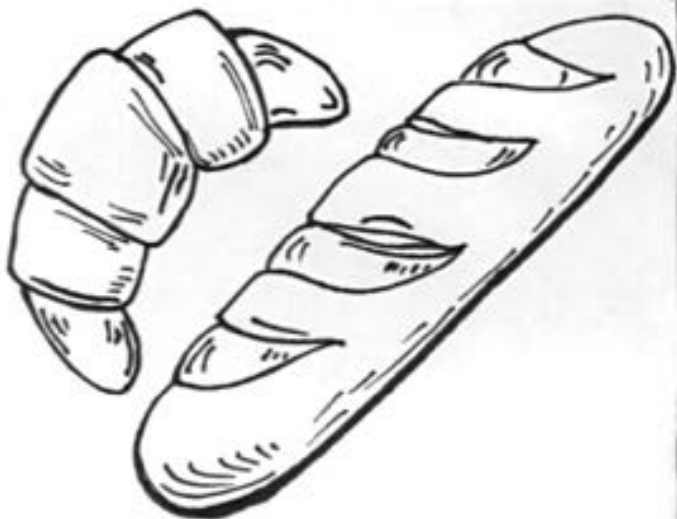




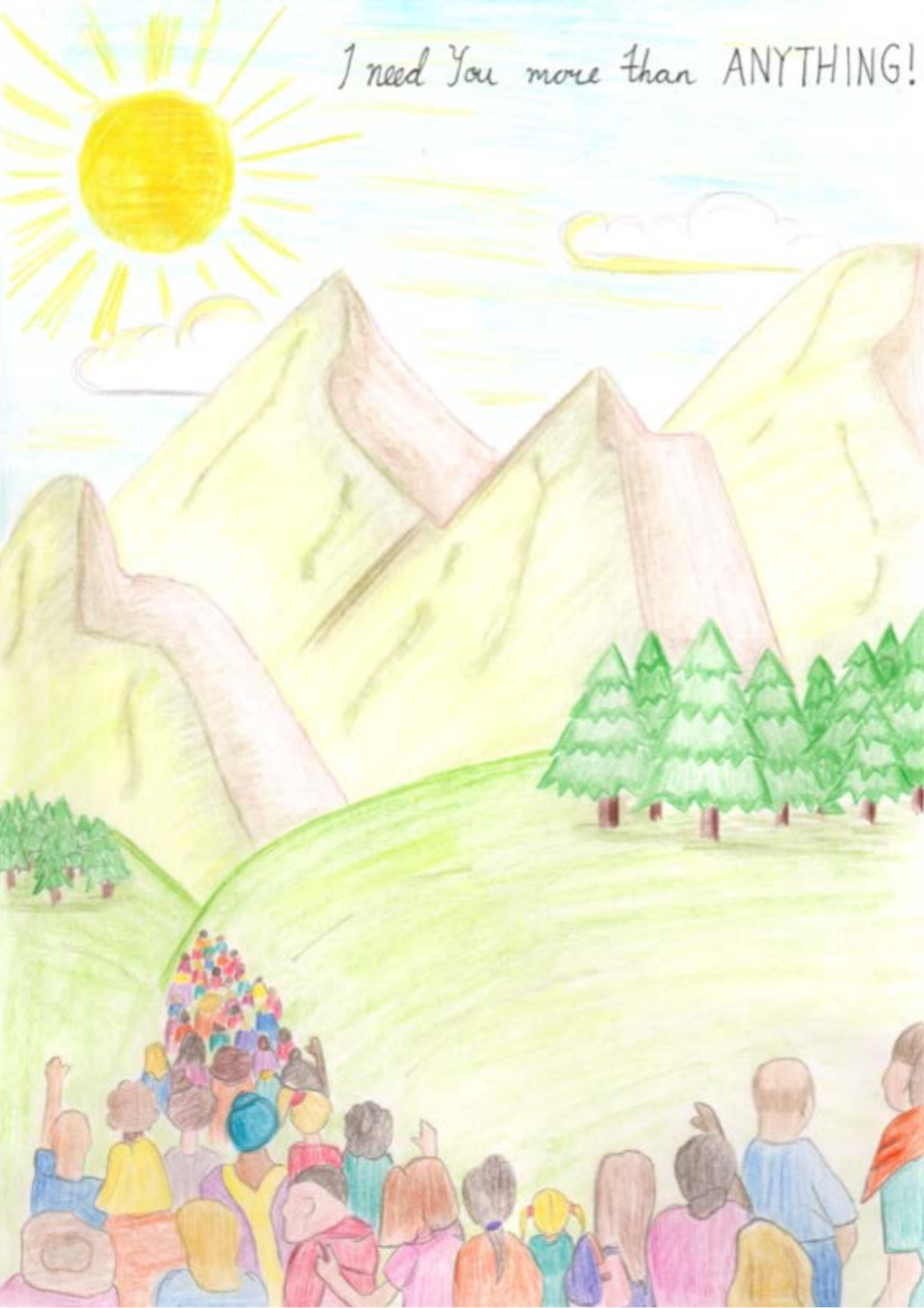
Jesus said
"I AM the
BREAD of
LIFE

whoever comes to
me shall not
hunger,
whoever believes in
me shall never thirst."





I need You more than ANYTHING!



I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Art: Ania Bond Thoughts: Ruth Beattie

Then Jesus said, 'I am light to the world, and those who embrace me will experience lifegiving light, and they will never walk in darkness'

(John 8:12, The Passion Translation)

Have you ever been in a room or outside when the space is so dark you literally cannot see right in front of you? It's the type of darkness that can frighten people – walking forward into the unknown and not being able to see the direction of travel. The darkness can feel immense around us, sometimes pressing in on us giving us little clue of the way we need to go in order to stay on track. Maybe it's an unwanted darkness, like a power cut in the middle of the night. As you stumble around looking for some method of light, in desperation you find some matches and a candle, and then suddenly the room is illuminated and all becomes clear again!

I often hear people saying that light is the opposite of dark, however I don't believe that to be true. One single match can light up an entire room and dispel the darkness and yet the darkness, however big, can never do

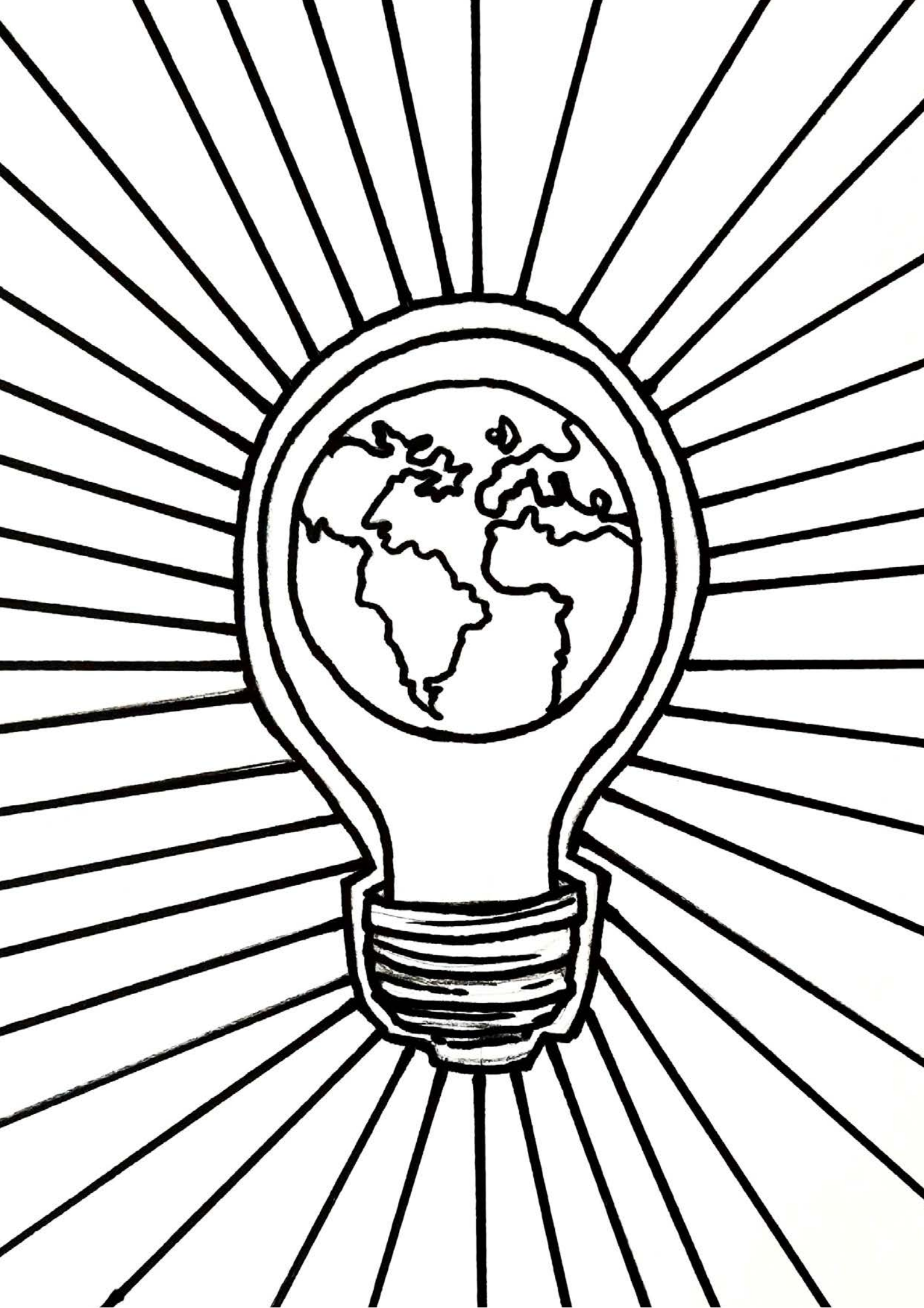
that to light.

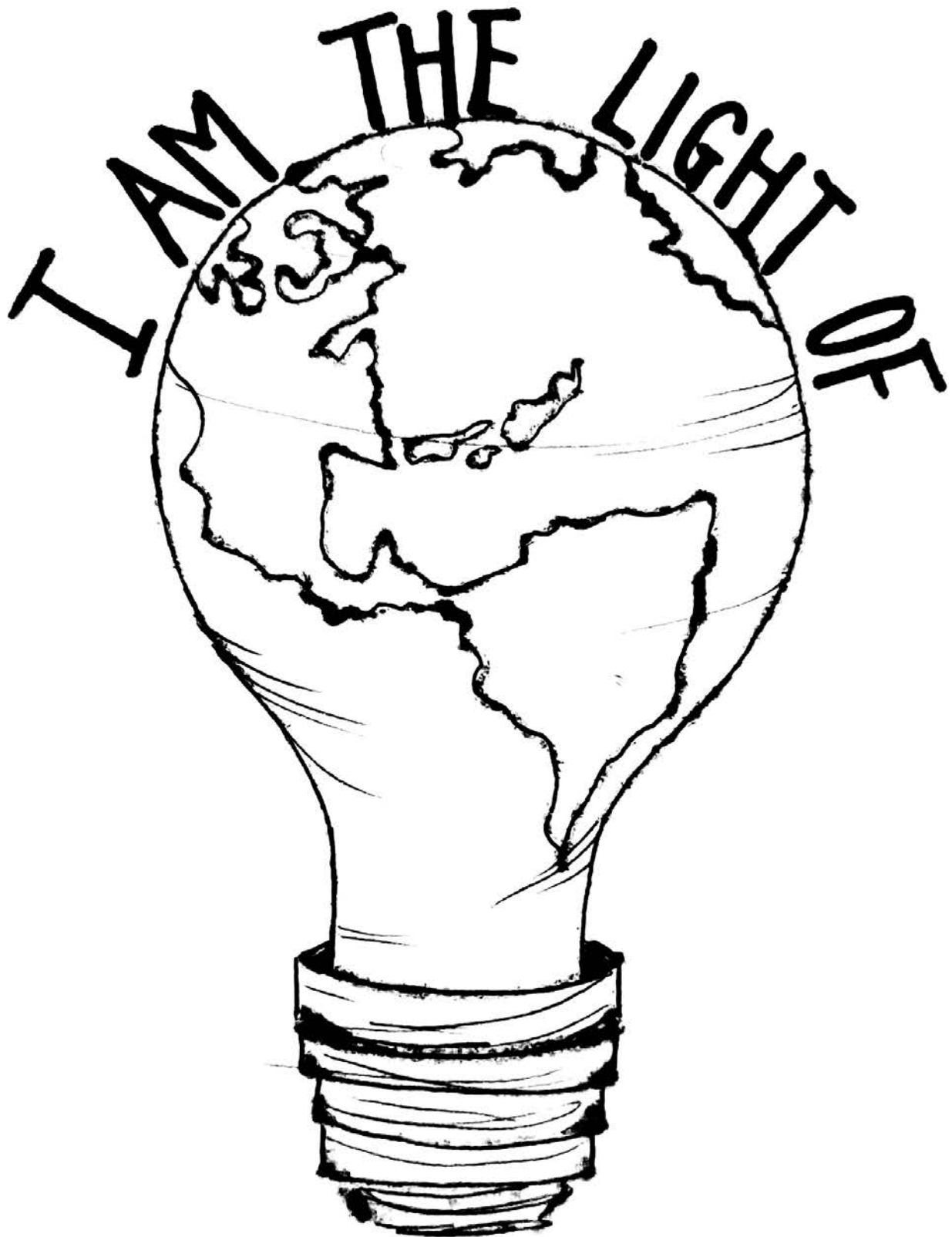
Sometimes life can feel like that darkened space for each of us. We experience lots of dark moments, often unwanted, that mask the right direction of travel. Sometimes we forget that we don't have to do it on our own and that God is right by our side! He has called us out of the darkness into the light of His love, above all challenge and turmoil. His light brings life, clarity and direction.

When we walk with Jesus in this life, we're called to walk out of the darkness and into His marvellous light – a light which brings us clarity and helps us to see things as they really are – not as they appear to be. Let's seek Him first daily and watch as He illuminates the next step, giving us vision and direction. Jesus shines into our darkness and the darkness cannot defeat Him!

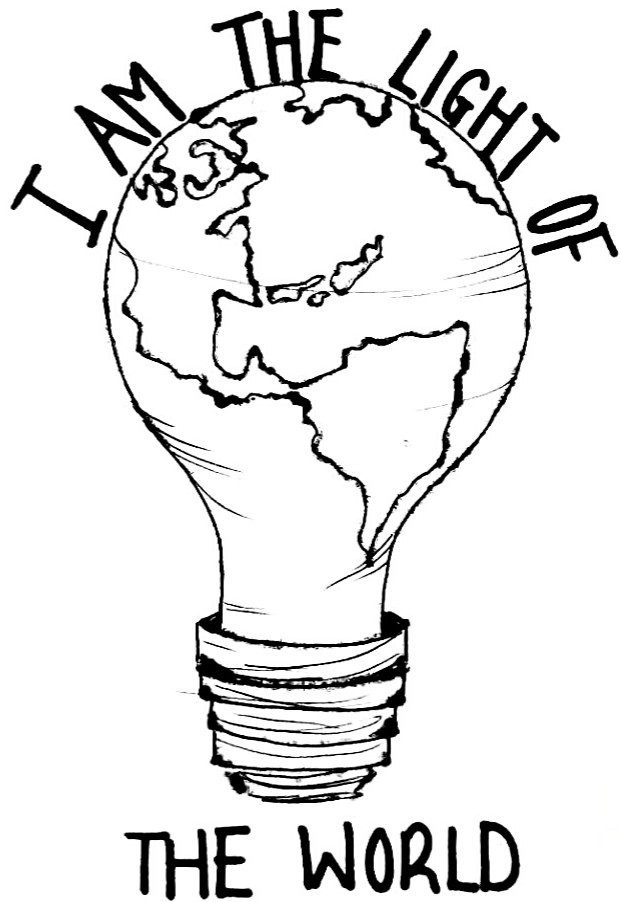
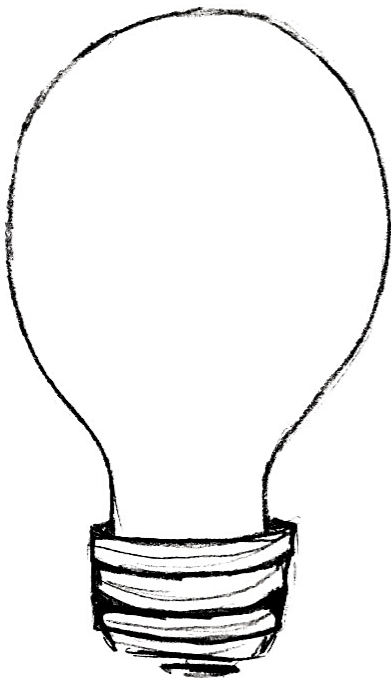
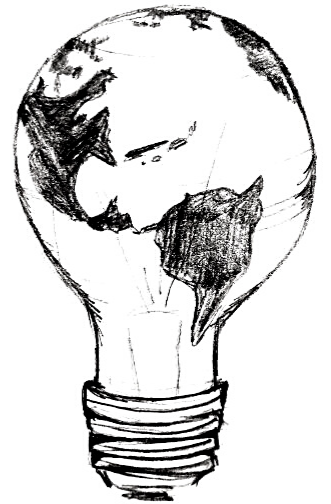
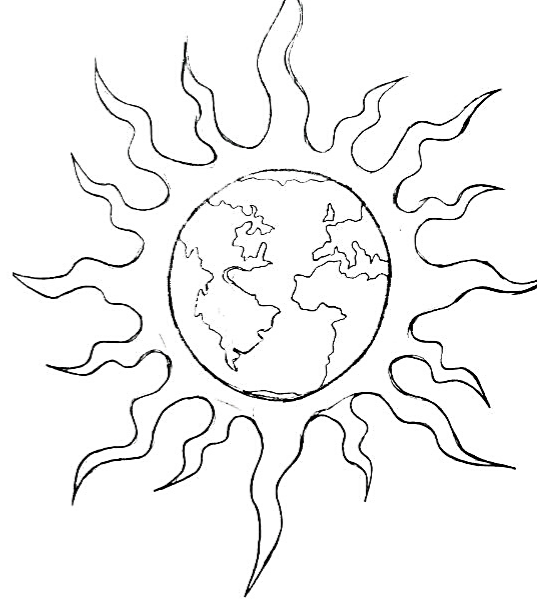
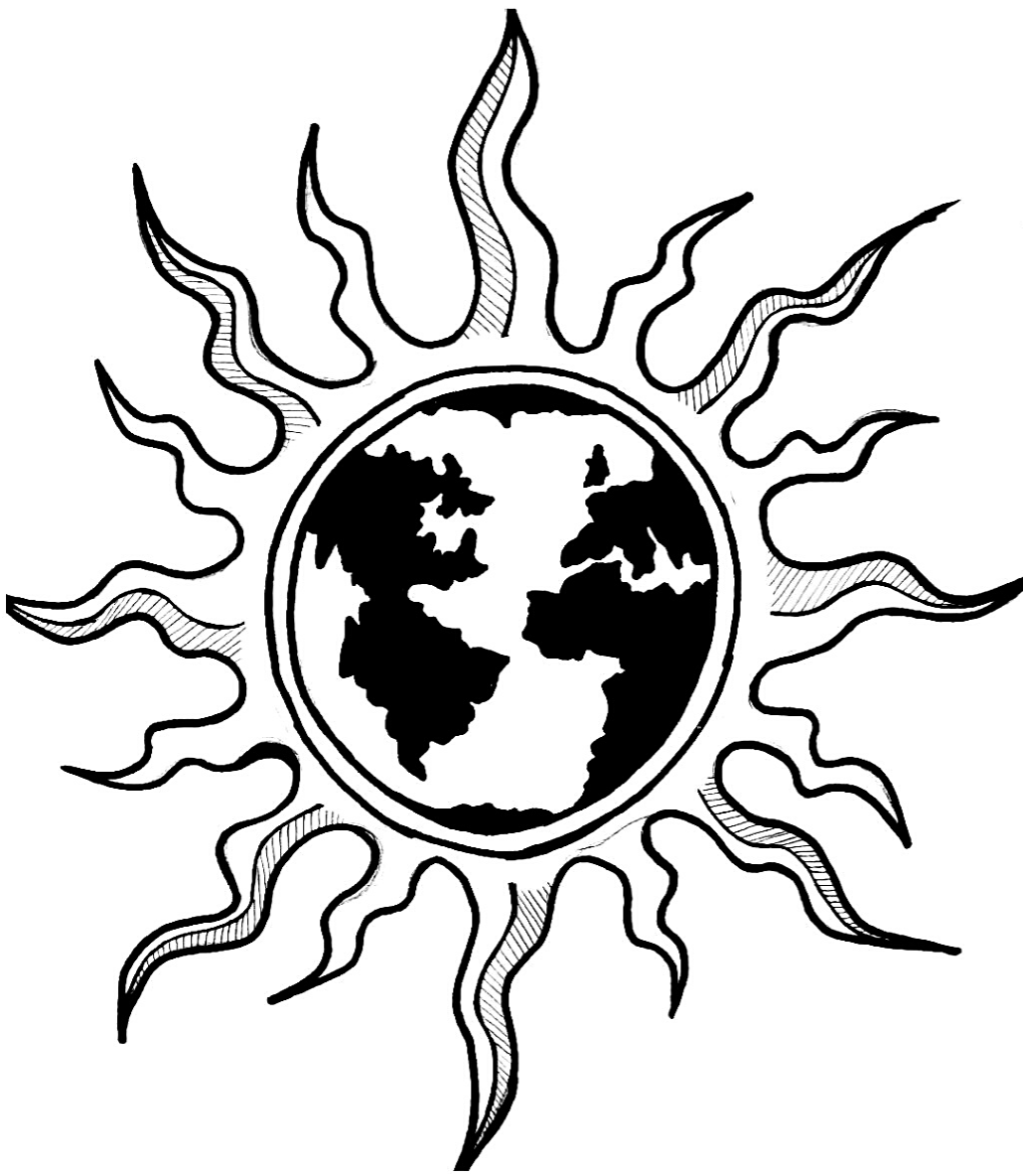
PRAYER

Thank you Father for giving us the light of life in Jesus. Please help us to remember as we travel through the darker times that you brought Jesus into this world as our light. Help us to remember that His light brings us truth and that His love overcomes all darkness. Amen





THE WORLD



Abond



I AM THE GATE

Art: Heather Culshaw Thoughts: Mel Scoulding

Therefore Jesus said again, 'Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'.

(John 10:7-10, NIV)

Have you ever pulled on a door that says "push" or pushed on a door that says "pull"? I do it all the time and there is always a moment of confusion when I wonder why the door stubbornly refuses to open! Only then do I realise that the fault is entirely mine because of my inability to act on the instruction so clearly displayed.

I hope that no one has witnessed my foolishness, but it happens so frequently that it has become a standing joke within the family. I always get things wrong before I ever get them right and relying on my own judgement almost always leads to that moment of confusion.

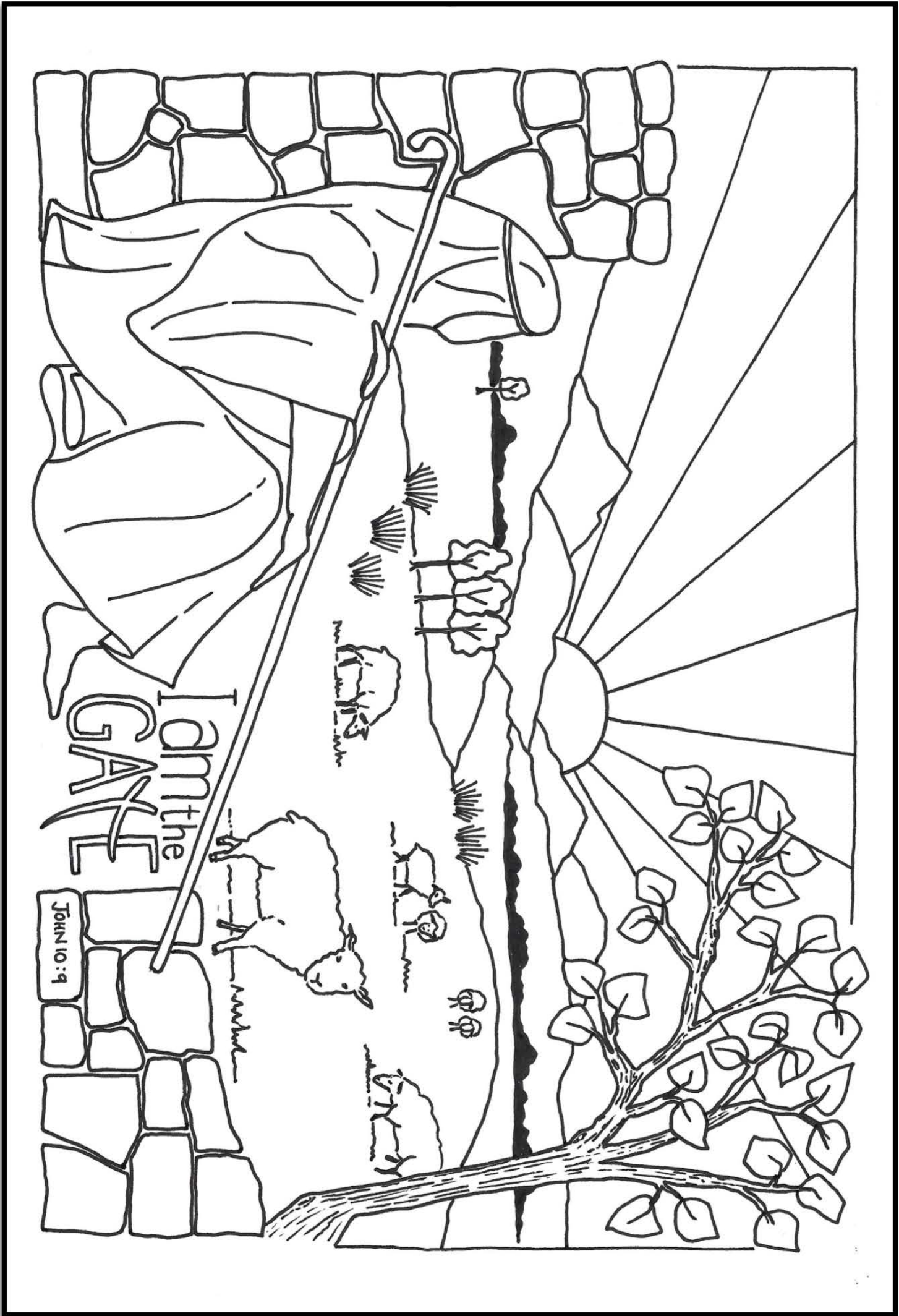
In these verses, Jesus reminds us to be careful about where we place our trust as other motivation may be at work. He assures us that trust in Him is never misplaced. If we listen to Him and respond to Him, a whole new adventure awaits! No more confusion, no more uncertainty, no more relying solely on our own instincts.

No-one has invested more in us than Jesus has. His instruction is clear that the assurance we seek can only be found in Him. And what joy awaits us on the other side! Freedom to come and go and to find rest. Opportunity to experience life in all its technicolour glory! Of course, it won't all be trouble-free because every life has both light and shade, but He will be there with us every step of the way, encouraging us and helping us through.

Perhaps the key you have been searching for seems elusive, or just out of reach. Perhaps you have been afraid to trust, fearing what may be asked of you. Perhaps you feel that the opportunity has been missed or has somehow passed you by. But Jesus hasn't moved. There are no special skills or fancy technology needed to unlock this door. Just a heartfelt plea that He becomes Lord of your life from this point on. Perhaps now is the time to allow Him to usher you into His care.

PRAYER

Lord God, we thank you for sending your Son to show us that a full life is possible. We know that we can safely trust in Him because through Him you have shown us such deep love. Give us the courage to step forward into a new future with Jesus alongside us. Amen



I am the
GATE

JOHN 10:9

John 10:9 I am the gate;

whoever enters through



me will be saved. He will

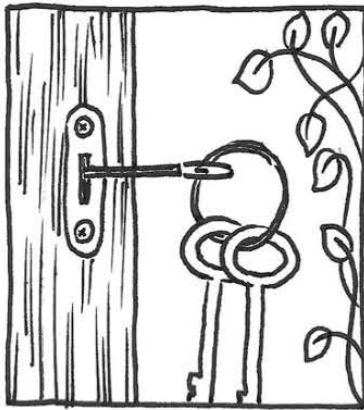
go out and find pasture.

enters through me will be



Saved. He will come in and

I am the gate! whoever

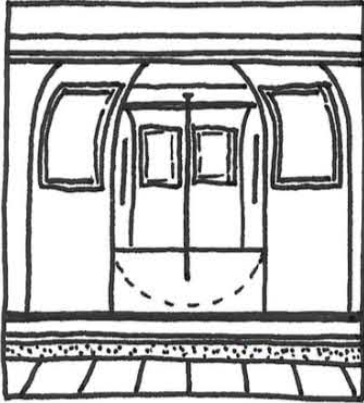


come in and go out, and

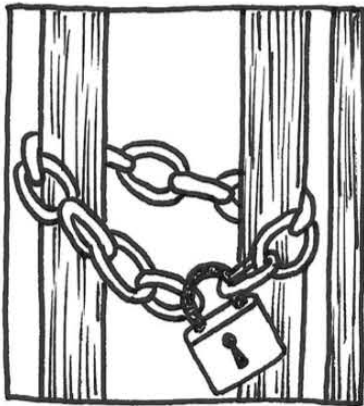


find pasture. John 10:9

will be saved. He will come

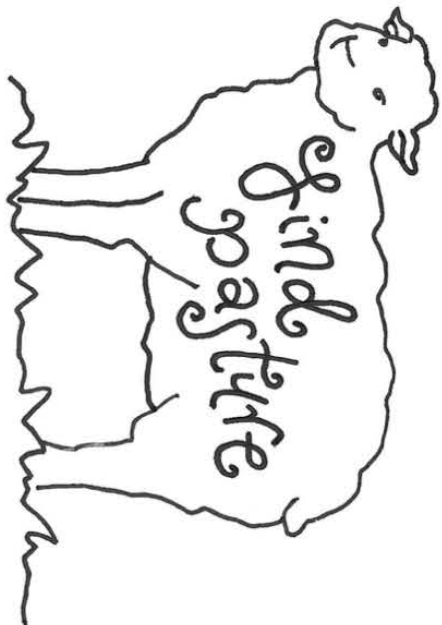
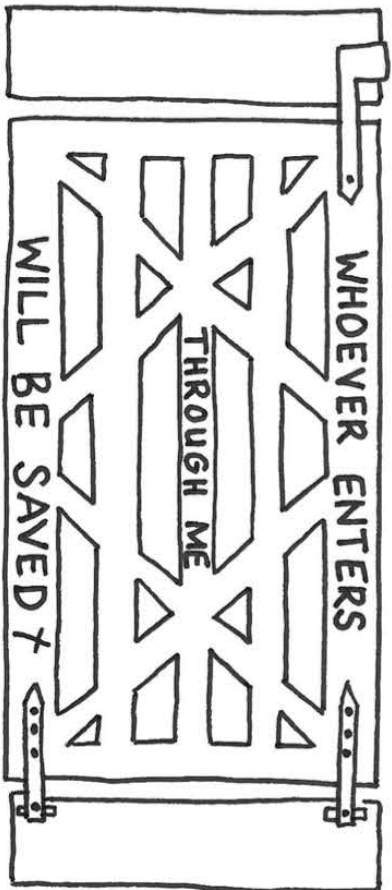
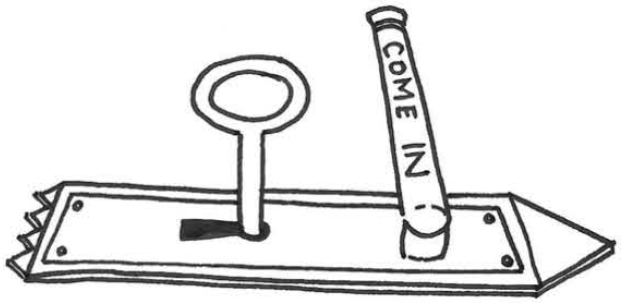
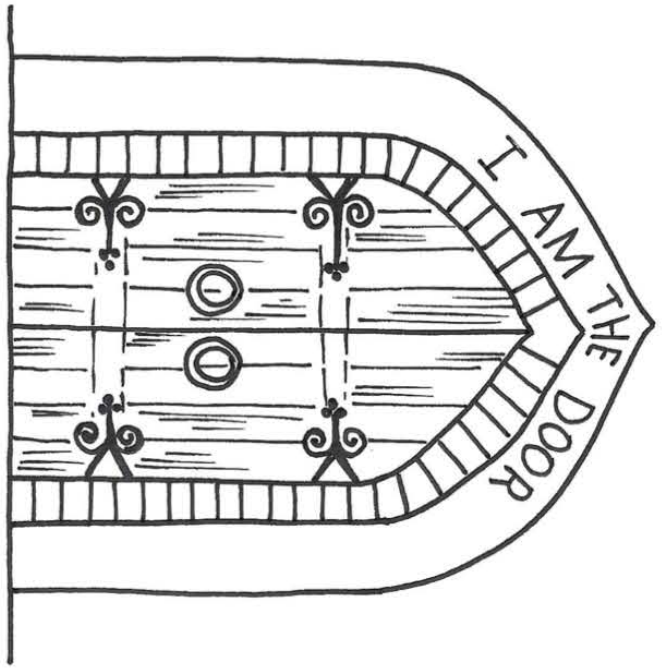
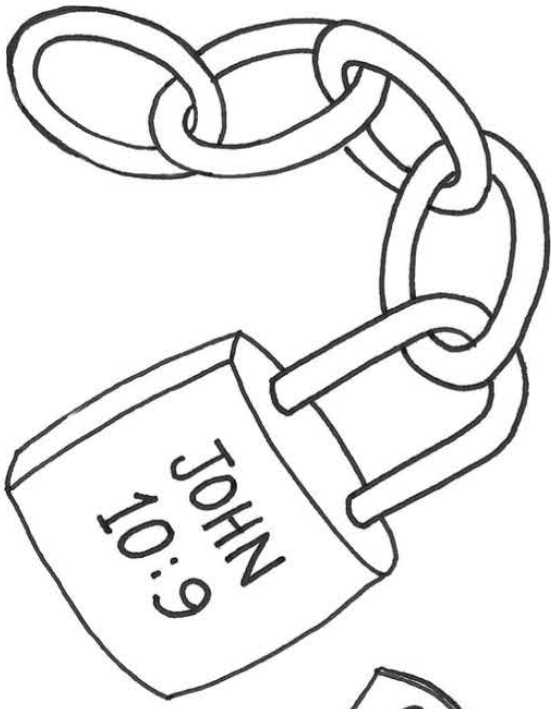


I am the gate; whoever enters through me



in and go out, and find pasture. John 10:9

enters through me will be saved. He will come



I AM THE GATE
JOHN 10:9



I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Art: Mike Hendy Thoughts: Kay Moorby

**'I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep
(John 10:11, NIV)**

The image of a shepherd walking the hills of the Yorkshire Dales surrounded by sheep is familiar, but as you take a closer look at our picture, something is not quite right!

Our shepherd confidently strides over the hillside with the sheep following behind him, but this is not the way of a Western shepherd. His place should be behind the flock, driving them forward. In Eastern traditions, the shepherd would lead the flock from the front. The sheep recognised his voice and, knowing they were safe in his care, followed his call and stayed with the flock. In this context, Jesus referred to himself as the 'Good Shepherd', knowing each of His sheep and leading them forward.

As followers of Jesus, we have a choice. Will we be led by the Good Shepherd or driven along by the things of this world? Will we spend time listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd so that we recognise it amid our busyness, or will we be distracted by other voices that call for our attention?

It goes against our nature to follow, to be led, and to give ourselves over to the direction of someone else. The Good Shepherd calls us by our name to follow Him, knowing the lengths He is willing to go to to keep us safe and secure.

Jesus says, 'I am the Good Shepherd' - I know you by name. Trust me. Follow me.

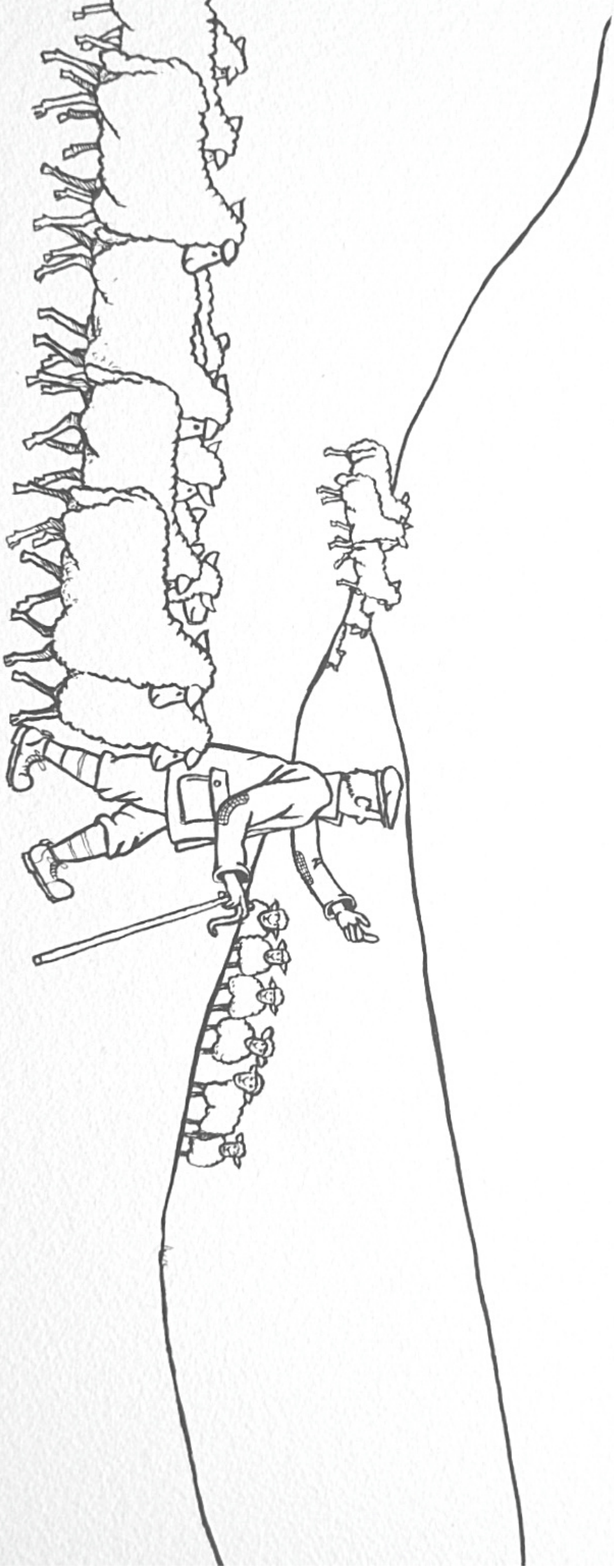
But, it's not just about us. Other sheep belong to the flock who look on from the hillside or travel in the opposite direction. They are also known by name and precious to the Good Shepherd.

Spend time reflecting on the people who come to mind as you look at the picture. Who is looking on, wanting to discover more about the Good Shepherd? Who has turned away, listening to the calls of other voices? And what about you, are you following and trusting the Good Shepherd?

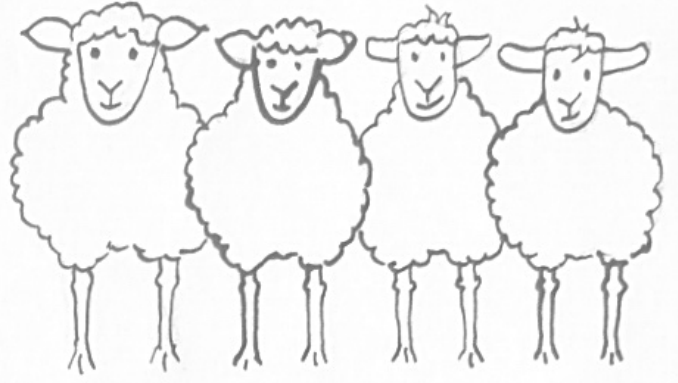
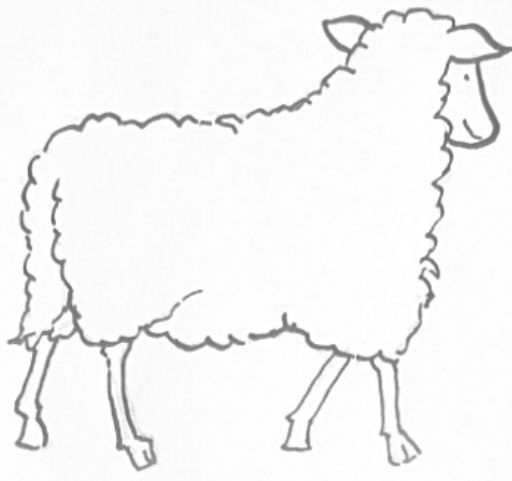
Jesus knows the name of each person He has placed on your heart and He knows you too.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you that you are the Good Shepherd leading me through the hills and valleys of my life. Thank you that you call me by name to follow you. I know how special every person in this world is to you. Help me to live a life that draws others closer to you and leads them to recognise your voice for themselves. Amen



I know my sheep
and my sheep
know me



John 10:14



I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Art: Caitlin Potts Thoughts: Elwyn Harries

Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die'

(John 11:25, New International Version)

Of the eight 'I Am' sayings of Jesus nowhere does He make a bolder claim to His divinity than in this conversation with a grieving sister in a small village outside of Jerusalem. The words of comfort and solace Jesus spoke to a dear, heartbroken friend seeking to come to terms with the death of her brother have brought hope and assurance to countless others throughout the past 2,000 years.

In this outlandish statement, the carpenter from Nazareth was claiming not only to be the creator of life (John 1:1-4) but also the conqueror of death (John 5:21). In so doing He was making His divinity clear, because as His original hearers were aware, only God can create life and only God has authority over death.

He would not have been the first or only one to make such claims, but He was the first and only one to live up to the claim when He died on the cross and rose again on the third day. In John 3:16 and John 10:10 we learn that He did this to provide fullness of life to any who would place their trust in Him.

In this most beautiful provision of loving compassion to a grieving family, Jesus foreshadowed the

redemptive purpose of the cross and the empty tomb. Knowing the destiny that was ahead of Him, He used the death of his friend Lazarus to demonstrate His claim to be God.

There are four elements to the Lazarus story which are reflected in the Easter Sunday story and which are pertinent to our personal responses to Christ:

- ⑥ the stone needs to be removed
- ⑥ the dead need to respond to the command: '_____ (insert your own name) come out'
- ⑥ the graveclothes have to be left in the tomb
- ⑥ the living are to be let go to live the life Christ died to give them.

By His death and resurrection, Christ alone has removed the barrier between life and death – our sin (represented by the stone). Having done so He calls us to come out of the grave – from death into life – but we, like Lazarus, have to respond to the invitation. When we accept His gift in humble, repentant, obedience we can begin to know the true fullness of life that only Christ can give.

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

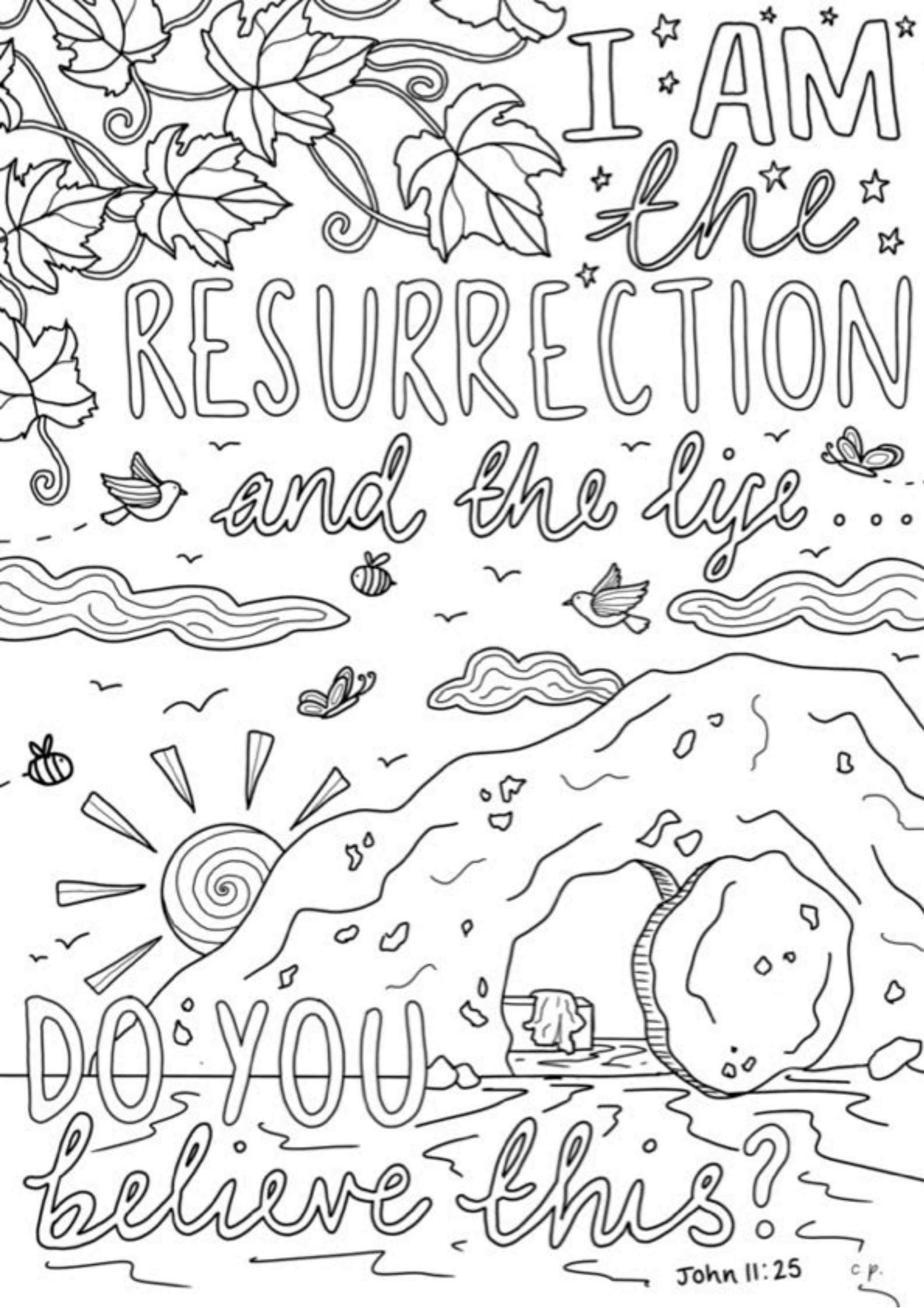
Continued

But what about those graveclothes? Lazarus was alive; Lazarus had come out of the grave; but Lazarus was still severely hindered by the trappings of the dead. He had to surrender the graveclothes in order to be set free. Some people receive the gift of salvation with grateful hearts but soon

discover that some of the old habits, attitudes, actions and reactions are still somehow attached to them. In order to live a full life we need to invite the Holy Spirit to help us identify and then remove the graveclothes, that we might be free to be the people Jesus created us to be.

PRAYER

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are the creator of life and the conqueror of death. We thank you that by the death and resurrection of Jesus we too can know what it is to live lives that are full and free. Help us to respond honestly to you and to be aware of and to deal with any graveclothes that might yet be hindering us. Amen



I AM
the

RESURRECTION

and the life...

DO YOU
believe this?

Jesus
said to her

“I AM

the

RESURRECTION

and the life.

The one who
believes in me

will live

even though they die.”

John 11:25

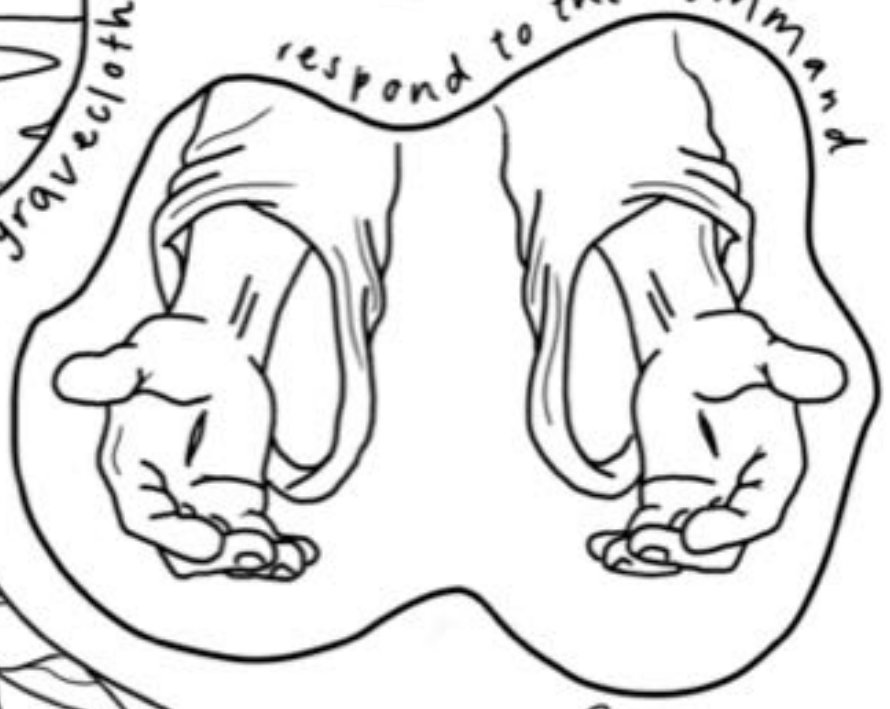


roll the stone away



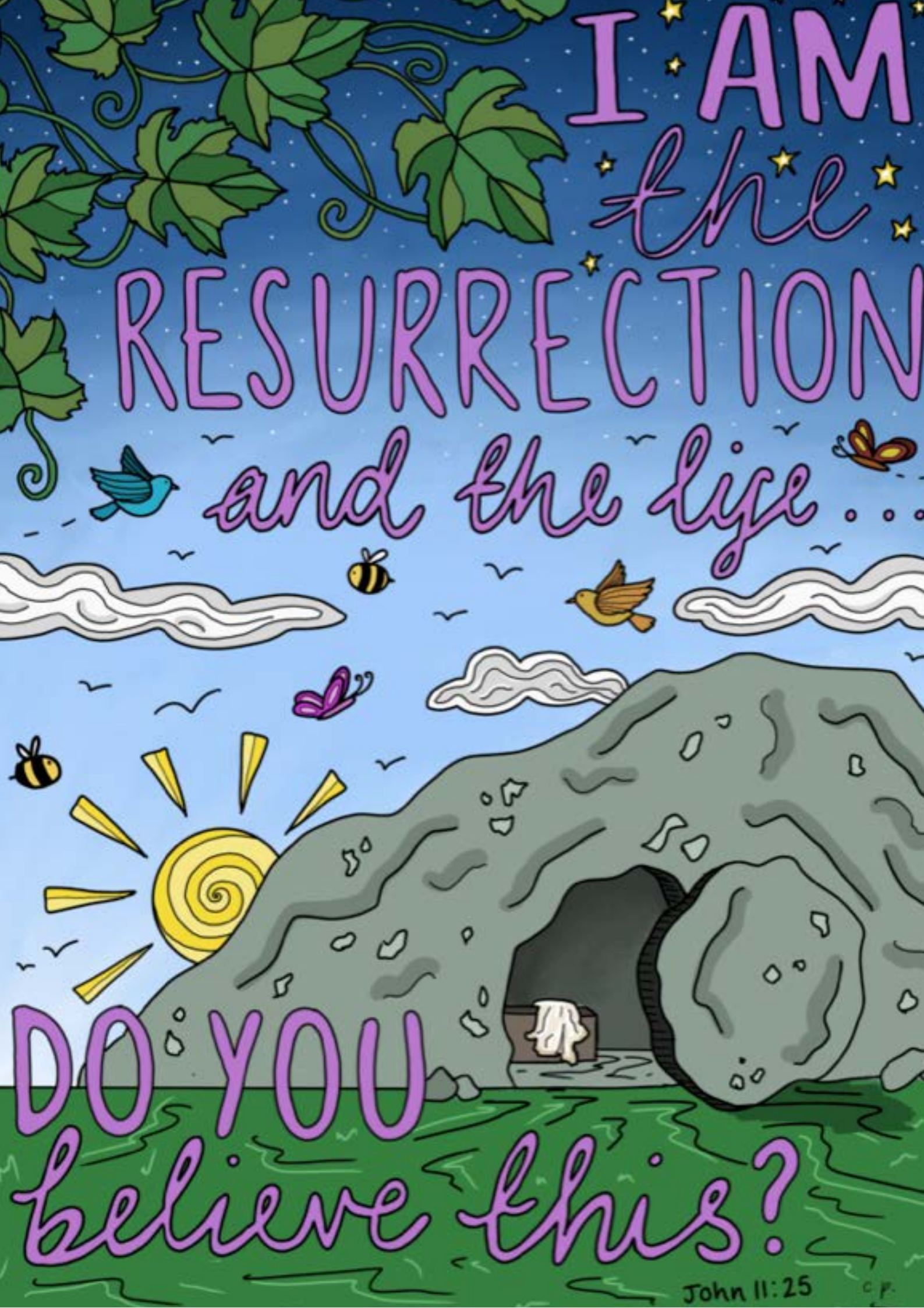
leave the graveclothes

respond to the command



live the life christ gave you





I AM

the

RESURRECTION

and the life...

DO YOU

believe this?

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Art: Joy Pocock Thoughts: Wendy Hooper

'You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

Jesus answered, 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

(John 14:4-6, NIV)

Take a moment to stop and think about what Jesus meant in those verses.

Jesus said, 'I am THE WAY...'

If you're driving on a journey and you seem to lose your WAY,
There's always a map or Google to stop you going astray.

If you're looking for eternal life, the surest only WAY

Is to trust in Jesus for salvation, so to Him you pray.

For Jesus is the Son of God, turn to Him and don't delay.

Just follow Him along the road, He will always lead the WAY.

The only WAY to eternal life is to trust and to obey,

So repent and follow Jesus for He's the only WAY.

Jesus said, 'I am the WAY, the TRUTH...'

The very essence of God's Word is TRUTH.

Psalms 119:160 says 'All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.'

And in John 1:1-3 we read 'In the

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through Him all things were made;

without Him nothing was made that has been made.'

Jesus alone is the source of TRUTH, the creator and sustainer of all life. TRUTH is life and with it comes completeness, light, security and eternal Life. Jesus is the Word of God, His identity is TRUTH.

Jesus said, 'I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE...'

In John 1:4 we read that, 'in Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind,' and throughout Scripture we see LIFE and light spoken of together. Is it possible to have LIFE without light?

If we follow Him, just as His disciples did, we are promised LIFE – eternal LIFE full of joy, love and light. Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (John 10:10)

Reflect on these different Bible translations of John 14:6:

Jesus said, 'I am the real and living way, no one comes to the Father

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Continued

except by Me.' (Moffatt Bible)

'I myself am the road', Jesus replied, 'and the truth and life. No one approaches the Father except through Me.' (New Testament in Modern English)

'I am the way and the reality and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' (Holy Bible, Recovery Version)

Pause for thought...

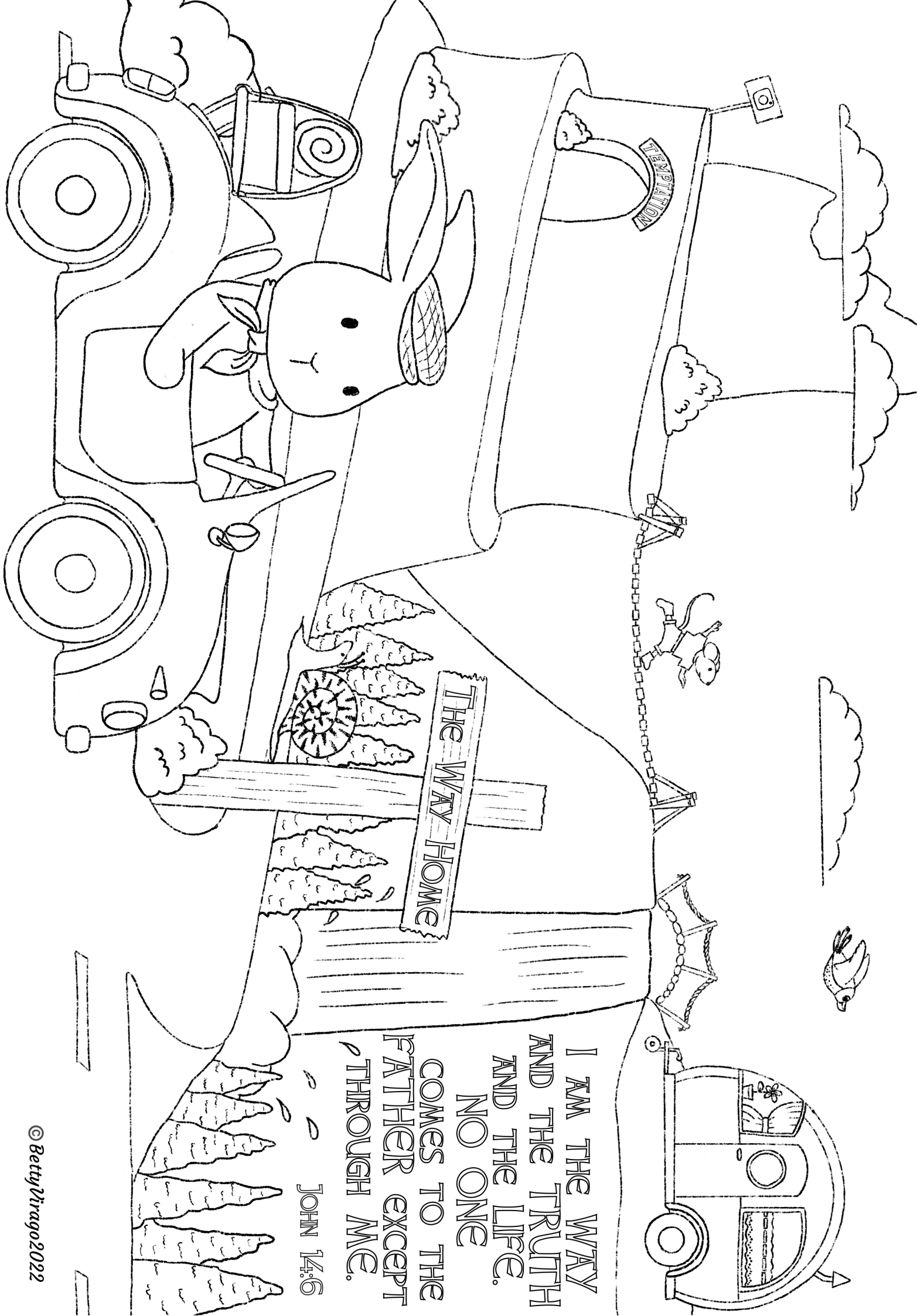
☉ I wonder if Jesus said, 'No one goes to the Father except by me,' as a law, a promise or something else?

☉ I wonder how many people, at that time, continued to follow Jesus after he said this?

☉ I wonder how it helps us to think of Jesus as 'the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE'?

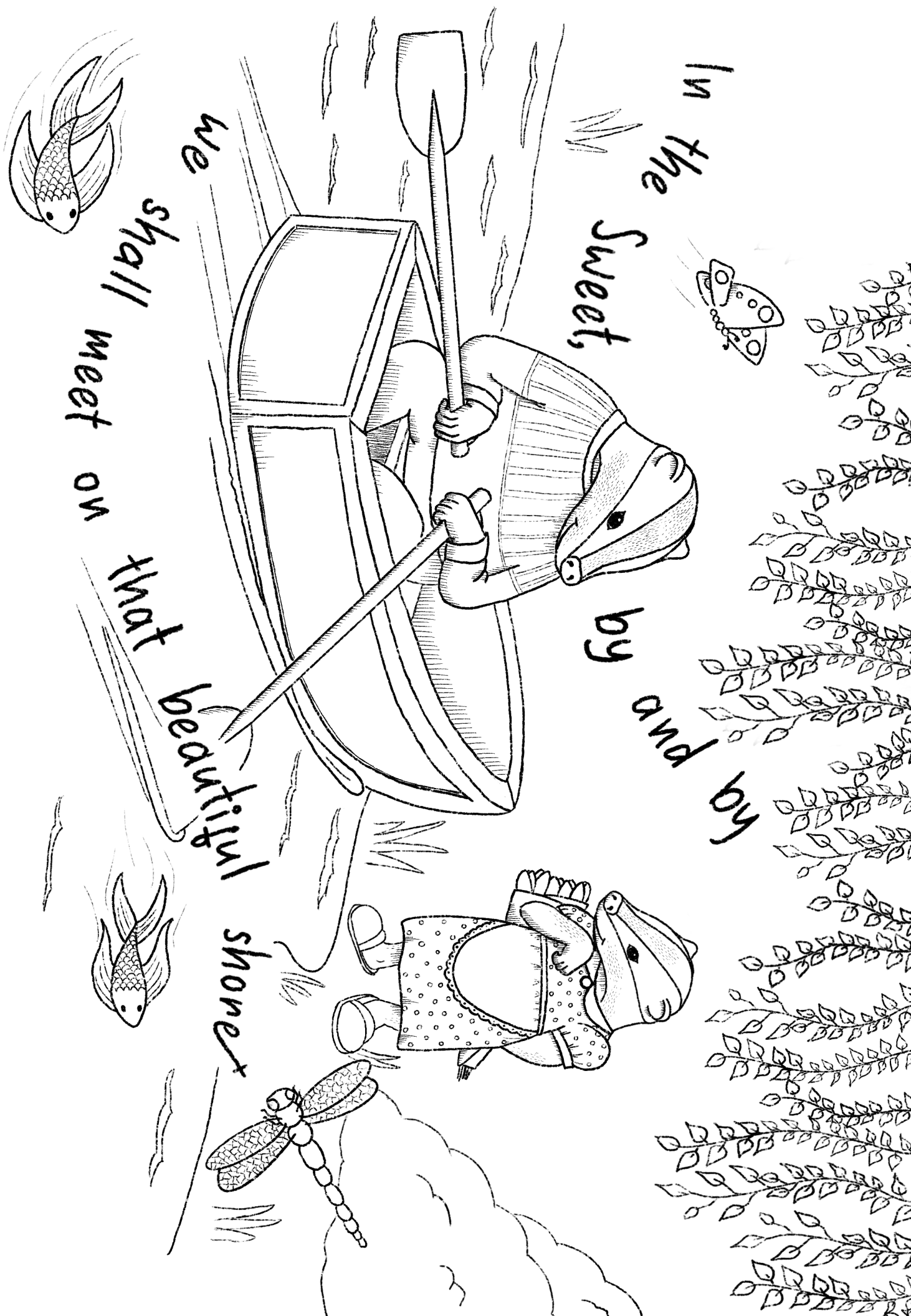
PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your Son to show us the WAY of salvation, the TRUTH of your Word and the fullness of LIFE promised for now and all eternity. Help us to live as true disciples and be worthy of eternal life with you.
Amen



I AM THE WAY
AND THE TRUTH
AND THE LIFE.
NO ONE
COMES TO THE
FATHER EXCEPT
THROUGH ME.

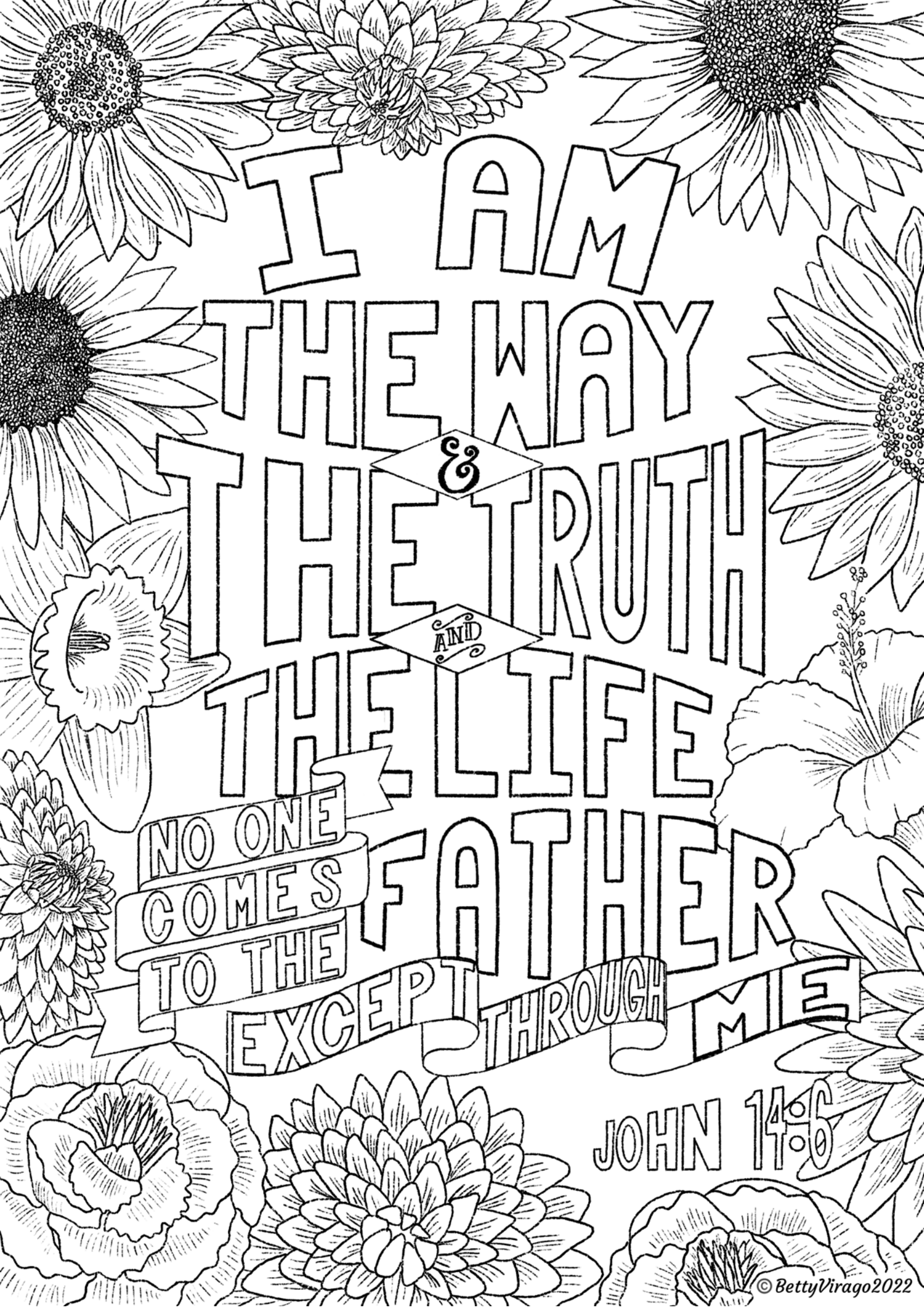
JOHN 14:6



In the Sweet
by and by
we shall meet on
that beautiful shore

I AM
THE WAY
&
THE TRUTH
AND
THE LIFE
NO ONE
COMES
TO THE
FATHER
EXCEPT THROUGH ME

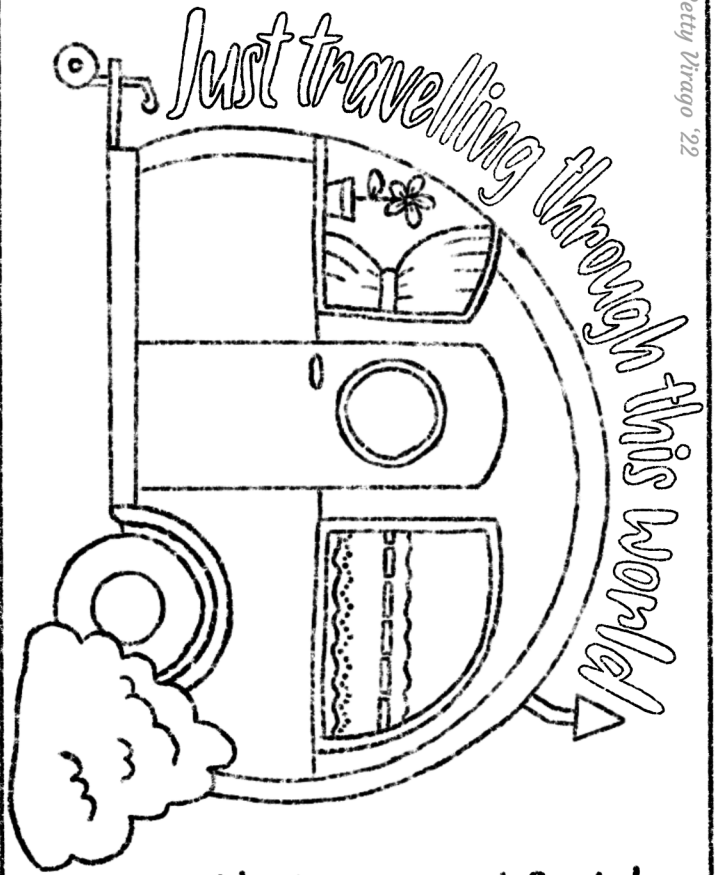
JOHN 14:6



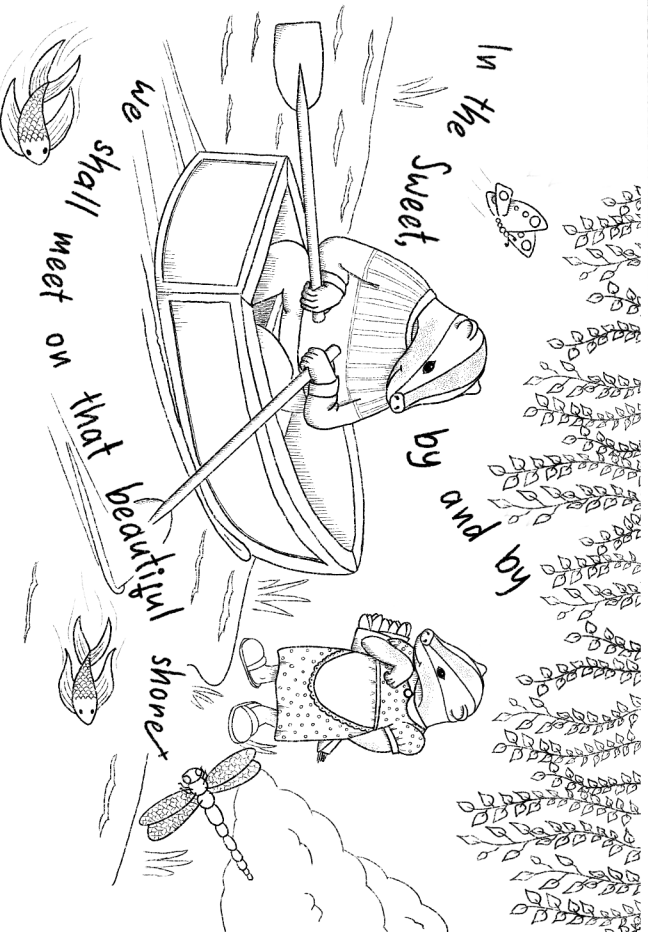
I AM
THE WAY
&
THE TRUTH
AND
THE LIFE
NO ONE
COMES
TO THE
EXCEPT THROUGH
FATHER
JESUS

JOHN 14:6

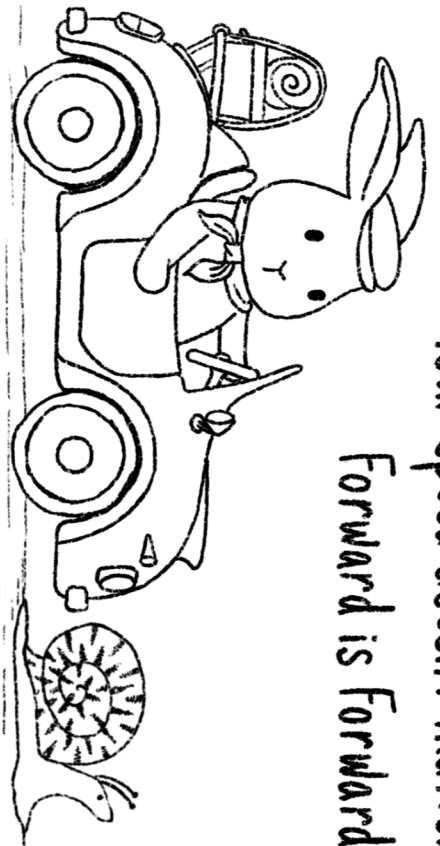
John 14:6



Hebrews 13:14



Run the race Hebrews 12:1-3



Your speed doesn't matter
Forward is Forward



I AM THE WAY
AND THE TRUTH
AND THE LIFE.
NO ONE
COMES TO THE
FATHER EXCEPT
THROUGH ME.

JOHN 14:6

We shall meet on that beautiful shore

In the Sweet, by and by



I AM THE VINE

Art: Liz Hall Thoughts: Noreen Batt

This session uses a collage style of artwork. You'll find an idea you might like to consider and suggestions of how you could achieve it on the following pages. The thoughts have been written with the creative process interspersed throughout. Prior to beginning the reading, take a look at the sample images and instructions and consider your way ahead.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

(John 15:5, New International Version)

(As you choose and begin to cut or tear the papers for your artwork...)

Take a moment to wonder what the vine is really like.

The vine is looked after by the master gardener, the Father of all. He always knows what he is doing. Like every master gardener he knows that the branches that don't bear fruit need to be removed. He knows that pruning the branches will help bear more fruit. He always knows how to grow the best fruit on the vine.

The Father does not use secateurs to prune the branches, His teaching is enough. His Word can cut through any dead and dying wood.

(As you start to create your vine...)

Wonder how the Father has been pruning you and removing any dead

wood in your life. Which words in Scripture or life events have resulted in your pruning? Jot them down to maybe use later in your work.

We are not those who visit the vineyard to admire the vine. We are in the vine. We are actually the branches of the vine! A vine cannot be a vine without branches. As Jesus is the vine we become the vine in him. A branch cannot be a fruit-bearing branch if it is not joined to the vine. The true vine bears wonderful fruit. Drawing goodness from the true vine, all Jesus is becomes all of who we are. That is the true fruit of the true vine. So, the vine we cannot see can be seen - in us.

(As you continue with your artwork...)

Wonder what it means to you to be a branch in the vine and what it means to bear much fruit.

PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you that you always know what you are talking about. Thank you for talking in images that help us to begin to glimpse the things we cannot see. Please help me to remain so deep in you that your life and love flows from the Vine you are into the branch that I am. May my life bear much fruit like you, fruit that will last. Thank you. Amen



John 15: 1-5

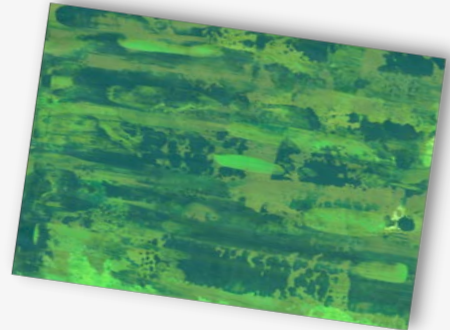
How fruitful am I?

Connected

Am I...

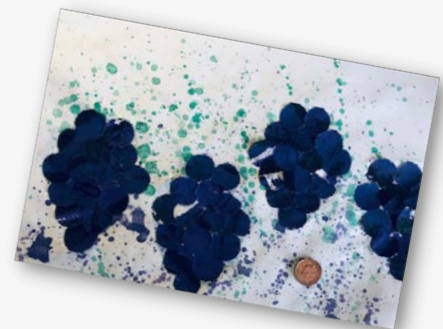
As with every Drawing Closer session, feel free to express yourself through whichever artistic style or medium works for you and however inspiration strikes you. However if you choose to follow them, there are instructions below which will help you to create something similar to Liz's example piece.

Create colour wash sheets in green and purple. Acrylic paint is bright and does dry faster than watercolours or find magazine pages featuring shades of green, black and purple that can be torn or cut up to create your collage.



Tear or cut shapes for leaves and grapes from your colour wash sheets or magazine pages - a penny is a good template for the grapes

Splatter paint onto a background sheet, arrange your grapes into bunches and stick them in place.



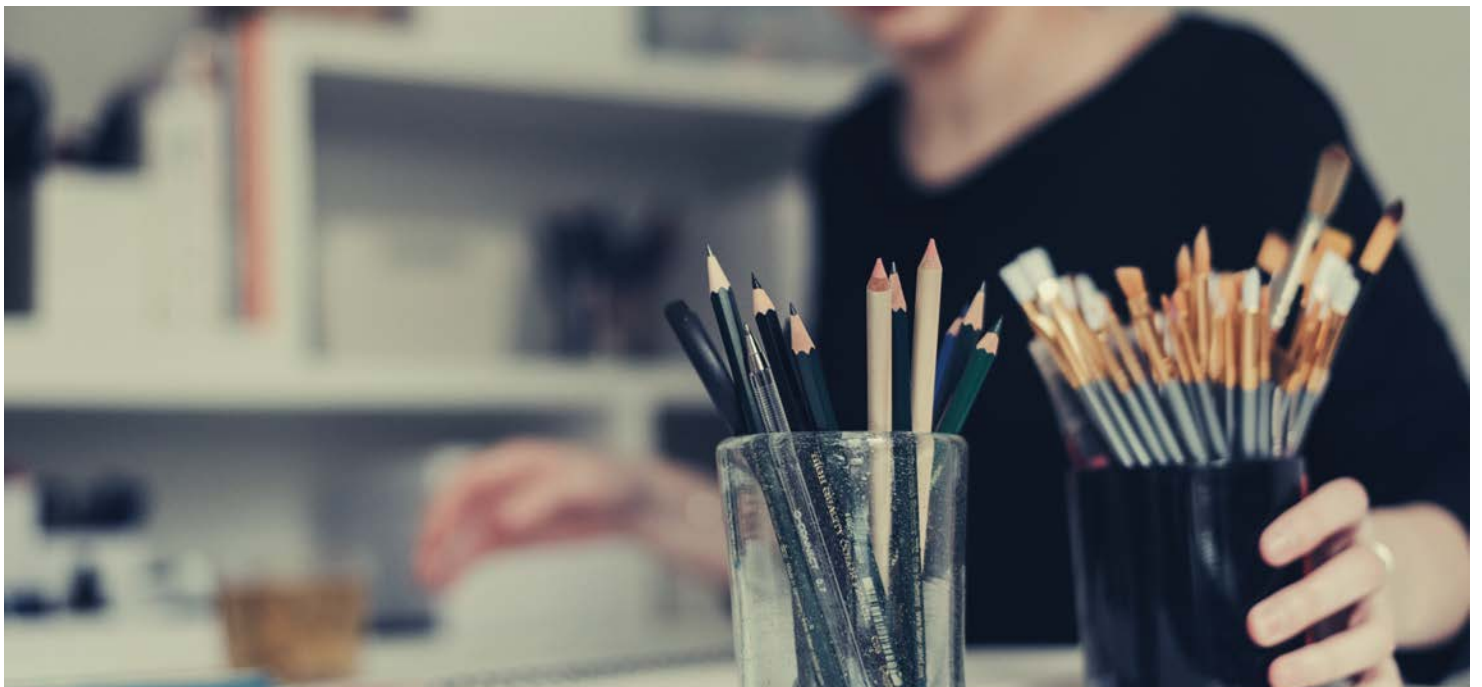
Rub string or wool through green paint.

Arrange your leaves and stick in place, then cut your string or wool into pieces and give them a good covering of PVA glue. Finally twirl and stick them onto your work

Create banners and flags with thoughts or ideas that the session identifies for you, or include the full 'I Am' statement



*I am the vine;
you are the branches.
If you remain in me
and I in you,
you will bear
much fruit*
John 5:15



SHARE YOUR WORK

We hope you've enjoyed using Drawing Closer and through doing so, God has blessed you. We would love to see the artwork produced by groups around the Territory. Why not take a photo of the work your group has created to share on social media?

Use the hashtag [#DrawingCloser](#) and include the 'I Am' statement in your favourite translation. You'll find The Salvation Army on all major social media platforms.



This volume of Drawing Closer was produced by The Salvation Army Music and Creative Arts team in collaboration with Family Ministries Department in the United Kingdom and Ireland Territory, 2023.

The Salvation Army is a church and registered Charity in England (214779), Wales (214779), Scotland (SC009359) and the Republic of Ireland (CHY6599). Territorial Commander for the United Kingdom and Ireland Territory: Commissioner Anthony Cotterill