

# Palm Sunday

“Friends!” Jesus said to his disciples. “I need to go to Jerusalem. I’ve got some important things to do and I want to celebrate Passover with you there. Will you come with me?”

“Sure!” said the disciples. “Passover is a great holiday! Such good food! And what a wonderful story Passover celebrates—the exodus of God’s people, the Israelites, from Egypt! It’s good to be with friends and family at Passover.” So Jesus and his friends started to go to Jerusalem.

When they got close to the city, Jesus said, “I’d like two of you to go borrow a donkey in the next village over. Please tell the owner I need it. He’ll understand.”

When the two friends came back with a donkey, Jesus climbed on its back and rode down the hill into the city of Jerusalem. The disciples followed behind him.



Suddenly, they found themselves in a parade!

People were singing and shouting, “Hosanna!

Hosanna! Here comes  
God’s king! Hosanna!  
Praise God!”

People all over heard the shouting and singing and they joined the parade too. Hundreds of people! Thousands of people! They started taking off their coats and laying them on the ground for Jesus and the donkey to walk on. They pulled palm branches down from the trees and waved them as they sang. Then they threw their palms on the ground to make a path for Jesus.



The crowds gave Jesus a royal welcome as he rode into the city, just like a king. But Jesus was a very different king—he was a king of peace. Not everyone understood that. Jesus was not at all what they were expecting.

They thought the crowd was too loud and the parade was getting too big. “Who is that man?” someone asked. “What’s going on here?” asked another. The crowd answered, “This is Jesus! God’s King! He has come to save us!” Some of the religious leaders

murmured, “Hush! Jesus, tell your friends to be quiet—it’s way too loud here!”

But Jesus said, “We can try to make these people be quiet, but that wouldn’t make a difference because today the whole earth is celebrating!”



# Washing Feet

Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. He wanted to share his last Passover meal together with his 12 closest friends, the disciples. Jesus loved his friends and wanted to show them his love in a very caring way.

As the friends got ready for the meal, Jesus put water in a large bowl and knelt down on the floor. He wanted to wash the feet of each disciple. When it was Peter's turn, Peter said to Jesus, "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Peter, you don't understand what I am doing now, but you will later."

Peter loved Jesus so much that he said, "Then don't just wash my feet but my head and hands also!" Peter wanted to be as close to Jesus as possible.



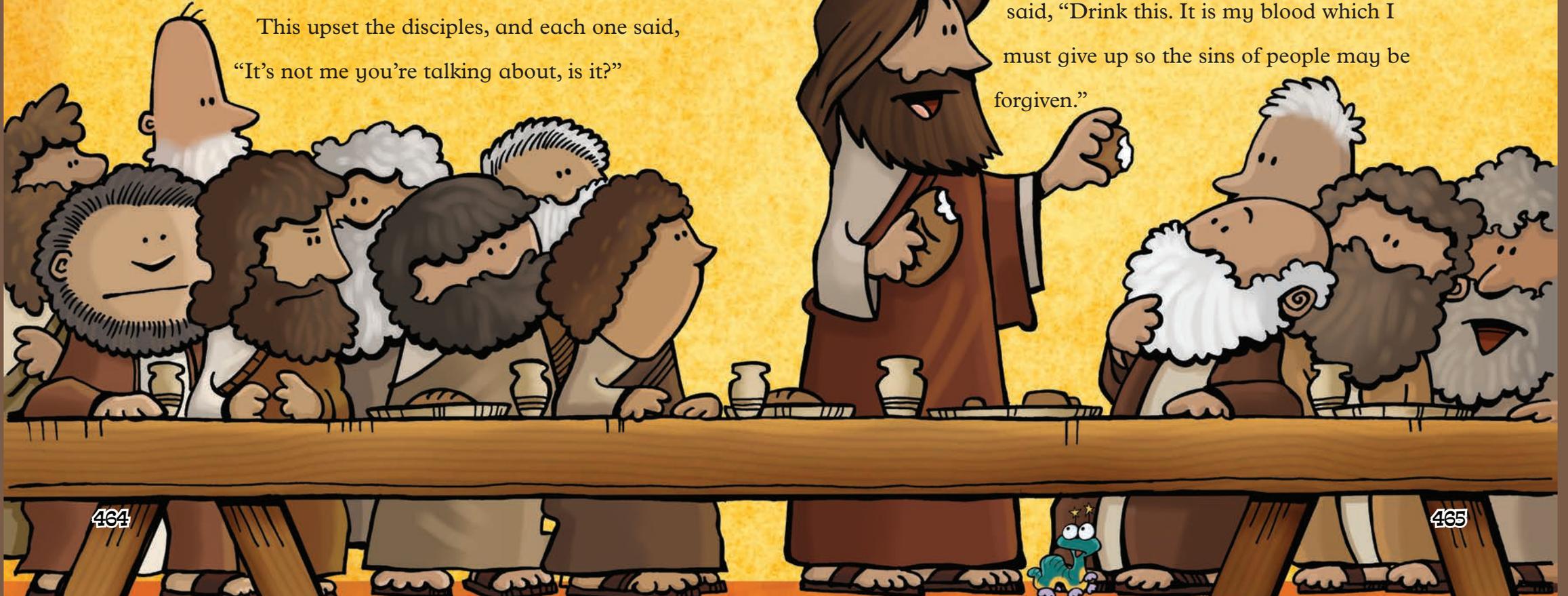
# The Last Supper

As they were eating, Jesus sadly told his disciples, “Soon, one of you will betray me. One of you will tell people who don’t like me where I am so they can take me away.”

This upset the disciples, and each one said, “It’s not me you’re talking about, is it?”

When Judas said this, Jesus gently replied, “Yes, Judas, you will betray me.”

Then Jesus picked up a loaf of bread. He blessed it and gave some to each of his friends, saying, “Take this bread and eat it. This is my body.” Then Jesus picked up a cup of wine. He gave thanks and said, “Drink this. It is my blood which I must give up so the sins of people may be forgiven.”



# Jesus Is Betrayed

When the meal was over, Jesus and his friends went to a place called the Mount of Olives. Jesus said sadly, “Soon you will all leave me.”

Peter felt bad. “Even if all the others leave you, I won’t!” he said.

Jesus looked at his dear friend and said quietly, “Before the sun rises, you will pretend you don’t know me three times.”

Peter said, “Jesus, I love you too much to ever do that to you!”

And all of the other disciples said the same thing.



Jesus liked Peter so much he gave Peter the nickname “The Rock.” Jesus had another friend named Judas.

Jesus, Peter, Judas, and the other disciples spent lots of time together. They were all together when Jesus told them that his life had to end. It was a sad and hard time for Jesus and his friends.

Jesus felt so sad that he went to a quiet place in a garden and prayed. “Please God,” Jesus prayed, “make me strong. Help me trust you.”

Jesus asked the disciples to come to the garden and stay awake while he prayed. But they fell asleep.



“Wake up. Wake up. Wake up,” Jesus told the disciples three times. When Jesus finished praying, it was time for them to go and face hard things.

Even though Jesus had many friends, he had some bad enemies too. Some people were scared that Jesus would change the world too much with love.

Judas got scared too. He let Jesus down. Judas told some of Jesus’ enemies where Jesus was. When soldiers came to the garden, Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek to show them who they were looking for. The soldiers took Jesus away. Judas and Peter ran away and hid. They were so scared.



# Christ the King

The priests were mad at Jesus and wanted to get rid of him. “What will happen to us if the people follow Jesus?” they grumbled. So, they made a plan. “Let’s take Jesus to the governor, Pontius Pilate. He can get rid of Jesus.”

When Pontius Pilate saw Jesus he asked, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus didn’t answer. Pilate thought kings ruled over countries and people. Jesus knew that his power was about loving God. Jesus’ kingdom was not the same.

Pilate was frustrated. Some people wanted to kill Jesus, but Pilate didn’t think Jesus had done anything wrong. Pilate didn’t want any trouble, so he handed Jesus over to the people.

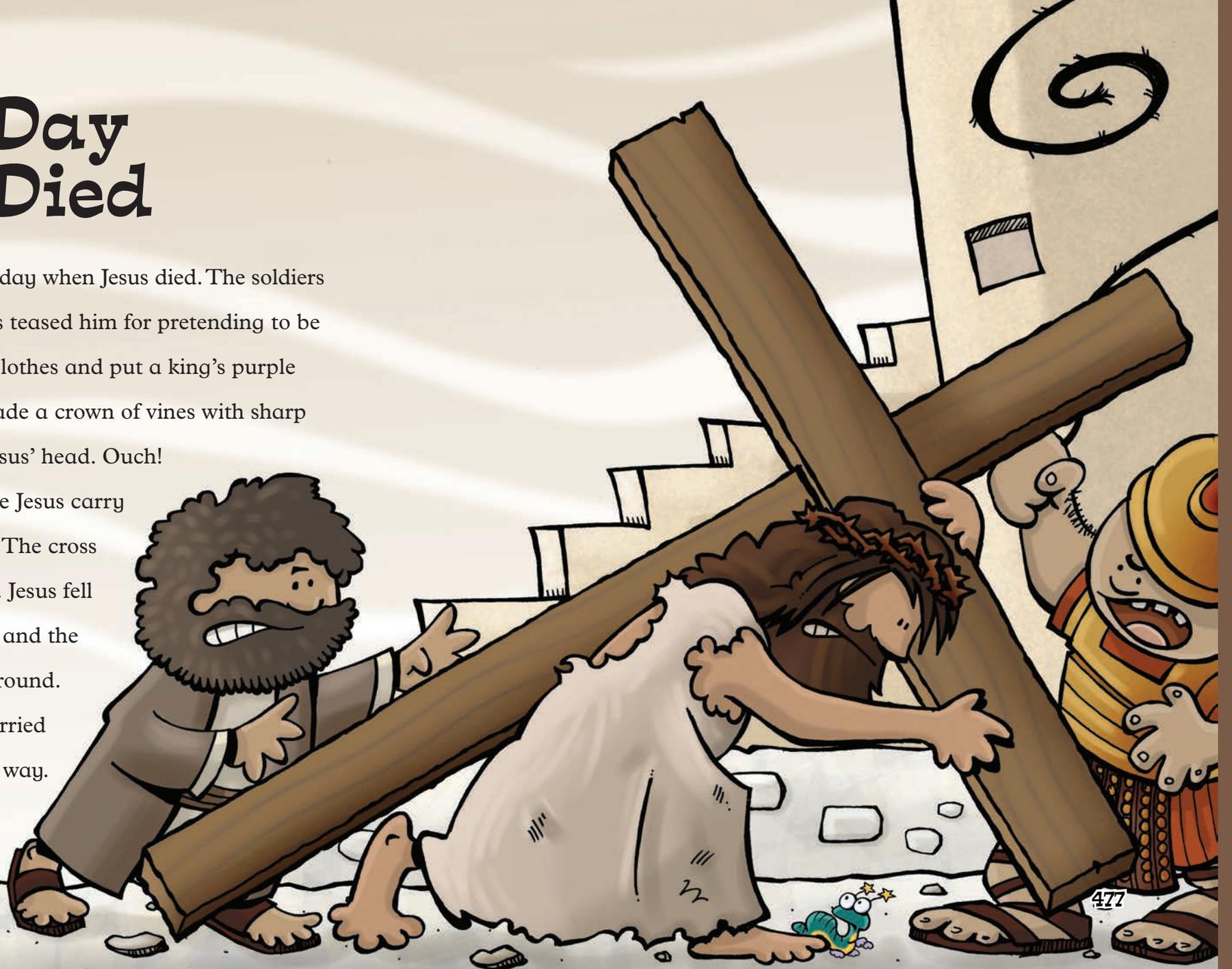
The priests smiled. Soon Jesus would be gone. Jesus knew that he would die, but that wouldn’t be the end of the story. Jesus knew God’s plan too.



# The Day Jesus Died

It was a very sad day when Jesus died. The soldiers who had arrested Jesus teased him for pretending to be a king. They took his clothes and put a king's purple cloak on him. They made a crown of vines with sharp thorns and put it on Jesus' head. Ouch!

The soldiers made Jesus carry a heavy wooden cross. The cross was too heavy for him. Jesus fell and skinned his knees, and the cross tumbled to the ground. A man in the crowd carried the cross the rest of the way.





The soldiers nailed Jesus' hands and feet to the cross. They raised Jesus' cross up on a hill between two other men. The other men were thieves and they were being crucified too. One of the men was angry with Jesus.

"If you are a powerful king, can't you save yourself? Why don't you save us too?!" The man spat at Jesus.

But the other thief believed in Jesus. He shouted back, "Don't you know who this is? This is God's Son. He hasn't done anything wrong. We are being punished for our mistakes. But Jesus shouldn't be here."

The man turned to Jesus and asked, "Will you take me to heaven with you?"

Jesus looked at the man and loved him. Jesus told him, "Yes, today we will be in heaven together."



After a while, the world grew very dark, as if a terrible thunderstorm was coming. It was as if all of creation was crying because Jesus was about to die. Jesus was feeling all alone and prayed to see if God was still there. Of course, God never left Jesus. God was with him the whole time.

Jesus looked at the crowd. He was so sad that people didn't believe that he was God's Son. He asked God to forgive them for killing him. The soldiers offered him some sour wine, but he didn't want to drink it.

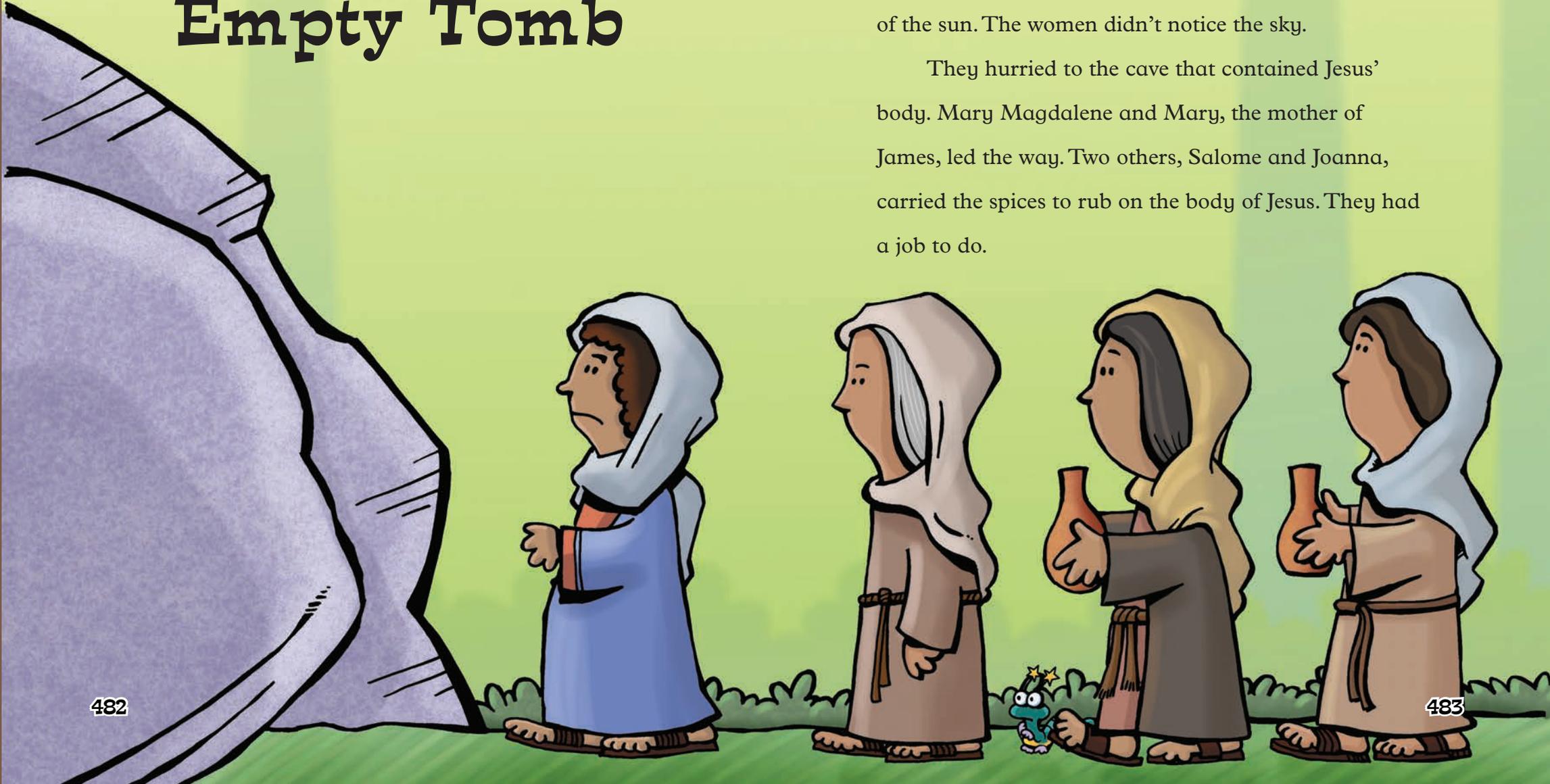
He was ready to die. Finally, Jesus had fought for long enough. He said, "God, the work you gave me to do here is finished." He breathed a final, long, slow breath, and then he died.



# The Empty Tomb

It was early in the morning on the third day after Jesus died. The sky was pink and red with the first light of the sun. The women didn't notice the sky.

They hurried to the cave that contained Jesus' body. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, led the way. Two others, Salome and Joanna, carried the spices to rub on the body of Jesus. They had a job to do.



When the tomb of Jesus came into sight, they froze. Uh oh! They had forgotten about the huge stone that sealed the opening to the cave. How would they move it?

The women kept going to the cave anyway. As they came closer, the women could see that the stone had already been rolled away!

They peeked inside. Ooh! It was dark in there. Brrr! It was cold in there. Drip, drop! It was damp in there. What?! It was empty in there! Jesus was gone!

