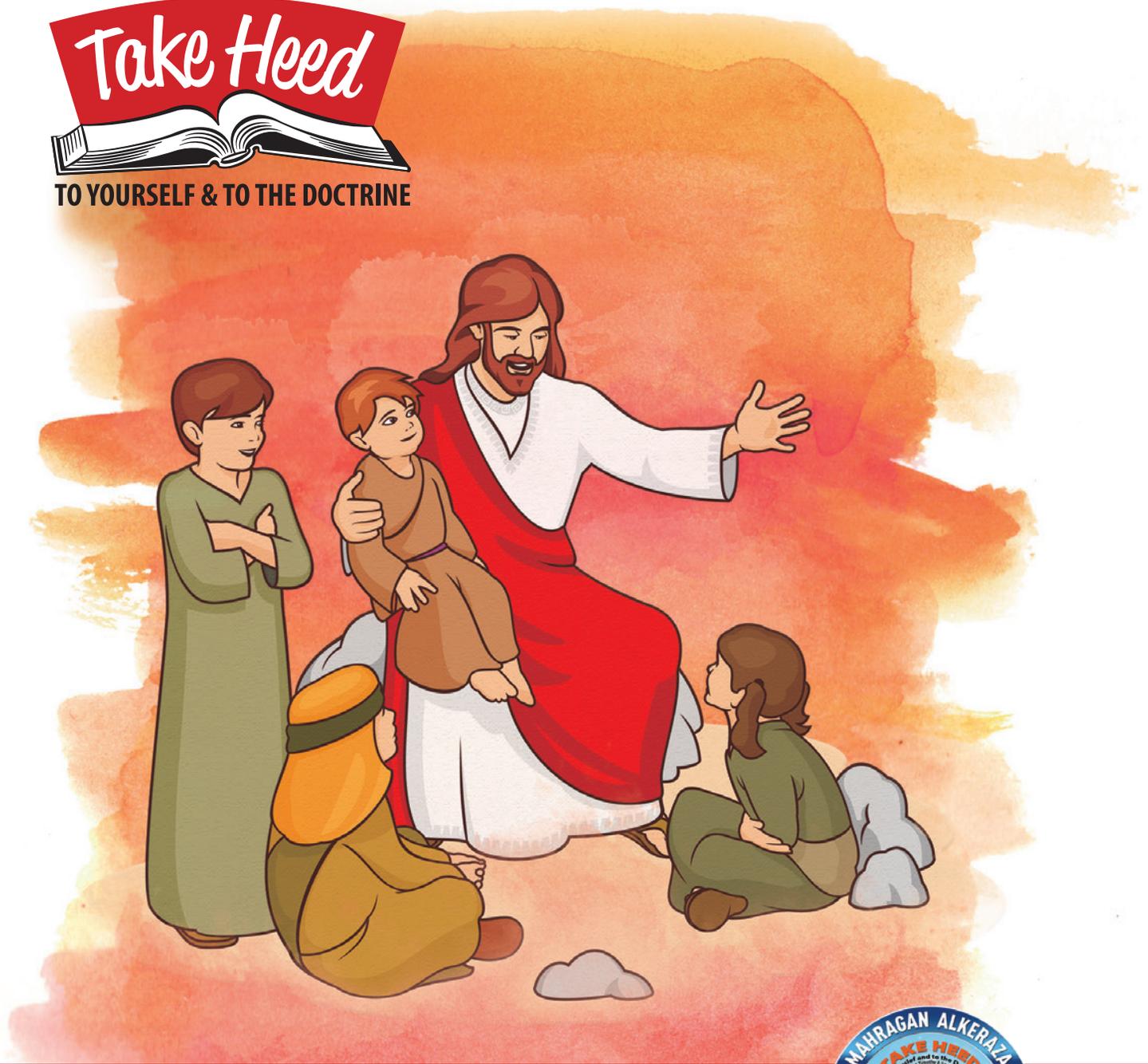


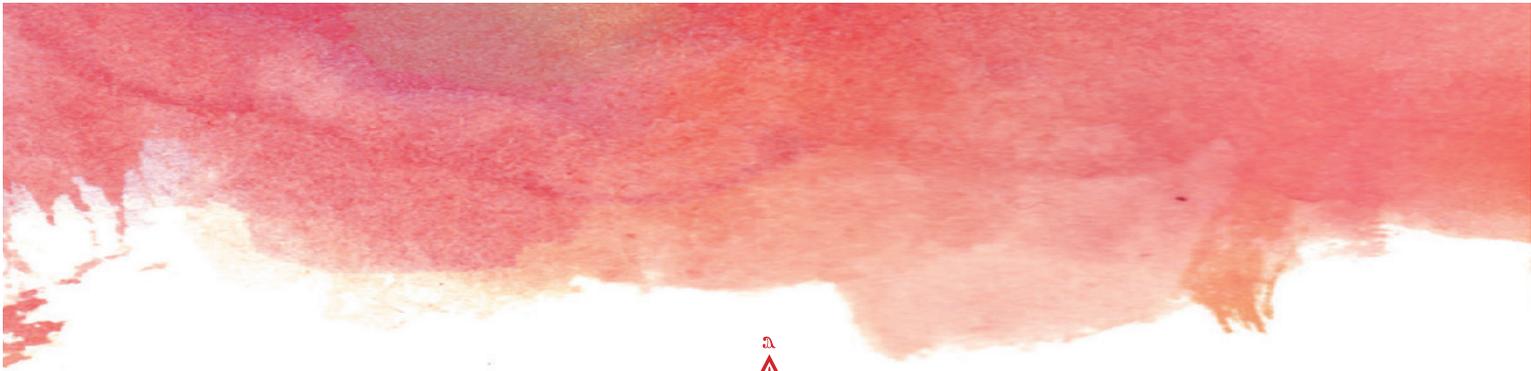
MAHRAGAN ALKERAZA 2017



ENGLISH EDITION | GR 1-2



"Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." 1 Timothy 4:16



Under the Guidance of H.H. Pope Tawadros II

Pope of Alexandria &
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark



WELCOME TO COOL

NAME: _____

GRADE: _____

GROUP: _____

PHONE: _____



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INTRODUCTION

MAHRAGAN ALKERAZA 2017

As we celebrated the conclusion of last year's Mahragan with the distribution of the trophies for the first, second and third place winners, we were grateful for God's blessings for a successful 2016 Mahragan. His Holiness Pope Tawadros II said during the Awards Ceremony in Egypt, "I am happy to see the activities of the Youth Bishopric, I am glad that our beautiful Church that is 2000 years old is full of young youth and I am proud to see the creative work and achievements of the youth."

Last year, in addition to the usual participation from Egypt and Sudan, we had a great worldwide participation from 192 Churches representing more than 20 countries and 8 languages.

The theme for Mahragan 2017 is "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:16). This year, God is asking each one of us to grow in Christ. To do this we will learn about the following topics:

1. Watch Yourself
2. Keep God's Teachings
3. Abide in God, Always
4. Heaven.. So Much More Than We Can Imagine
5. Bring Your Friends To God



We hope that all of you will participate in the Mahragan activities this year, and encourage everyone you know to join us in one of the greatest annual events, presented by our mother, the Coptic Orthodox Church.

May God bless Mahragan Alkeraza this year and the efforts of all the participants and coordinators, through the prayers of our beloved father Pope Tawadros II.

✠ My best wishes for a happy
Festival

✠ Bishop Mousa

Watch Yourself

Uncle Sam the boatmaker gathers all the boats around him to celebrate Ben, the newest boat in the collection. The other boats, Speedy, Larry, and Ken are super excited for the celebration. Seagull and Linny, the lighthouse are there too!

Uncle Sam: Hi everyone!

Today I would like to introduce Ben, the newest boat who will join us at the port.

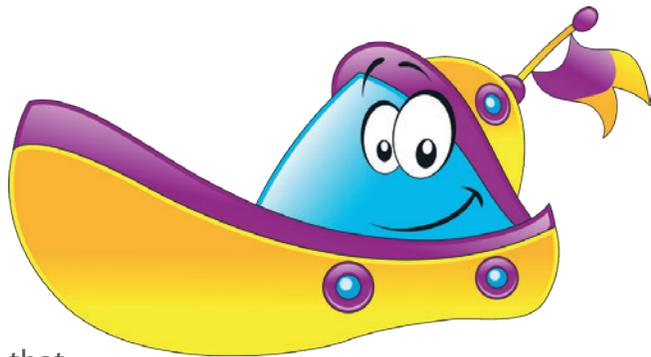
Speedy: Aww, he's so small! The smallest boat here!

Linny: Welcome Ben! Tell us one thing that you could have to make you different from everyone else. Something you can use to work with here.

Ben (worried): What do you mean?

Ken: Well, you have to choose something that will help you do your work. For example, I chose the crane and this helps me a lot in my work in the port.

Larry: Yeah! And I chose a big deck to be able to hold all the different packages.



Speedy: I chose to add an extra motor to be the fastest boat in the port.

Ben: Oh, I get it!

Linny: So tell us! What will you choose?

Ben: Hmm. I don't know.

Larry: Think about what you want to do and you'll know.



Ben: (pauses and thinks) I really don't know.

Linny: There's a story that Uncle Sam used to tell all the new boats to help them choose.

Speedy: Yeah, I remember my first day when I joined the port. Uncle Sam told me that story and I still remember it.

Larry: I wanna hear it again!

Ken: Me too!

Uncle Sam: I have an idea, why don't you all tell it to Ben?

Linny: Okay, I will start...

KING SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM (1 KINGS 2-10)

A Long time ago, there was a great Kingdom called the Kingdom of Israel and its King was King David. King David had many children; one of which was called Solomon. Solomon walked in God's way and followed His commandments like his father David.



Speedy: God chose Solomon to be the next King. After many years, when David was much older, he gave the throne to his younger son Solomon. He told him to follow God's commandments. Solomon was young when he reigned over the Kingdom of Israel.

God was very important in the life of King Solomon. That's why, before doing anything in the Kingdom, he offered a thousand sacrifices in a place named Gibeon and prayed.

At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

Ben: Oh! That's the same question that I can't answer. What did Solomon ask for?



Larry: King Solomon thought about it. He knew he was young and had a big responsibility. He said: "I am a little child". He figured what he needed the most was wisdom so he can learn how to judge among God's people and understand the difference between good and evil. So, he didn't ask for riches or wealth or a long life for himself, he asked for wisdom and said to God:

MEMORY VERSE:

***"Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil."* 1 Kings 3:9**



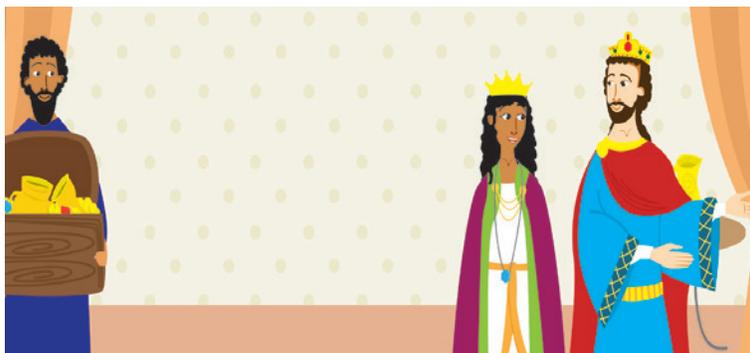


Linny: God was pleased with Solomon’s request because he did not ask for anything for himself but he asked for wisdom. God said to him: “I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor; so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among Kings. And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life”.



And because of this, there was peace throughout the reign of King Solomon. Solomon reigned over all of Israel for 40 years.

He was able to build the temple, which is the house of God. This was God’s promise to David his father; that Solomon would be the one to build the temple. At the time of David, the house of God was a tent called the Tabernacle. King Solomon built the temple in 7 years and it was called “the Temple of Solomon”.



King Solomon was also very wise, all the Kings of the earth heard about his wisdom. They came to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom of Solomon. One of them was the queen of Sheba. She came from a far country with a great caravan to hear the Wisdom of Solomon and she had many questions. Solomon answered all her questions. She was overwhelmed with all what she heard and saw and said to Solomon: "What I have seen exceeded what I heard about you." She gave him gifts of gold and precious stones.

Ben: Wow! King Solomon was so wise. He knew what he needed and asked for it.

Uncle Sam: King Solomon understood what he needed to succeed which is why he was able to make the right choices.

Linny: Now Ben, what are you going to choose?

Ben: I know! Just like Solomon chose wisdom to be able to discern between good and evil, I will choose a searchlight so I may see and choose the right path.

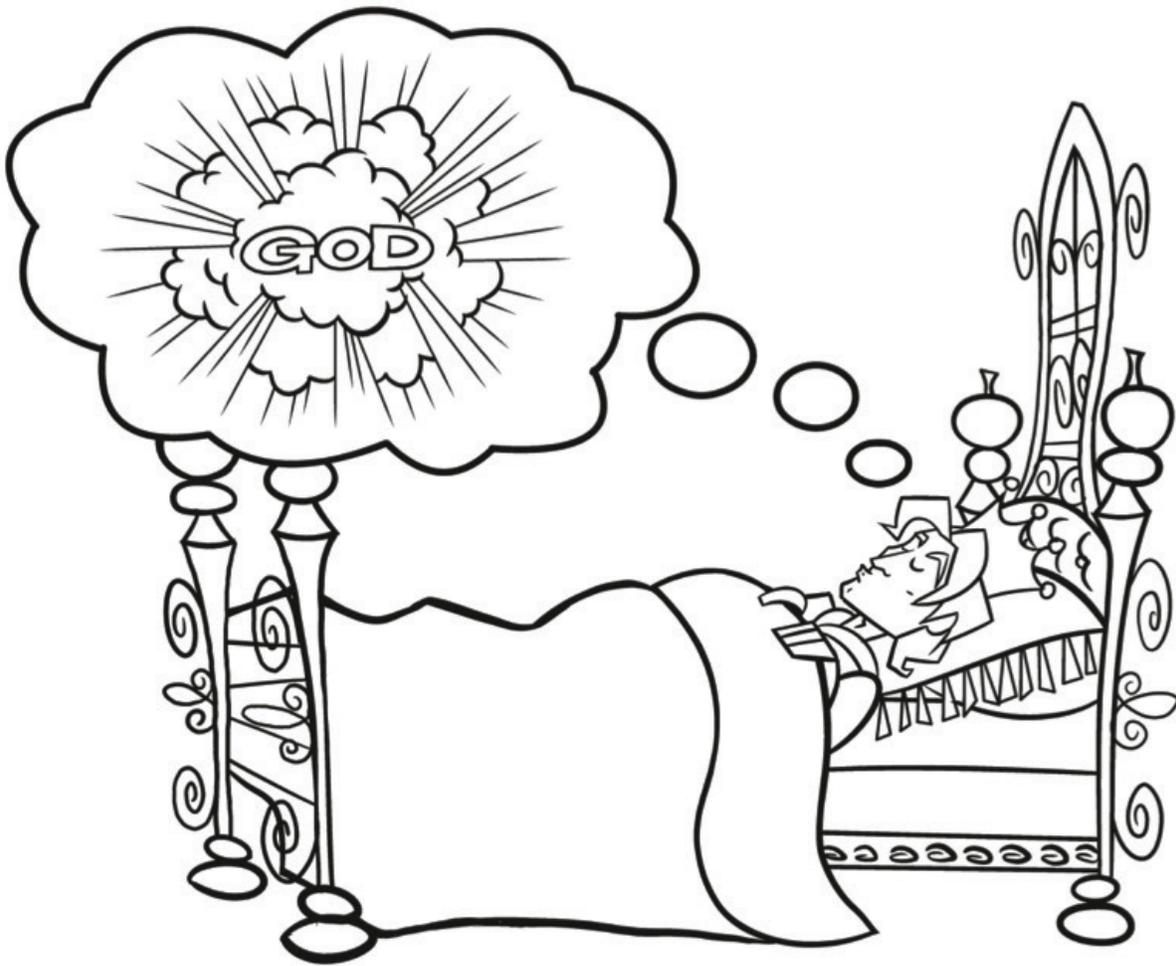
Linny: Great choice!

Uncle Sam: Excellent Ben! I will get you a searchlight.

Uncle Sam fixes a searchlight on the little boat.



King Solomon Asks for Wisdom

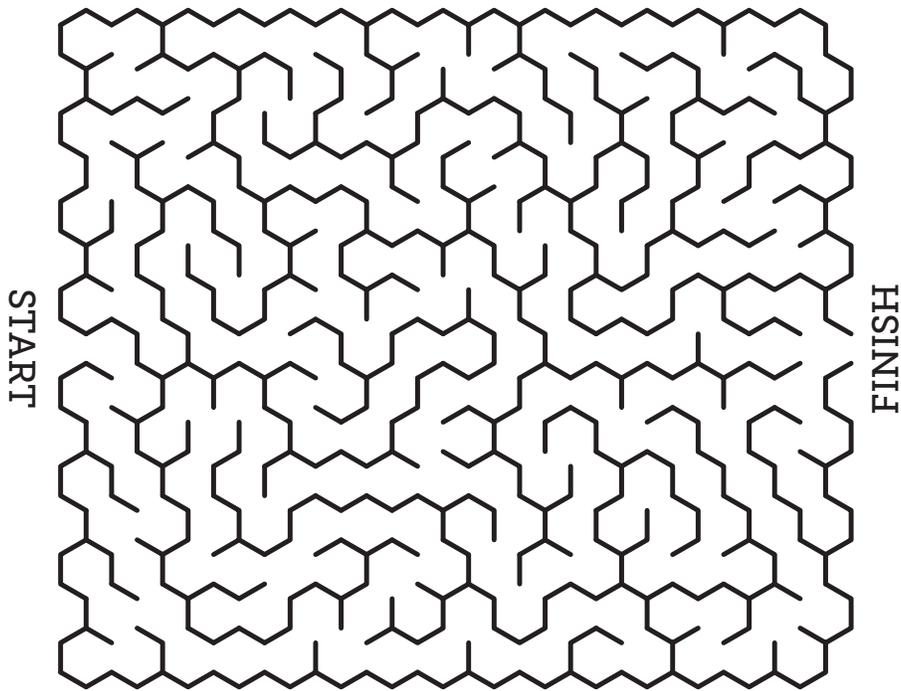


When David & Bathsheba's son Solomon became King, God appeared to him in a dream and said he could ask God for anything. Solomon asked for wisdom. (1 Kings 3)

The Wise King Solomon

ACTIVITY

Help King Solomon build the temple.





Keep God's Teachings

The boats carry on with their work day after day. One day, Seagull comes to inform Linny of a new mission for the boats. Linny signals with his light to call everyone.

Ken: Linny's calling! It looks like he has a new mission for us.

Speedy: Let's go!

Linny: I have a new mission for you all. We have to deliver this package from here to the other port on the other side of the sea. We have to deliver it quickly and take good care of it. Are you all ready?

All: Of course!

Linny: Okay, so this is what you have to do. Speedy you go first and clear the way in front of the other boats. Here's the map to follow. Speedy will have a map and another copy will be with Uncle Sam.

Speedy: Sounds good.

Linny: Ken and Larry you will help each other. Ken will lift up the package and put it on Larry and when you reach the other port you will unload it. Ken, stay beside Larry and make sure the package does not move from its place.

Larry and Ken: Okay, We're ready.

Linny: Alright, you may go now.

Ben: What about me? I don't have a role?



Uncle Sam: Yes you do—you'll take me with you. We have to be close to help in case there's a problem. That's a very important role.

Speedy (going very fast): Clear the way! Everyone follow me!

Ben: Oh! Careful Speedy! (Sighs) Of course you won't hear or see me. I'm too small and don't have an important job.

Everyone, including Ben follows Speedy, but Uncle Sam notices that Ben is not happy.

Uncle Sam: What's wrong Ben?

Ben: All the boats have an important role to do in this delivery and my role is so small. Also Speedy soaked me. Why didn't I get an important role like them?

Uncle Sam: No Ben, you're just as important! Did you ask yourself why I chose you in particular?

Ben: No, why?

Uncle Sam: I wanted to have a boat with your talents.

Ben: You wanted a boat like me! What talents do I have? I'm too small and no one ever notices me.

Uncle Sam: Don't look down on yourself. You can do things no one else can do. Let me tell you a story so you can understand what I mean.

Ben: Okay, Uncle Sam. I like your stories.

SAINT MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD (THE THEOTOKOS)

Uncle Sam: Let's start from the very beginning. When Adam and Eve sinned and did not obey God, they were separated from God and they needed someone to save them and all their descendants from their sin. God promised them that He will be born from a virgin and will save them so they can live with God again.

Everyone waited for many years for God's promise to be fulfilled. Many prophets talked about God's birth from a virgin. They also wrote about her qualities. All the girls in Israel wished to be this virgin.



Ben: Of course, this role is not just for anyone. This person had to be very special, a princess for example.

Uncle Sam: Actually, no. When the time came for God to be incarnate for our salvation, He chose a very simple girl that no one knew. She was full of good qualities that were not found in any other girl before or after her.

Ben: A simple girl! What qualities did she have?

Uncle Sam: Her heart was full of love for God and all the people. She was quiet and humble, full of wisdom and she loved to pray and to serve God.

Ben: Who was she?

Uncle Sam: Her name was Mary; she lived in a city called Nazareth. One day, God sent

Archangel Gabriel to her. He told her: **“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus” (Luke 1:31)**. When she heard the angel, she was surprised because she was not married so she asked the angel and he said to her:



MEMORY VERSE:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:35

St. Mary was very humble. She believed God’s message that was sent to her by the angel.

Ben: You mean that God, the creator of the whole universe, was born from St. Mary!

Uncle Sam: Yes! And you know, after she knew that she would give birth to God incarnate, she was not prideful. She was still very humble. When she learned from the angel that Elizabeth her relative was pregnant, she went to serve her.

Ben: Wow!

Uncle Sam: Yes, and when Elizabeth heard St. Mary’s greeting, something really strange happened that proved that she was the Mother of God.

Ben: What happened?

Uncle Sam: The baby leaped for joy in Elizabeth's womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and it was revealed to her that our Lord Jesus was in St. Mary's womb. She said to her: **"But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me"**



Luke 1:43. St. Mary praised God and thanked Him and said: **"For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."** **Luke 1:48**

The church glorifies St. Mary the Mother of God from generation to generation.

Ben: The Mother of God! Wow. She really deserves to be praised by all people.

Uncle Sam: It's true, she gave birth to our Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. She raised Him and watched Him grow in front of her eyes all the way to the Cross.



After the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, she stayed with the disciples until her departure on the 21st of Tobah. God did not want to leave her body on earth so He took her up to heaven. The church calls her the Theotokos.

Ben: What does "Theotokos" mean?

Uncle Sam: Theotokos means Mother of God. The church glorifies St. Mary and asks for her intercession and puts her above all the angels and saints. We mention her in the

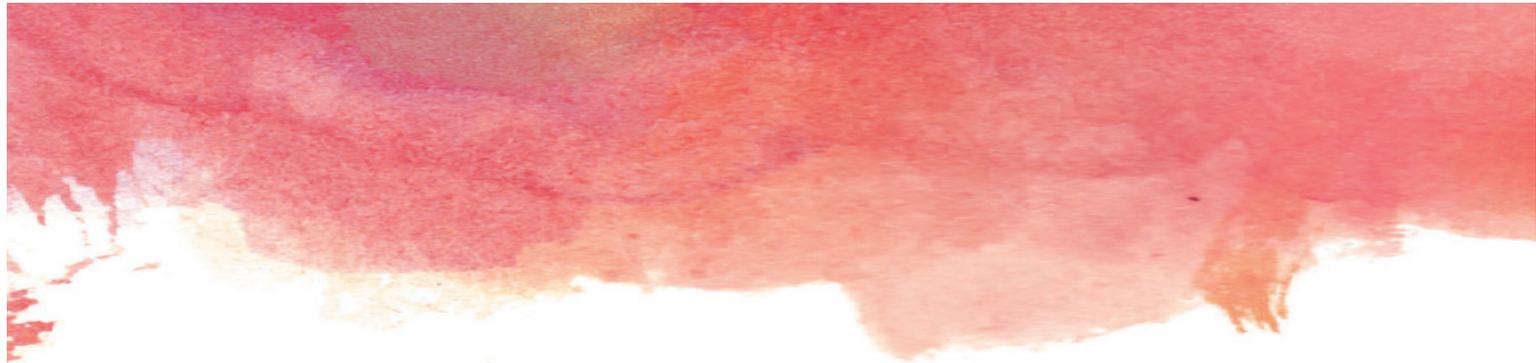
liturgies and put her icon on the right side of the door of the Altar on the Iconostasis.

There are many hymns and praises for St. Mary in our church. Also the introduction of the Creed, “We exalt you the Mother of the true Light” that we use in our prayers, teaches us the special rank of St. Mary in our church.

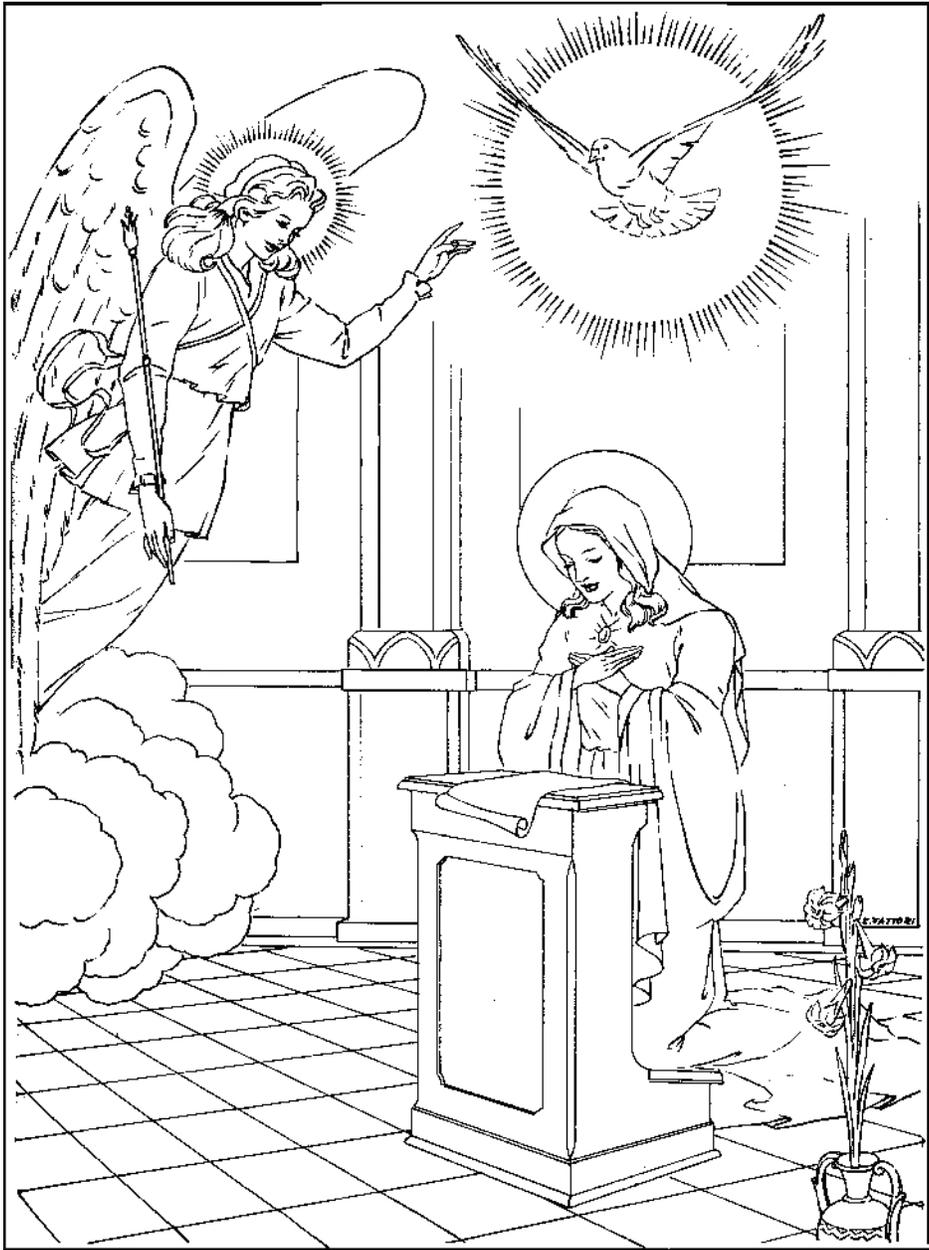
Ben: Thank you Uncle Sam for this beautiful story.

Uncle Sam and Ben follow the map to reach the rest of the boats. And as they travel, they share more stories with each other.





Archangel Gabriel Speaks to St. Mary



The Birth of Jesus



There are eleven differences between these two otherwise identical pictures. Can you find them all?

Abide In God, Always!

Linny: How strange! I can only see Ben and Uncle Sam. Where are the rest? Seagull! Seagull!

Seagull: Yeah?

Linny: Can you please go check on the boats? I can't see them.

Seagull: Sure!

Seagull goes and comes back.

Seagull: Linny! Linny! The boats went the wrong way! And Larry hit a rock and broke down. Now, they're all stuck.

Linny: Oh no! Why did they go that way? They had a map! Go quickly tell Uncle Sam so he can help them.

Seagull goes and tells Uncle Sam.

Uncle Sam: Come on Ben! We have to go to them right away!

Seagull: But that way is dangerous and Ben is too small!

Ben: Yes, it's true that I am small, but I won't leave Uncle Sam. I will go with him





no matter what. I learned this from the story Uncle Sam told me about the good fisherman who did not leave his master.

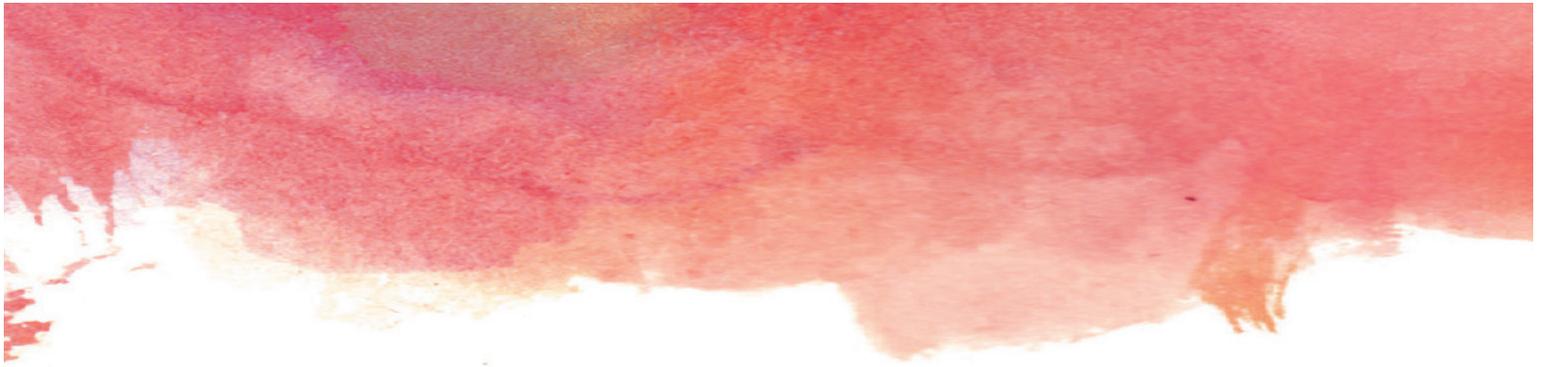


Uncle Sam: I am glad you remember the story. I won't leave you either. We will go together. Come on Seagull, Ben will tell you the story on the way!

ST. JOHN THE BELOVED (SYNEXARIUM 4 TOBAH)

Ben: The fisherman I'm talking about is St. John. His father's name was Zebedee and his brother's name was James. They lived in a city called Bethsaida. St. John was from a wealthy family. He was originally the disciple of St. John the Baptist, who taught people about repentance and how to draw near to God.





St. John and his brother James were fishermen. One day as they were fishing, our Lord Jesus called them and told them **“follow Me” Matthew 4:21**. They left everything and followed Him and became among the 12 disciples of our Lord Jesus.

St. John stayed with our Lord Jesus and did not leave Him. He loved to listen to His teachings, and to follow His commandments. He also witnessed many miracles that our Lord Jesus did.

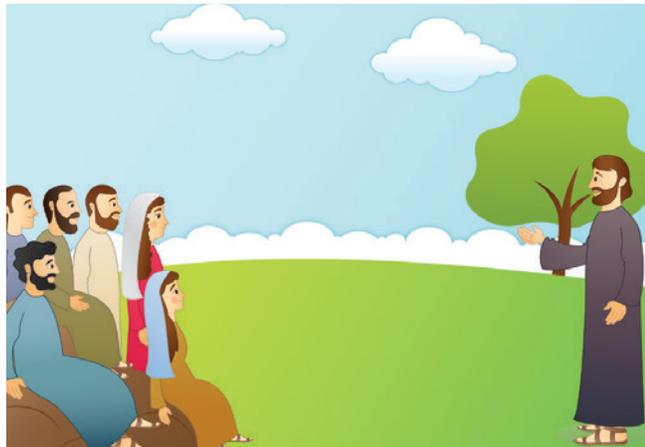
He did not leave our Lord Jesus during His trial and His passion. Even though many people abandoned Him, St. John followed our Lord Jesus to the Cross. There, our Lord asked St. John to take care of St. Mary. He told St. John, “Behold your mother” and He told St. Mary, “Behold your son.” From that time St. John took St. Mary to his house and took care of her.



Seagull: So even when many people left our Lord, St. John did not leave Him. He was very faithful.

Ben: Yes. Also in the morning of the Resurrection, he went to the tomb with St. Peter, saw the empty tomb and believed. He was the one who recognized our Lord Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias and said to the disciples, "It is the Lord" John 21:7.

After the Ascension of our Lord Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, they started preaching about Christianity and talking to people about our Lord Jesus. St. John ministered first in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas.



Uncle Sam: After the departure of St. Mary, St. John left Jerusalem and went to Asia Minor and preached there. Many people believed and were baptized because of his ministry. He also ordained bishops and priests who helped to spread the teachings of our Lord Jesus.

St. John fulfilled the verse that says:

MEMORY VERSE:

***"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you."
1 Corinthians 11:23***

During his ministry, St. John encountered many difficulties and persecutions. He continued to preach all the days of his life. When he was old, people used to carry him to the church to teach them. He used to tell them, "My children love each other"

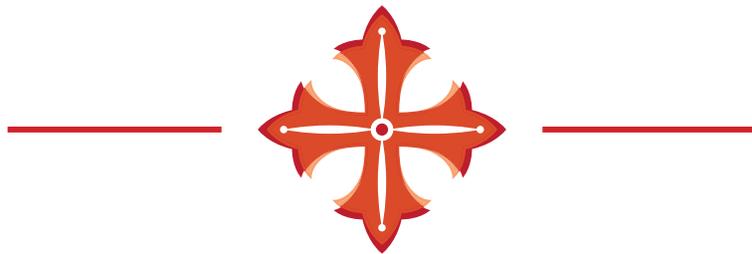
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and taught them that love is the most important commandment. That's why they called him the disciple of love and why our church calls him St. John the beloved. He departed at the age of 100 years.

Seagull: That's a beautiful story. You're right to learn from it Ben and to stay with Uncle Sam.

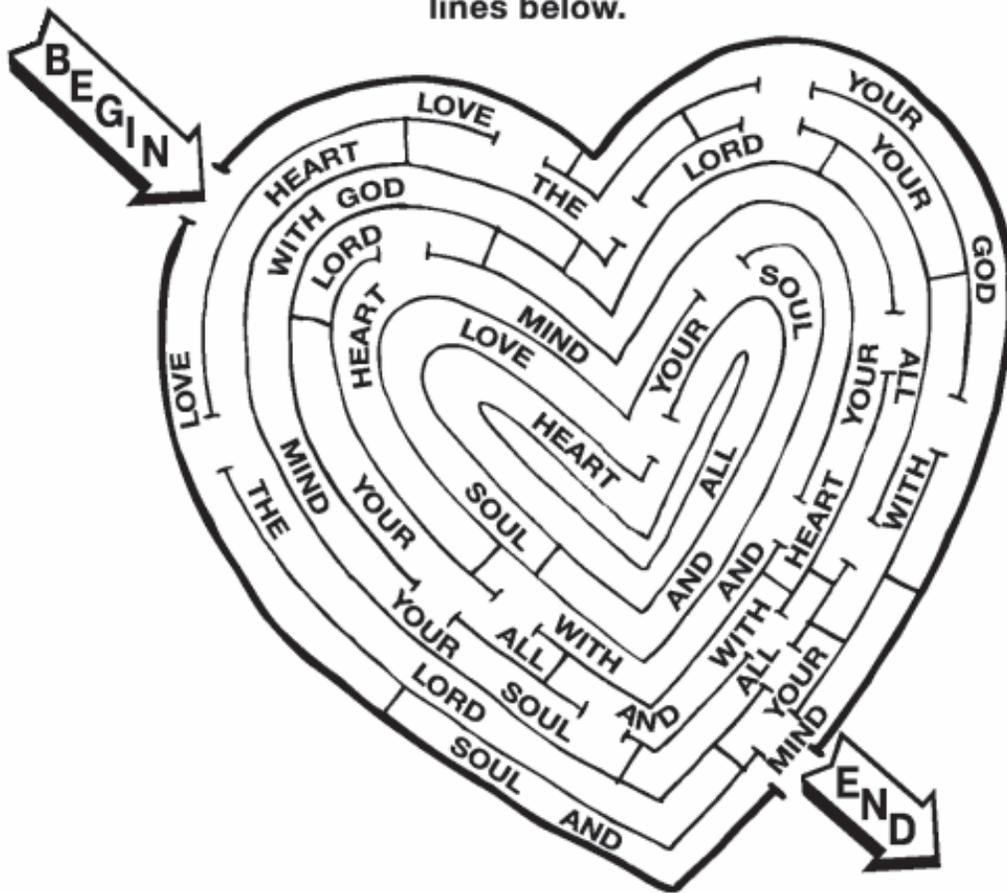
Ben: I will always stay with him.

Uncle Sam: Thank you, Ben.



Love...

Find the correct path through the heart below. Write the words in order, as you find them, on the lines below.



“ _____

 _____.” Matthew 22:37

Heaven...So Much More Than We Can Imagine

They finally spot them...

Seagull: I see them! Ben go right, then straight.

Ben: I see them too! Uncle Sam can you see them?

Uncle Sam: Yes. Let's reach out to them but be careful and don't hit anything.

Speedy: Oh! Uncle Sam is here! How did they find us?



Uncle Sam: Ken... Larry...

Speedy... are you alright? Why did you come this way? Didn't you have a map?

Larry: Yeah, but the way on the map was too long and the package was so heavy!

Uncle Sam: That's not a reason to change the way Linny told you. Speedy, you shouldn't have done that.

Speedy: Well, we always listen to Linny. But this time we found the way too long so we took a short cut to deliver the package faster.

Uncle Sam: If Linny tells us a way to follow, it means that it is the best way.

Ken: But, how does he know? He can't even move from his place. All he does is lights the



place up, and tells us what to do.

Uncle Sam: Of course he knows. He controls the port, he knows the sea inside out. That's why he told you about the way that is safer for you. That's the job of a leader. Let me explain with this example.

THE ROLE OF THE PRIEST IN THE CHURCH (THE SACRAMENT OF PRIESTHOOD)

Uncle Sam: The church teaches us the way to heaven. In order to do this, God has established order in the church and put in place leaders to help us. The leaders I am talking about are our fathers the priests.

Priesthood is one of the church Sacraments; it is also a call from God. Without Priesthood, we cannot practice any other Sacrament. Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Priesthood when He gave the authority to His disciples. The Bible says, **“when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power” Matthew 10:1.**

The priest takes care of his people with love. If anyone is sick he visits them and if any one is sad, he comforts and supports them.

He performs all the other church Sacraments. In the Sacrament of Baptism, he immerses the child three times in the water: in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Through this Sacrament, the sin that we inherited from Adam and Eve is forgiven. We become Christians and children of God.



The Sacrament of Myron, is performed right after Baptism. The priest anoints the baptized person 36 times over his whole body. Through this Sacrament, we receive the seal of the Holy Spirit and we become the temple of the Holy Spirit.



The Sacrament of Repentance and Confession is where we obtain the forgiveness of our sins. First we repent and promise God that we will not sin again. Then we confess our sins to the priest to obtain absolution and forgiveness.



The Sacrament of the Eucharist is after we repent and confess, because our hearts become clean and ready to receive Jesus Christ through Communion. This happens during the liturgy when the priest prays over the bread and wine and they are transformed into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of the liturgy, we receive the Holy Communion. Through this Sacrament we unite with Christ and abide in Him and He abides in us.



The Sacrament of Unction of the sick is done when someone is sick. **“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” James 5:14.**

The Sacrament of Matrimony is when the priest prays on the couple and the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they become husband and wife. They become one body and their home becomes a holy church for God.



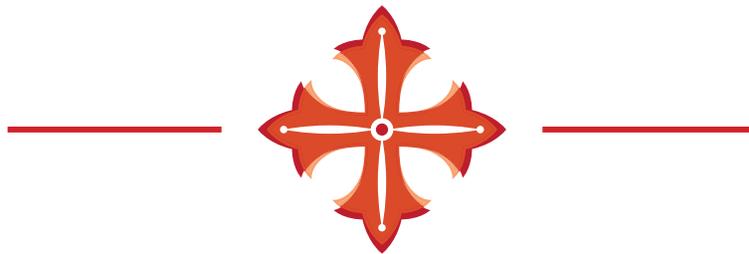
And finally, as we said, the Sacrament of Priesthood is essential for us to perform all the other Sacraments.

It is important to obey the priests because they are the leaders of the church. Because if we don't follow our leaders we can get lost, just like you got lost when you did not follow Linny's map.



Everyone: You're right.

Speedy: I'm sorry Uncle Sam, we've learned our lesson.





Bring Your Friends To God

Now that the boats know their mistake, they start to think of a way to fix the problem.

Uncle Sam: Okay Seagull, while I fix Larry, can you go tell Linny that we're all okay?

Seagull: Of course!

Larry: It was so dark, I couldn't see the rocks

Uncle Sam: Don't worry, I'll fix you, you'll be as good as new!

Uncle Sam starts working on Larry. When Seagull comes back...

Seagull: Uncle Sam, I went to Linny. He was worried but now he's happy to know we are all okay. But he said that we might be late for our delivery.

Larry: We can't go back there! I can't go between the rocks again.

Speedy: Yeah! It will be a huge problem if you hit the rocks again!

Ben: I have an idea!

No one hears Ben because they are busy talking...

Uncle Sam: Everyone, can we please listen to what Ben has to say? Go ahead Ben.

Ben: Since I'm small, I can go between the rocks with my searchlight and find out if the way is clear for you.

Speedy: But that's your first time in the middle of the sea. Aren't you scared?

Ben: Don't worry Speedy I have the searchlight. Even if I am a little scared, I have to do this for all of us.

Speedy: Super!

Uncle Sam: Thanks Ben, we'll send Seagull with you.

Ben heads off to find a way and Uncle Sam continues fixing Larry...

Speedy: What Ben did is amazing. He's not afraid to go by himself because he loves us!

Ken: And we never pay attention to him.

Speedy: Yeah, I splashed him with water so many times. We are not treating him very well and he is still so nice to us. I'm gonna be nice to him from now on.



Uncle Sam: I am so happy to hear you say that. I'll tell you a story while I fix Larry.

ST. PACHOMIOUS, THE FATHER OF THE SPIRITUAL COMMUNAL MONASTIC LIFE—SYNAXARIUM ON THE 14th OF BASHANS

St. Pachomious was born to pagan parents who worshiped idols and did not know God. When he grew up, he became a soldier in the army. One day, he went with a group of soldiers in military service, and after a long trip, they arrived in a city called

Esna. They stopped there to get some rest. There, something happened that changed St. Pachomious' life.

Speedy: What happened?



Uncle Sam: The people of the city offered them food and water with love and joy. The soldiers were amazed, and St. Pachomious asked them why they are doing this to them?



One answered him and said, "We do this because we are Christians... God taught us to love and help all people."

Ken: Oh wow! The love of the people of Esna was great.

Uncle Sam: Because of this great love, St. Pachomious vowed to become a Christian after his military service ended. The people of Esna were a good example for the people who dealt with them. Likewise, all Christians should be good examples for the people around them as the verse says,

MEMORY VERSE:

***"In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works."
Titus 2:7***

After St. Pachomious returned safely to his country, he was baptized and became a Christian. He stayed in Esna for 3 years serving the people.

After that, St. Pachomious heard about a holy monk called Abba Balamon. He went to him and became a monk. He prayed, fasted and read the Bible.

Larry: What's a monk?

Uncle Sam: A monk is a person who loves God so much and wants to spend all his life with God. He does not want anything to keep him from this love. That's why he leaves the world and goes to the monastery to be able to pray and worship God even more.



St. Pachomious was thinking about people who wanted to become monks but could not follow the monastic rules. At that time, monks were living in solitude, meaning that each monk lived alone.

He prayed a lot about it, and one day he had a vision in which an angel appeared to him and gave him new rules for monastic life: the rules of Communal Monasticism. That's why the church calls him "The Father of Communal Monasticism".

Speedy: What is Communal Monasticism?

Uncle Sam: At that time, monks used to live in solitude in individual cells to pray. In Communal Monasticism, monks would gather to pray, work and eat together. That's what St. Pachomious made. He built a monastery that gathered many monks. When the number of monks increased, he would build another monastery for them, until there were many monasteries.

Ken: That's a nice story. When people are nice, it influences others to be nice too.

Larry: Look! Ben is back.

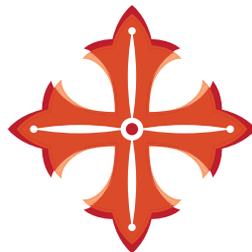
Everyone is happy to see Ben! He tells them that he found a way to reach their destination.



Speedy: You went all this way! You are so brave!

Ben: Thanks Speedy!

Uncle Sam: All done! Let's get going.



Prayer...



Find your way through the maze.

We are praying to God.
He is our loving father in heaven.

PSALM 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are proved right when You speak and justified when You judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely You desire truth in the inner parts. You teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will turn back to You. Save me from bloodguilt, o God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. In Your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight You; then bulls will be offered on Your altar. Alleluia



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This book has been translated and produced by the Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver, and Western Canada. Customized and revised by St. Mary Church of East Brunswick, NJ.