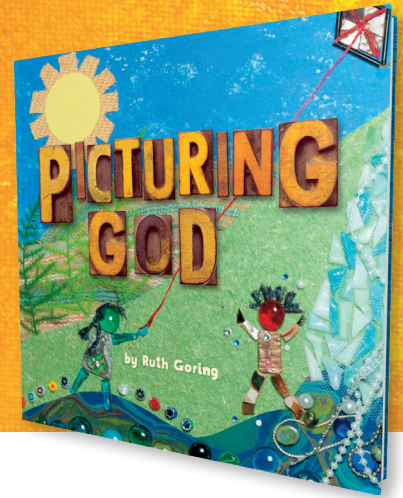


Questions for Adults and Children

Written by Ruth Goring,
author of *Picturing God*



As you move through the pages of *Picturing God*, you may want to linger on just one or two pages at a time, as each biblical metaphor is very rich. These questions, or others that come to you, may stimulate some extended conversations about who God is and how God cares for us. Of course there are no right or wrong answers! Remember that none of these metaphors are big enough to show us everything about God—but any of them can lead us to see God in a way that is surprising and new.

Word and Love

Page 3

- When have you used words to make something happen? Was it something good? something bad?
- Words seem like just sounds that come out of your mouth, but they are actually very powerful, aren't they?
- Why do you think the Bible calls Jesus the Word?
- What do you think is the most important word God says?
- Is it easy or hard to believe that God loves us?

Light of the World

Pages 4-5

- Do you like the dark? Why or why not?
- If you were going to do something that could hurt another person, would you rather do it in the light or in the dark?
- How does light help us?
- How do you feel when you're in a dark room and someone lights a candle or turns on a lamp?

Pages 6-7

- What must we do if we need to go somewhere at night or someplace dark? What kinds of light might we use?
- How is God like a light on our path or road?

Page 8

- What good seed do you want God to plant inside you?
- How is God's love like sunshine for plants?

Living Water

Page 9

- How is God's love like water on a garden?
- Do you like to play in the rain?
- In what other ways does water help us? [*bathing, cleaning, cooling . . .*]

Pages 10-11

- How do you think the girl by the waterfall feels?
- How does it feel to know that God's love will never stop pouring into your life like a waterfall?
- What happens when we are baptized?
- How is water a good picture of God in our lives and in our church community?

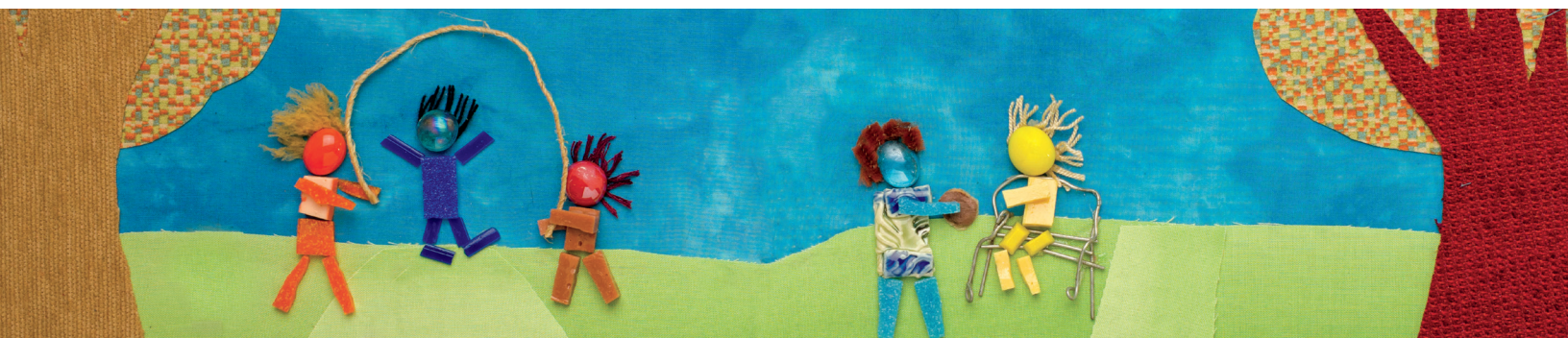
True Vine

Pages 12-13

- Think about a vine that you have seen—maybe a grapevine or ivy or a trumpet vine. Can the branches and leaves of the vine grow by themselves? What would happen to them if we cut them off the trunk of the vine?
- Do you ever feel God's love in you like sap in a vine or tree? or like blood in your veins?

Pages 14-15

- What happens when sap flows in the branches of a vine or another plant?
- When someone does something or says something that is really kind, does that feel a little bit like eating delicious grapes?
- *Tell your child something he or she has done that is juicy and beautiful, demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit.*





Bread of Life

Pages 16-17

- Did you know that we can eat God? What do you think that means?
- Is it a little bit like the way a baby grows inside its mother and is fed by her body and her food? or like the way a baby nurses at its mother's breast?
- How does that make you feel?

Pages 18-19

- Would you like God's bread to make you stronger and braver?
- How do you feel when you know that God gives you what you need to grow?
- Do you have any ideas about how to give God's love away?

Clothing

Pages 20-21

- Do you like dressing up in fancy clothes? Or is it more fun to wear a superhero costume? Or do you like just being comfortable in a T-shirt and shorts?
- The Bible says we can "put on Christ" the way we put on a shirt in the morning. Think about how your shirt is right next to your skin. How does it feel to have God so close to you?
- If you knew that God's peace was like sleeves on your arms, how would you act? Would it help you not to get into fights? Would it help you defend someone who is getting hurt?
- What is faith? How is it like a button that fastens your shirt?

Door

Pages 22-23

- When was the last time you [or we] were in a storm? How did it feel to get into a safe place?
- Where do you feel most safe and comfortable? How is God like that place?

Good Shepherd

Pages 24-25

When Jesus lived on the earth, lots of people owned sheep, and some people, called shepherds, had the job of taking care of the sheep.

- Do you think these lambs are happy to have a shepherd? They look like they're having fun, don't they?
- Do you think God is happy when you are playing and having fun?

Pages 26-27

- Here's another storm! How do the lambs feel?
- What does the Shepherd do to take care of them?

Rock

Pages 28-29

Did you know that in some places there is so much danger that people have to hurry away and move someplace else? And sometimes they can't take a car or a bus but have to walk a long, long way to safety.

- How would it feel to be very tired, in a hot desert with no buildings and no trees, and to come to a great big rock that casts a cool shadow?
- Have you ever had to do something really hard? Did that feel a little like walking in a hot desert?
- How can God be like a great big rock for you?

Wind

Pages 30-31

- Do you like to be outside on a bright, windy day?
- Can you see the wind? Then how do you know it is real?
- What do you want God's Spirit to blow away from you?
- What do you want the Spirit to blow into you?





Comforter

Pages 32-33

- How do you think the little girl was feeling before her mom hugged her?
- Do you think this mother will forget about her child?
- What helps you feel God's comfort when you are sad or lonely?

Father

Pages 34-35

- This boy went away from his family for a long time, and he made some bad choices. The boy is far away in the picture, but how do you think he feels as he walks home?
- Is the father angry, or is he excited?
- How does it feel to know that even if you try to go far away from God, God will always love you and will come find you?

Mother

Pages 36-37

- How do you think the hen feels with the rain pouring on her back? What is she thinking about?
- Jesus told his followers that he wanted to protect people the way a mama hen shelters her chicks at night or in bad weather. How does it feel to be a chick under God's wings?

Way and Home

Pages 38-39

Did you know that Jesus is like a path we walk on to get to God? We could say our whole life is like a trip we take to go all the way into God.

- How are these children behaving on the path?
- When we imagine God as bread, we see that God comes into us. But when we imagine God as our home, who goes into whom?
- What does it mean to be at home, to belong?
- Is God a little home or a big home? Do you think there's room for all of us there?