

A 365 PENTECOST





Maria lived in a cheerful little town in Guatemala, where the houses were painted bright colors and neighbors often gathered to talk and laugh. On quiet afternoons, she loved to sit in her room and play with her dolls. She would line up tiny cups and plates, set everyone in their places, and imagine they were enjoying a party together.

That's exactly what she was doing when her dad peeked into the room from the kitchen. "Looks like a party in here," he said with a smile.

Maria grinned and held up her favorite doll. “We’re having a tea party!”

Her dad stepped into the room. “You know, seeing all your friends gathered like this reminds me of a story from the bible. Want to hear it?”

Maria stood up and picked up her favorite doll. “I love stories,” she said. “What’s this one about?”





They walked into the kitchen together, and she climbed onto a stool.

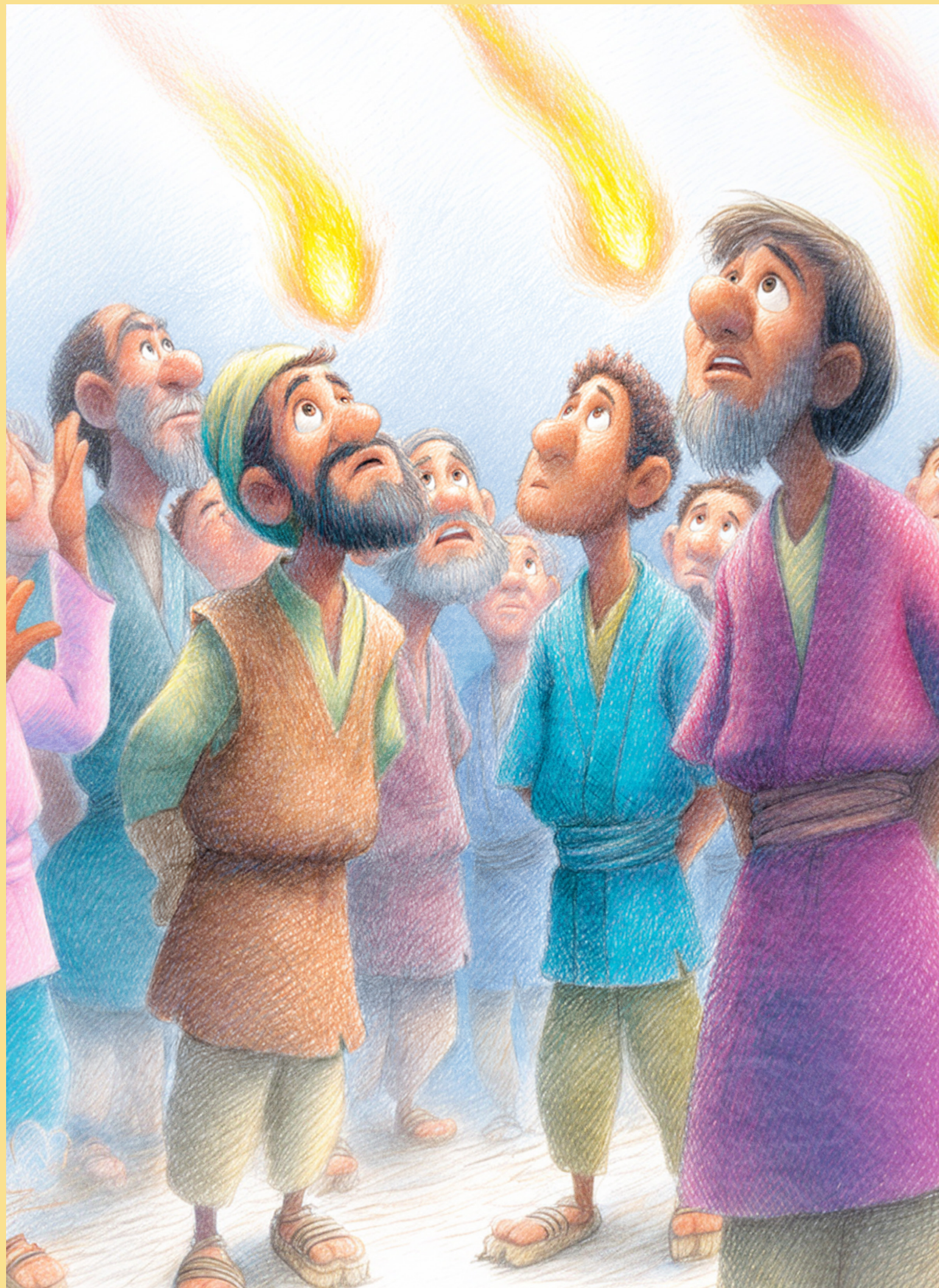
“It’s about the day the church began. It’s called Pentecost,” her dad said as he sat beside her at the counter. “It’s one of my favorite stories because it’s all about building community.”

Maria tilted her head.
“What’s a community? Like a neighborhood?”

“Sort of,” he said. “But this kind of community wasn’t made of houses or fences. It was made of people—people who chose to love and care for one another because of God’s love.”

He leaned in a little closer. “Here’s how it started: Jesus, the Son of God, told His friends to wait in Jerusalem for something very special. They didn’t know exactly what it would be, but they trusted Him. So, they stayed together, praying and waiting.”





Maria tilted her head. “Did something happen while they waited?”

Her dad nodded. “Oh yes. One day, while they were all in one place, something amazing happened. They heard a loud noise—like a giant wind whooshing through the whole house! And then, like glowing fireflies, small flames floated over each person’s head.”

Her eyes widened. “Fire? Did it burn them?”

He chuckled gently. “Nope, not at all. It didn’t hurt anyone. The fire was God’s special sign that the Holy Spirit had come.”

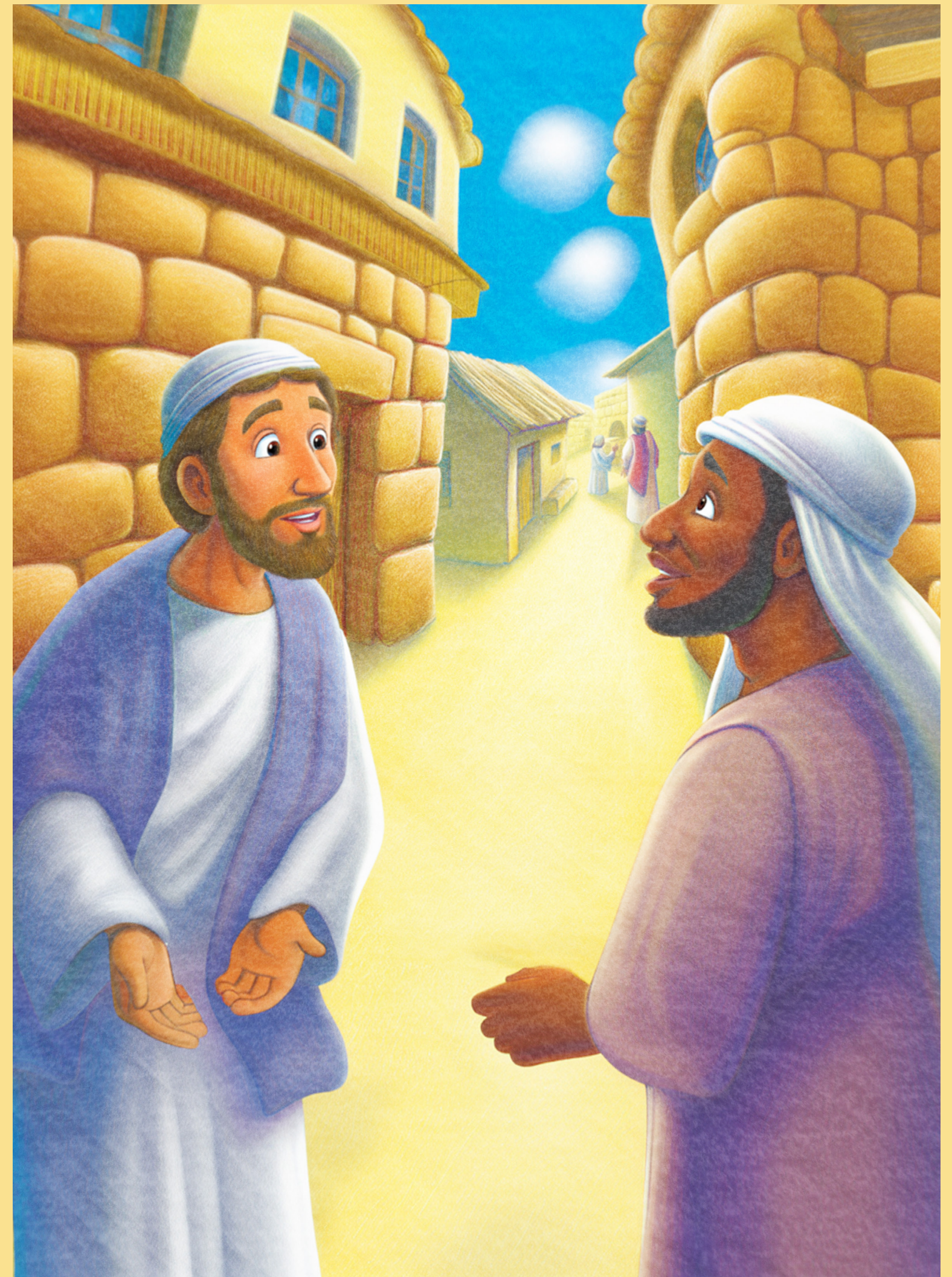
Maria blinked. “The Holy Spirit? Who’s that?”



“The Holy Spirit is God’s Helper,” her dad explained. “And He gave Jesus’ friends a special gift—they could suddenly speak in all sorts of languages!”

Maria looked confused. “Why would they need to do that?”

“Well,” her dad continued, “Jerusalem was filled with visitors from many different countries. Everyone spoke different languages and usually couldn’t understand each other. But now, with the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ friends could talk to everyone and tell them the good news about God’s love.”



Her mouth dropped open slightly. “God helped them talk so everybody could hear the story?”

“Exactly. It was a way to bring all those people together—to help them feel seen, heard, and included. That’s how God began to build His community, called the family of God.”

Maria gave her doll a big squeeze. “So it was like God was saying, ‘You’re all invited!’”

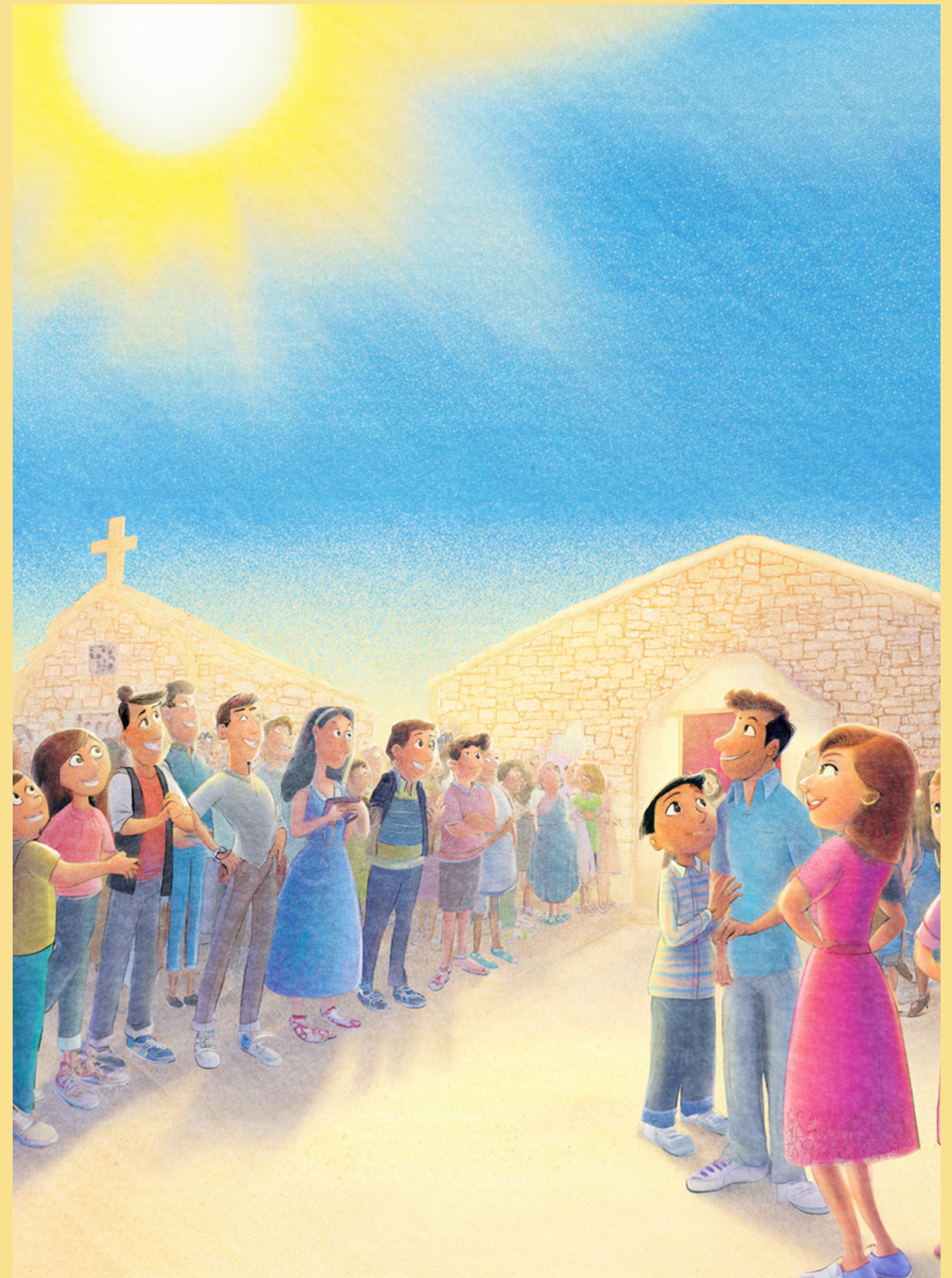




“That’s right!” her dad said, his eyes twinkling. “That day, thousands of people decided to follow Jesus. They began to share their food, help those in need, pray together, and learn more about God. They became a new kind of family—one full of love and unity.”

Maria was quiet for a moment. Then she asked, “So...church isn’t just a building, is it?”

Her dad smiled and shook his head. “Nope. Church is the people—just like you and me and anyone who follows Jesus. And the Holy Spirit helps us love each other and share that love with the world. That’s how we keep building God’s community.”





Maria's face lit up. "Can I invite some friends over for a snack picnic? We can share like how everyone shared in the Bible story!"

Her dad laughed warmly. "That's a wonderful idea. Sharing and loving your friends is exactly what Pentecost is all about."



As this story came across my desk, I was deeply moved by its message of unity, compassion, and hope. I trust it inspires each of you in the World Missions Community, just as it has inspired me, to continue our Journey to Breathe Life, Bring Hope, and Build Community for the Last, the Least, and the Lost. LaQuita and I wish you a joyful Pentecost—may you celebrate with wonder, knowing that His Spirit has come and the Church is alive!

-Dr. M. Thomas Propes