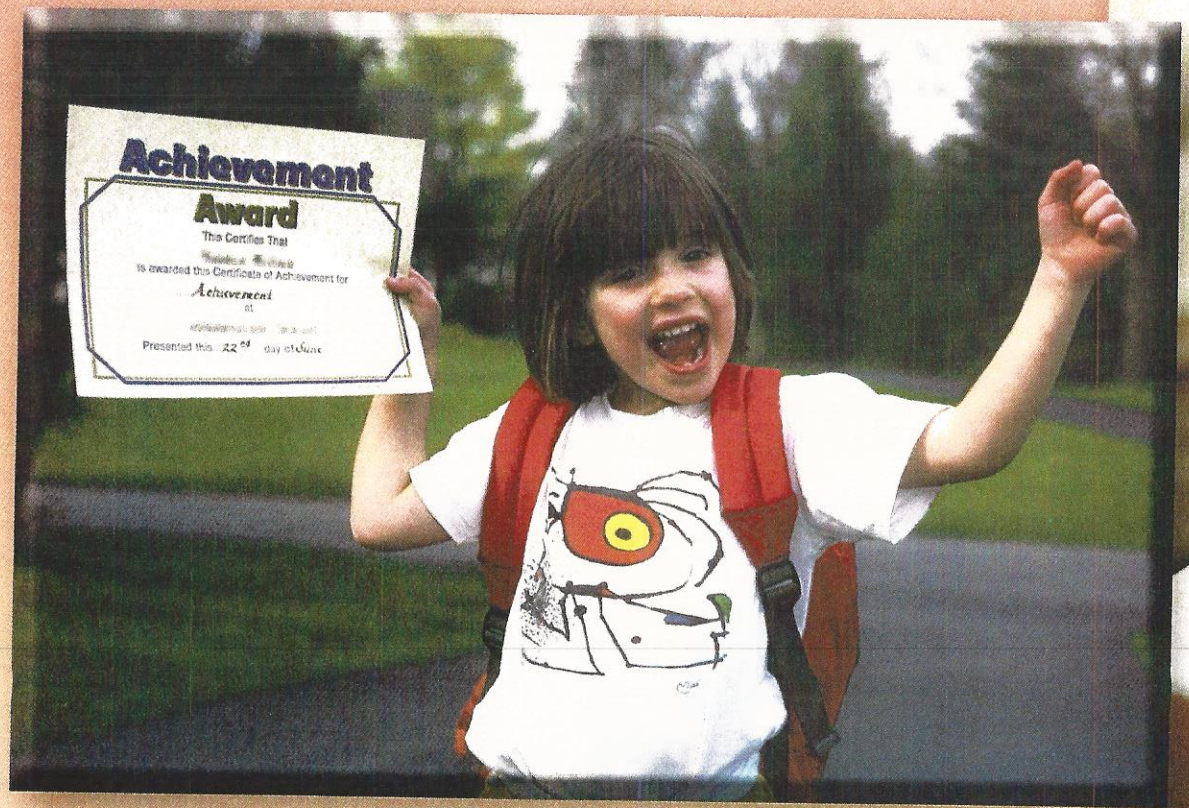
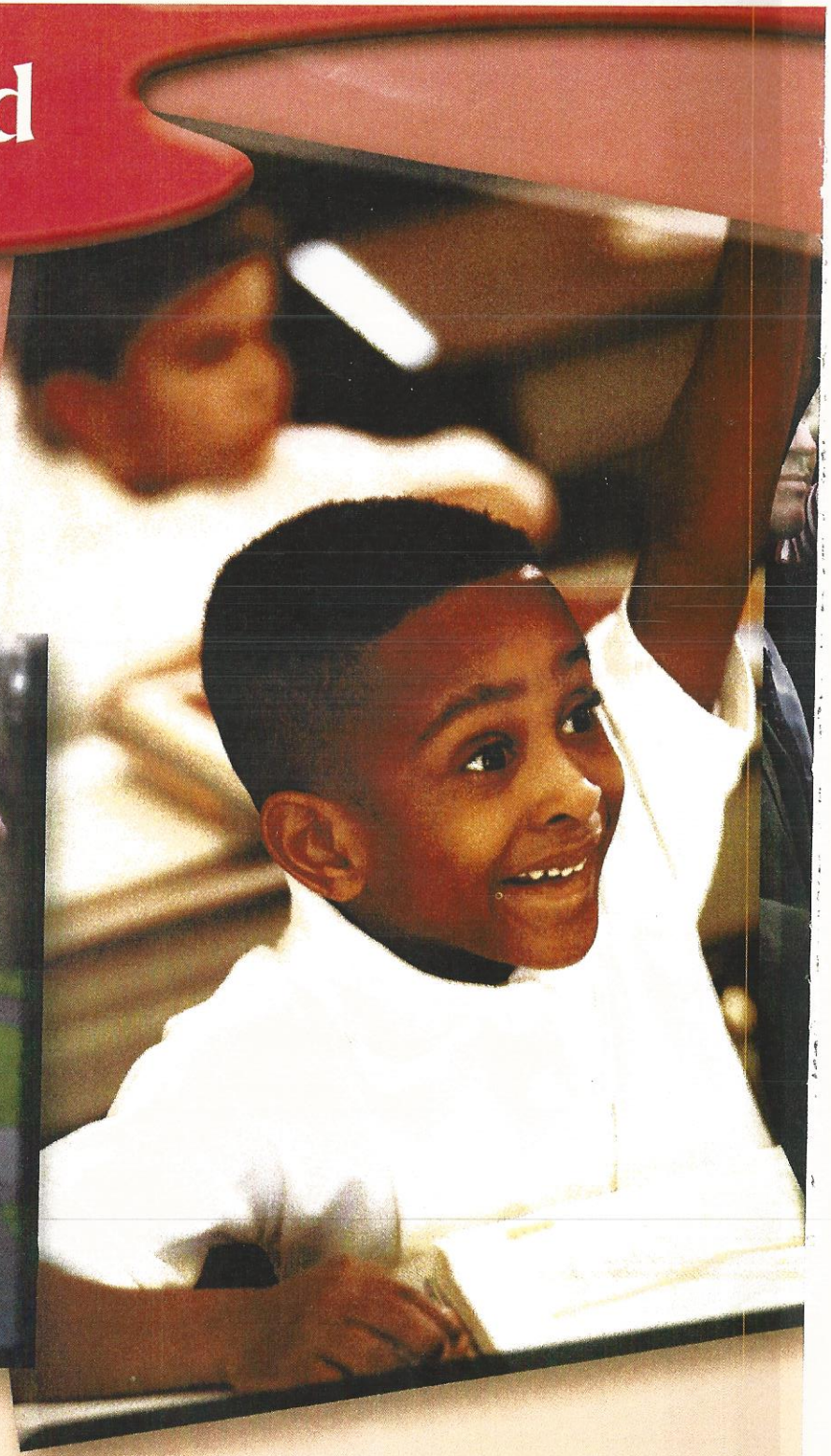
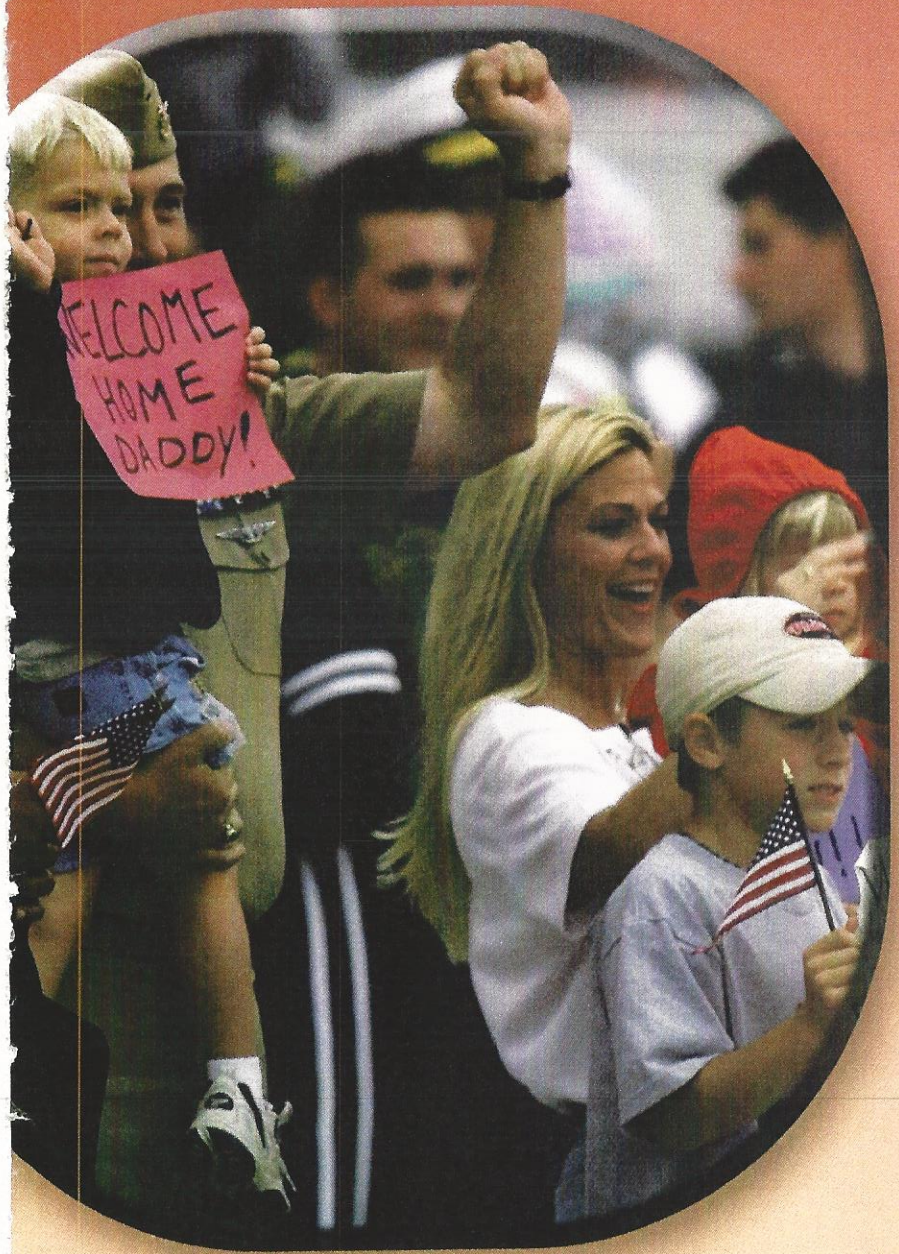
CHAPTER 1

We Belong to God

Loving God,
you call us each
by our name.







Sharing Together

In the opening prayer you were called by name and blessed with water. What was it like for you?

When are some important times you are called by name?

We are called by the name Christian because we belong to Christ. When we make the sign of the cross, we are telling others we are Christians. Give one example of a time when we make the sign of the cross.

God Loves Us

Jesus told us over and over again that we belong to God. He taught that God knows and calls us by name. Read this story to discover what it means to belong to God.

A shepherd had one hundred sheep. One day the shepherd discovered that one of his sheep was missing. Immediately the shepherd went looking for the one lost sheep.

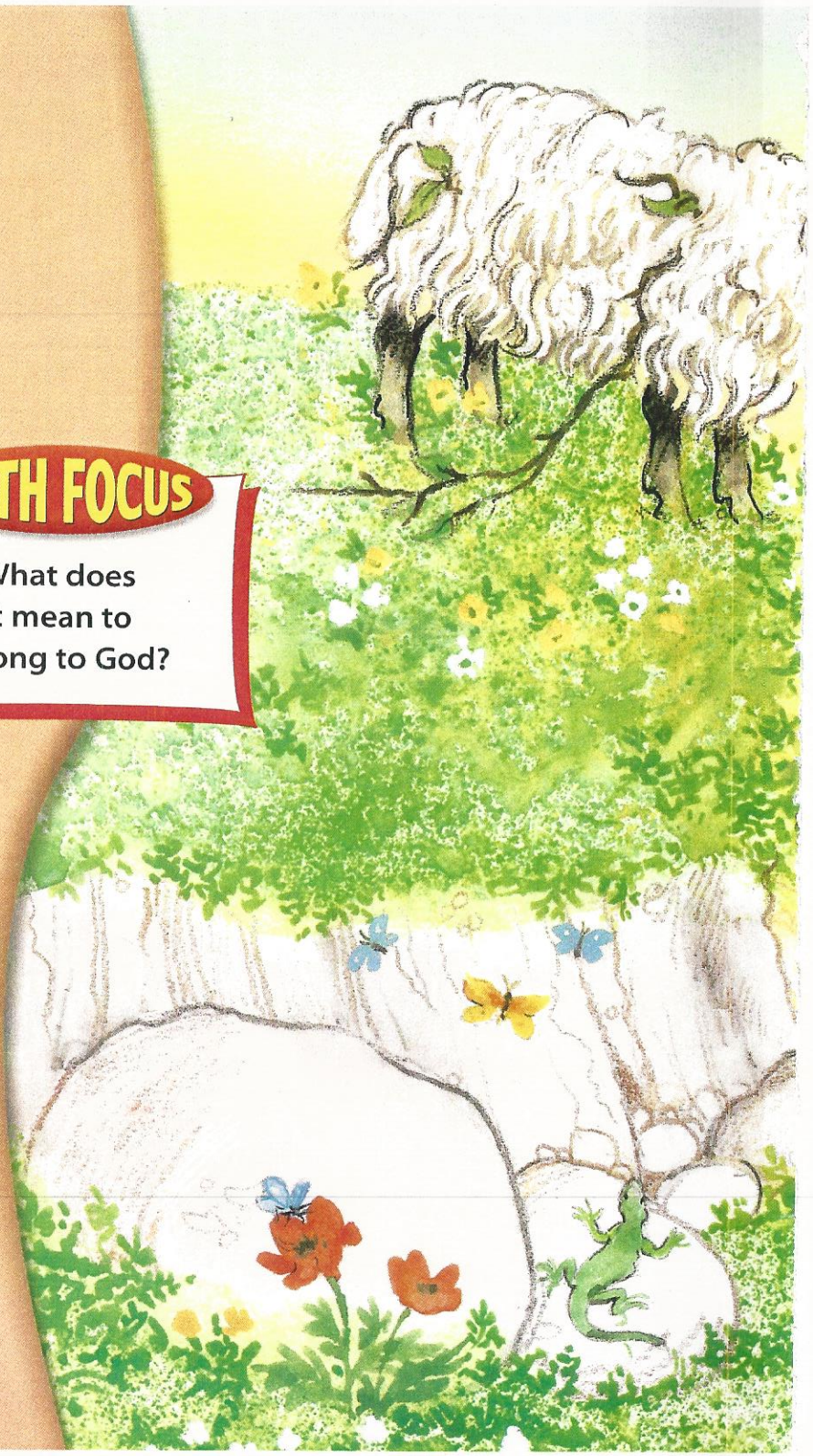
Soon the shepherd found his lost sheep. The shepherd's heart was filled with joy. He picked up the sheep, put it on his shoulders, and carried it back to the other sheep.

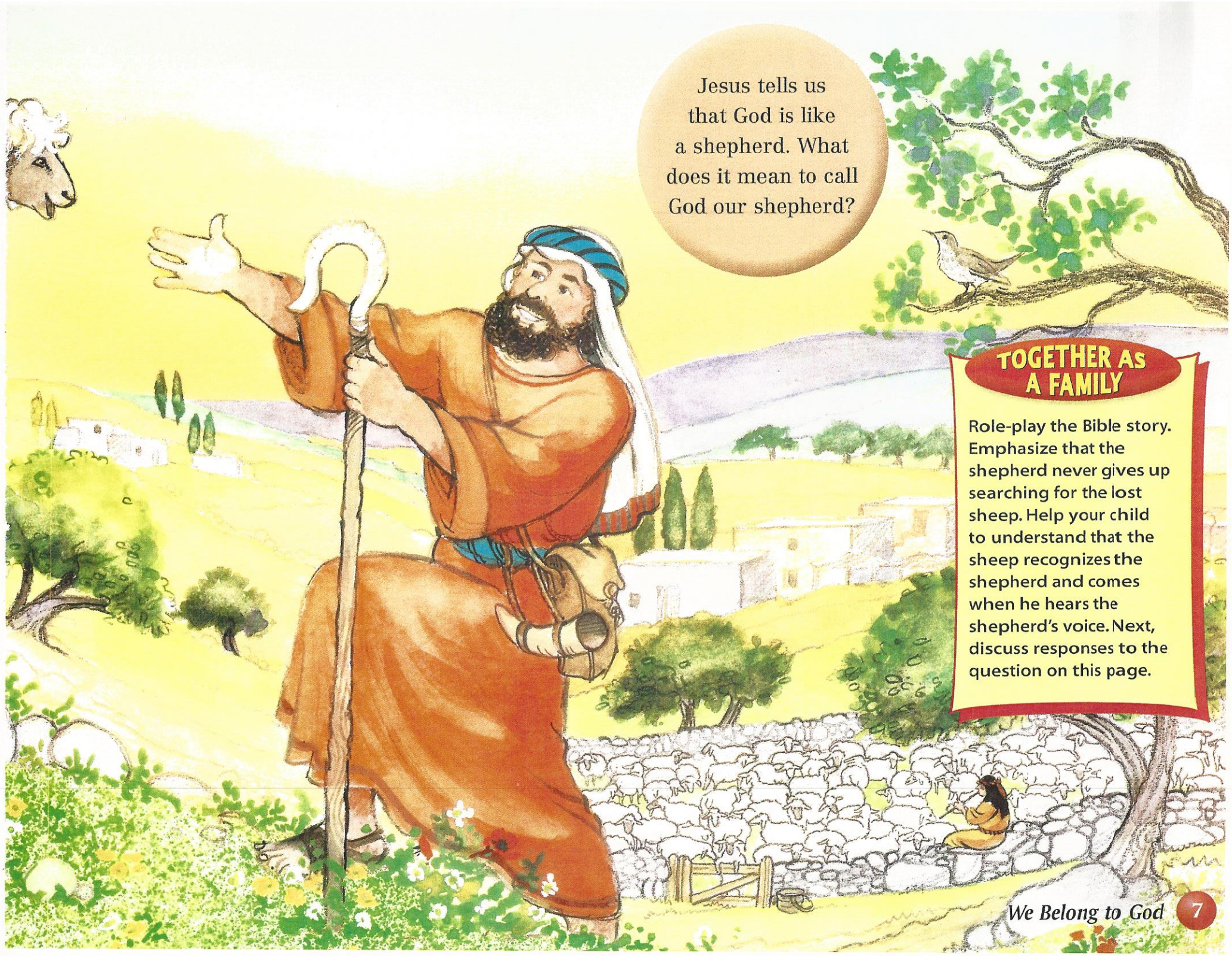
The shepherd was very happy. He shouted to his friends and neighbors, "I have found my lost sheep!"

BASED ON LUKE 15:4–6

FAITH FOCUS

What does it mean to belong to God?





TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Role-play the Bible story. Emphasize that the shepherd never gives up searching for the lost sheep. Help your child to understand that the sheep recognizes the shepherd and comes when he hears the shepherd's voice. Next, discuss responses to the question on this page.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

FAITH FOCUS

What do we celebrate at Baptism?

WHAT WE SEE AND HEAR

During the celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, the priest asks God's blessing on us. He does this by making the sign of the cross and praying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This reminds us that there are three Persons in one God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

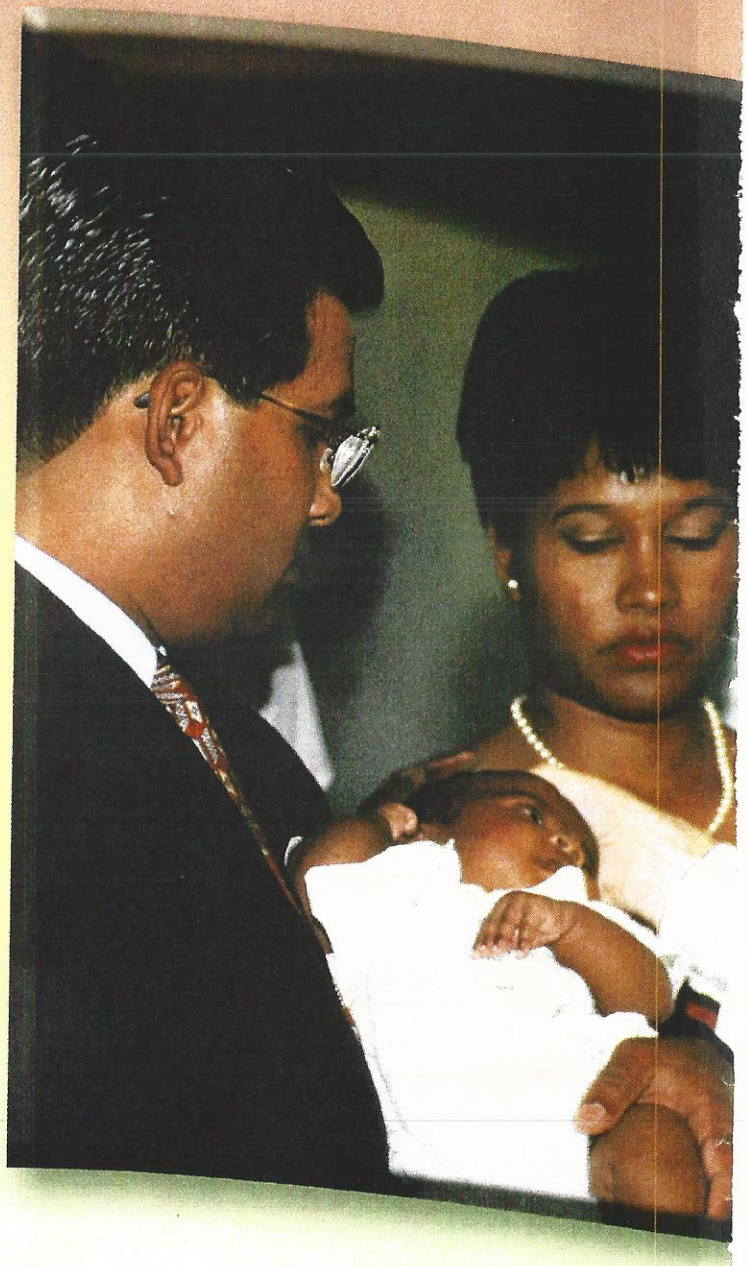
The Bible story about the shepherd and the lost sheep tells us how much God loves us. Jesus, the Son of God, told another story about a shepherd. It is the story about a good shepherd.

A good shepherd knows each of his sheep by name. When a good shepherd calls one of his sheep by name, the sheep comes to him. A good shepherd cares so much about his sheep that he will give his life to protect his sheep. Jesus told the people that he is a good shepherd. He said,

"I am the good shepherd.
I will give my life for my sheep."

BASED ON JOHN 10:14

Jesus the Good Shepherd gave his life for us. He died on the cross and was raised from the dead to save us from our sins. Jesus' death and resurrection show us how much God loves us.



At the beginning of the celebration of Baptism, the priest or deacon calls us by name and says,

> *(Name),* the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of the cross.

He traces a cross on our forehead. Then he invites our parents and godparents to do the same.

The Church celebrates Baptism because Jesus told his followers to baptize people. Baptism joins us to Jesus. We share new life in Christ. We share in Jesus' death and resurrection.

God shares his life with us. We become adopted children of God and members of our church family. Original sin and all other sins are forgiven. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are given the promise of eternal life.

What happens at Baptism?

TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Share the story of your child's baptism with your son or daughter. Then discuss responses to the question on this page.

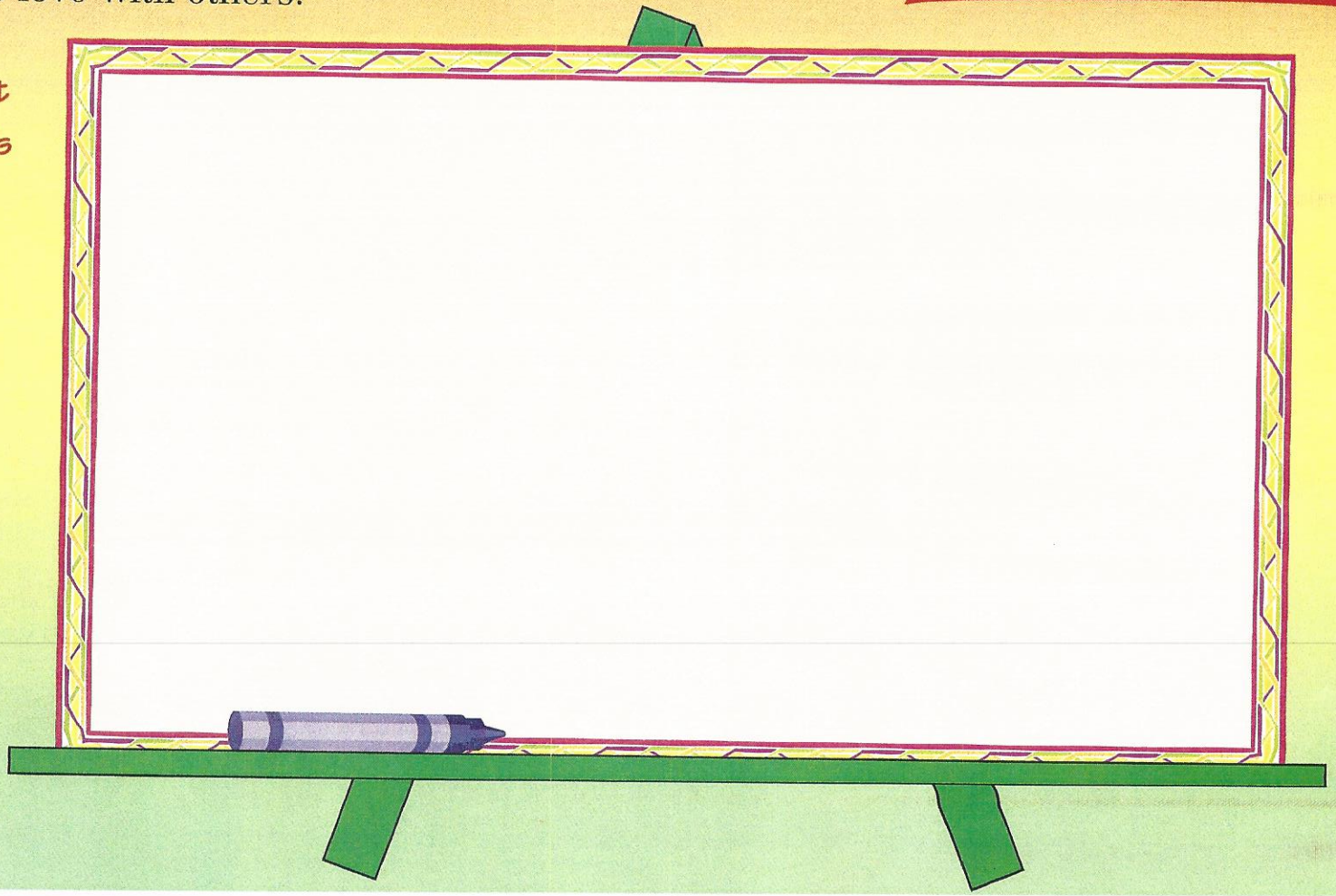
What Difference Does This Make in My Life?

Jesus taught us that we belong to God. God knows and loves each of us. At Baptism God shares his life and love with us. We become adopted children of God. The Holy Spirit helps us to share God's love with others.

MY FAITH CHOICE

Talk with someone about one thing you will do this week to show God's love for people.

Draw or write about how you show God's love for people.



TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Remembering Together

In this chapter your child learned that we belong to God in a special way. God knows and loves each of us. We become adopted children of God at Baptism. This is a good time for you to talk with your child about Baptism. Include responses to these or similar questions in the discussion:

- Where were you or your child baptized?
- Who baptized you?
- Who are your godparents?
- Who else was at your Baptisms?
- Why were these special days?

Sharing Together

Choose one of the following activities to do together or design a similar activity of your own:

- Look at pictures in your family's photo albums that show each family member's Baptism. Share stories about each Baptism. Tell your child why the name you gave him or her is special and a sign of your love.
- In the Bible story the shepherd looked for the one lost sheep. Think of someone who may be lonely. Name something your family can do for that person.

Visit the RCL Benziger sacraments web site by following the link titled "Sacraments" at www.FaithFirst.com.

Praying Together

Pray this or a similar prayer at family meals or at other family prayer times this week:

God, our Father,
we thank you for loving us
and claiming us as your own.
Send the Holy Spirit
to help us live as your children.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Getting Ready Together

We begin the celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation by praying the Sign of the Cross. This is a good time to review with your child the meaning of the Sign of the Cross. The cross is a sign of God's mercy and love for us. At Baptism we are marked with the sign of a cross and claimed for Christ. When we pray the Sign of the Cross and bless ourselves, praying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen," we remember our Baptism. We remember that we are children of God and that we belong to Christ.