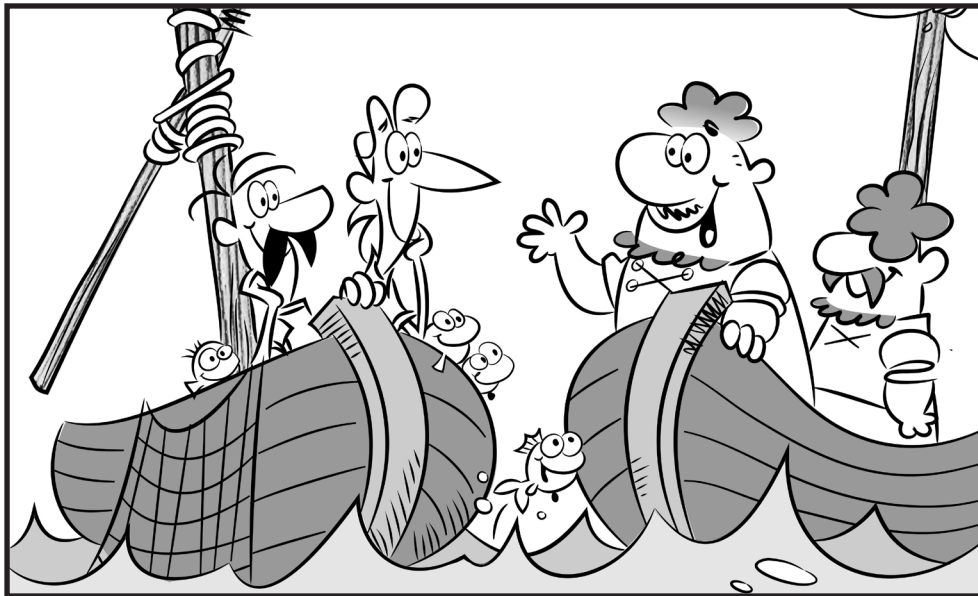


# Why Did the Disciples Follow Jesus?

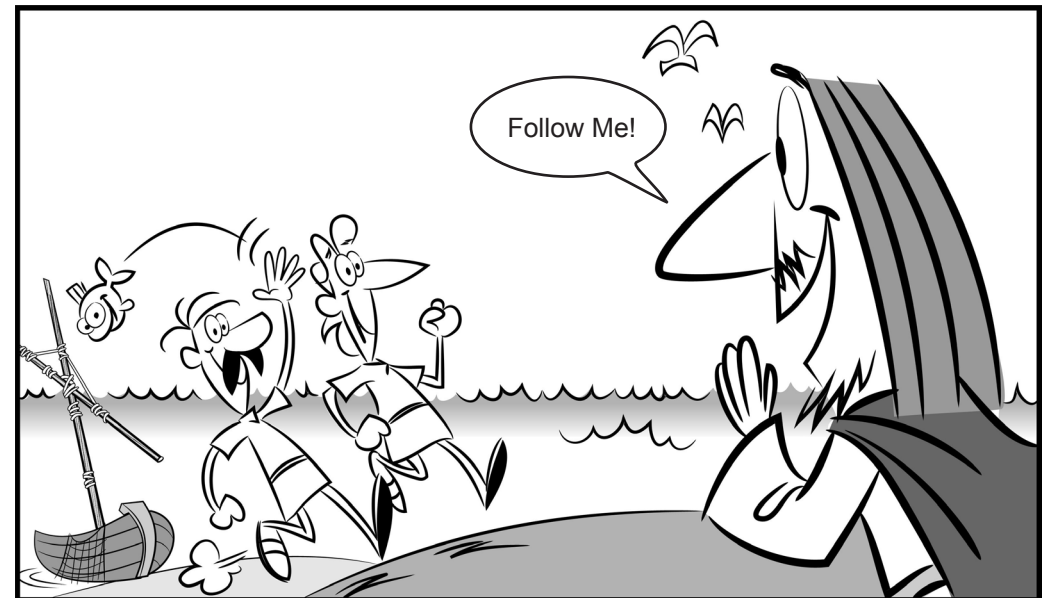
Before meeting Jesus, Andrew was one of John the Baptist's disciples. After John baptized Jesus and said that He was the Lamb of God, Andrew decided to find out more about Jesus, and went to visit Him. Andrew then took his brother Peter to hear Jesus teach. After listening to Jesus, they both decided to follow and learn from Him. (Read John 1:29-42.)



Peter and Andrew were excited about this man who seemed to be much more than just a great teacher or prophet.

The Old Testament Scriptures taught that the Messiah would come, so they were looking forward to and waiting for the Messiah. Because John the Baptist had called Jesus the Lamb of God, they were pretty sure that Jesus was that Messiah.

When Jesus called John and James, they also were ready and willing to drop what they were doing and follow Him!





<sup>1</sup> John 21:25

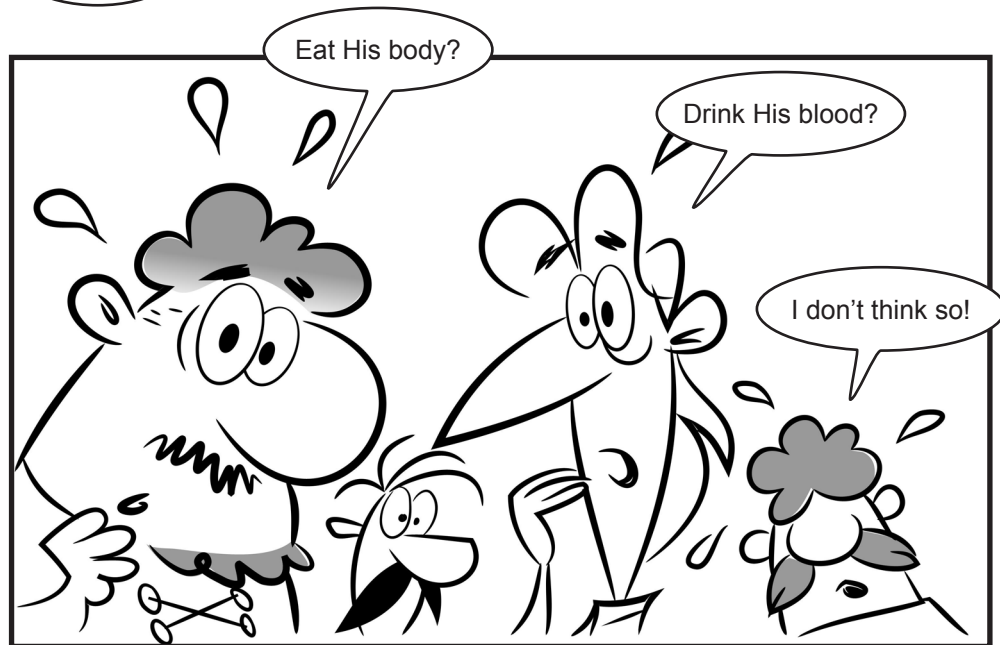
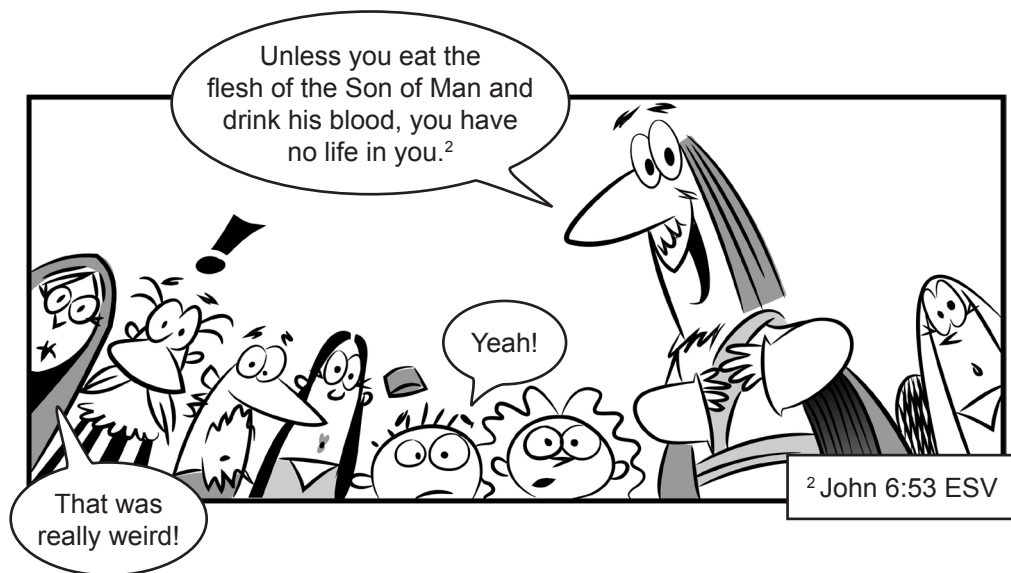
Jesus continued to gather His disciples and soon had 12. Can you name them?

In the Gospels, you can read about the most important things that Jesus did and taught His disciples. But as John explained, Jesus did and taught them so very much that they weren't able to write all of it down.



As Jesus went about performing miracles, such as healing people, and teaching them from the Old Testament, He began to become popular with the people. People liked Jesus.

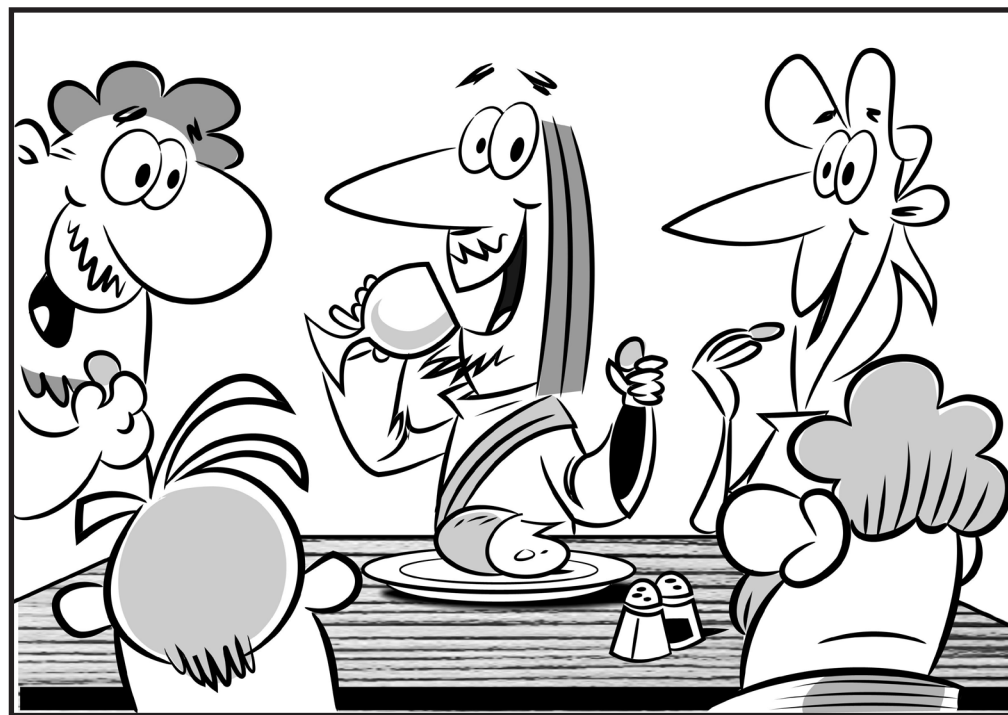
But then He gave the "flesh and blood" talk. (Read John 6:35-71.)  
That's when Jesus said...



Everyone was shocked at those words—including His disciples! They wondered if Jesus meant they were supposed to eat Him.

Jesus wasn't as popular after that. Many of His friends and followers left Him and didn't want to listen to Him anymore.

Later Jesus' disciples understood what He had meant when He said that.



Jesus was referring to how He would give His life for us, and also to how He was God's Word. He brought this out again at the Last Supper He shared with His disciples. He taught them to eat the bread as a symbol of His body that was broken for us, and to drink the wine that symbolized His blood shed for our sins.





After Jesus saw that many of His followers had left Him, He turned to His 12 disciples and asked...

Will you also leave Me?

Peter piped up in answer to His question and said...

Lord, who else would we follow? Only You have the words of eternal life (John 6:68).<sup>3</sup>

I agree with you, Peter!

<sup>3</sup> John 6:68

Each of Jesus' followers had to decide if they wanted to keep following Jesus, whether He was popular or not, or whether they understood everything He said or not.

The disciples agreed with Peter and continued to follow Jesus. While others had the written Word that was in the Old Testament, only Jesus had the new and living Word. Only He could speak the words that would encourage them to want to do and be everything that God wanted them to do and be.

Later, when Jesus was killed because some people didn't like what He taught, it was a shock to His disciples. Up to this point, they had a misunderstanding about what Jesus, the Messiah, was going to do.

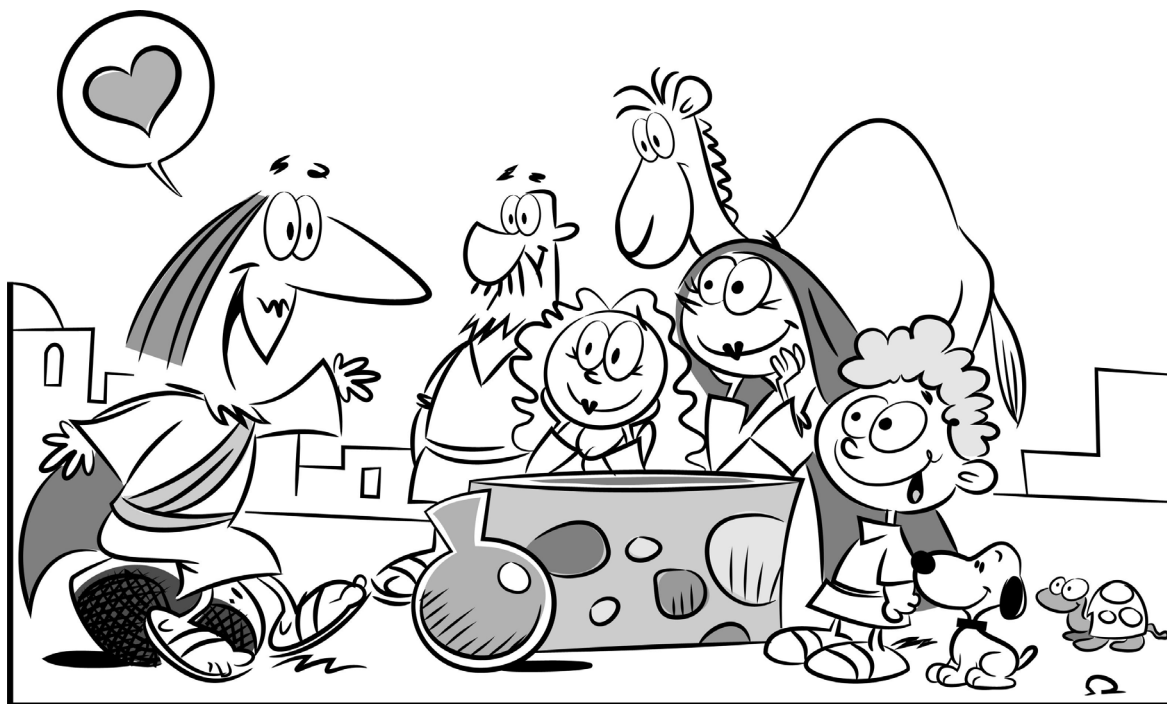
During that time, Judaea was ruled by the Roman government. The Romans did not believe in God, and they made the people of Judaea obey their Roman rules and pay taxes to their government. The disciples thought that Jesus would help them rebel against the Romans and stop them from ruling over their country, and then Jesus would be their physical king and leader.

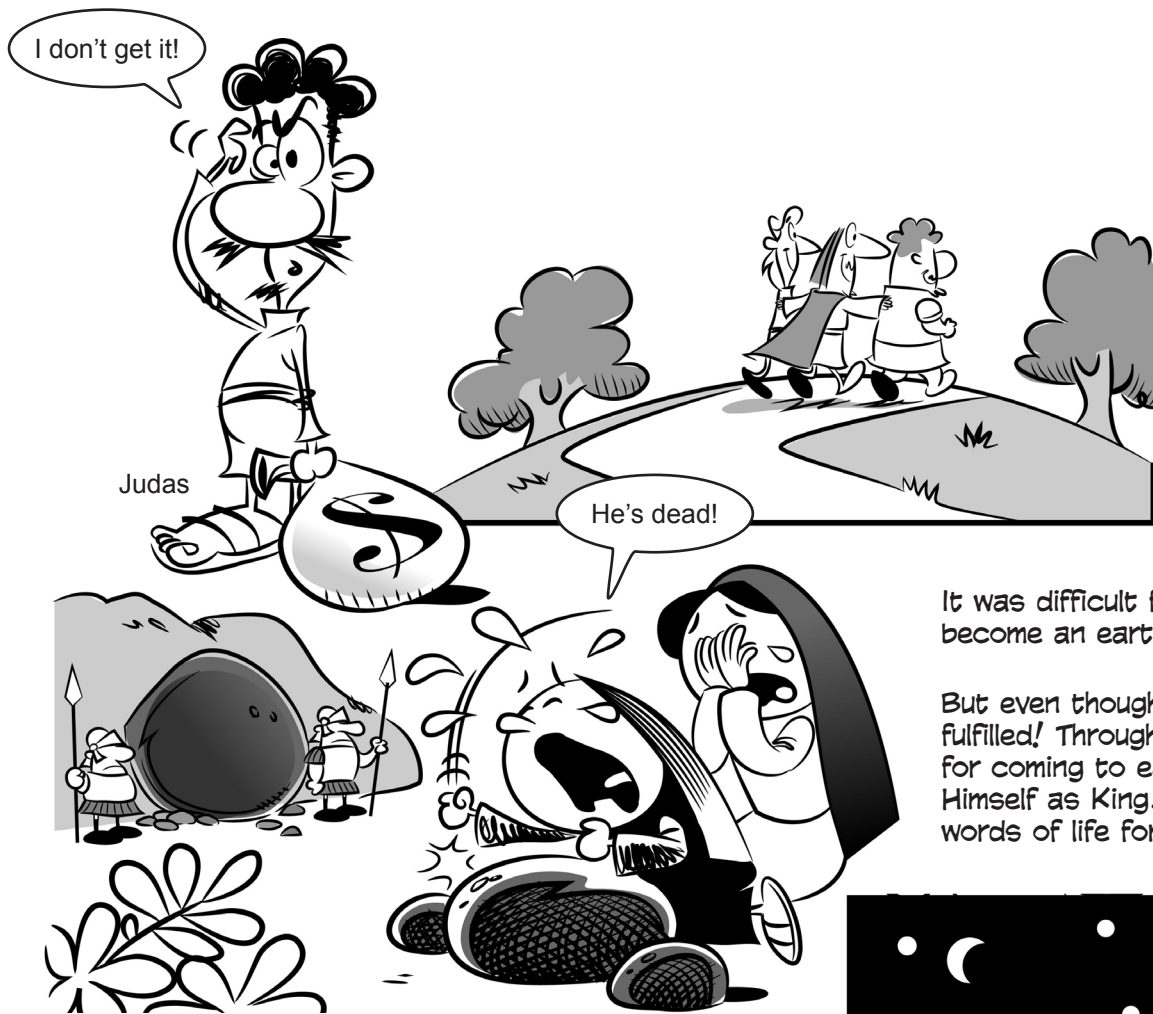


But they were wrong!

Jesus had no interest in political power and ruling their country in place of the Roman leadership. His interest was in changing people's hearts with God's love!

Jesus wanted to be their Heavenly King, the King of their hearts, and He said, "My kingdom is not of this world!"





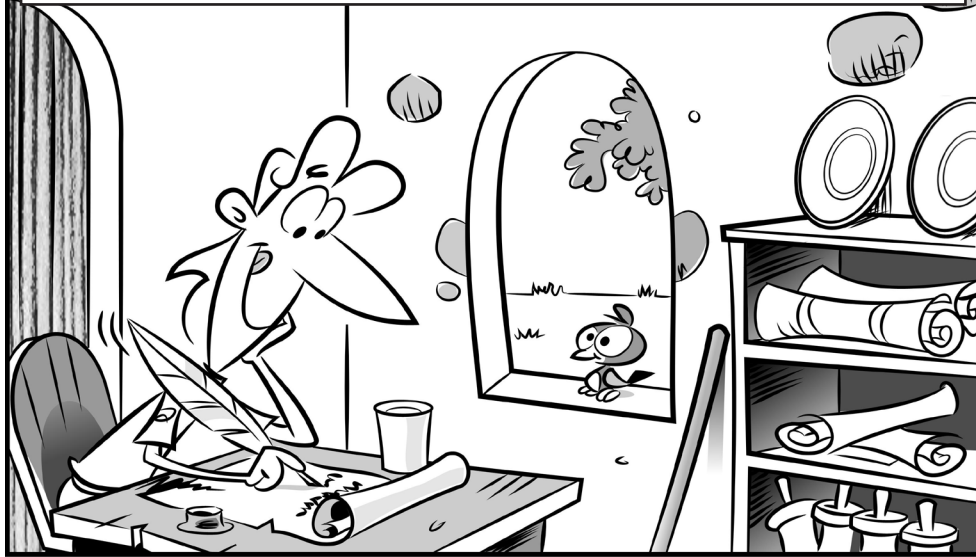
It was difficult for the disciples to get the point that Jesus wasn't going to become an earthly king. Therefore, Jesus' death was a big surprise.

But even though it looked to people like Jesus' mission had failed—it was actually fulfilled! Through His life, death, and resurrection, His whole purpose and meaning for coming to earth was fulfilled. Jesus had conquered death and established Himself as King. And now through Him we have eternal life in His kingdom and His words of life forever!





John began his writing of the Gospel of John with the statement, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). He went on to write, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).



I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> John 13:15 NKJV

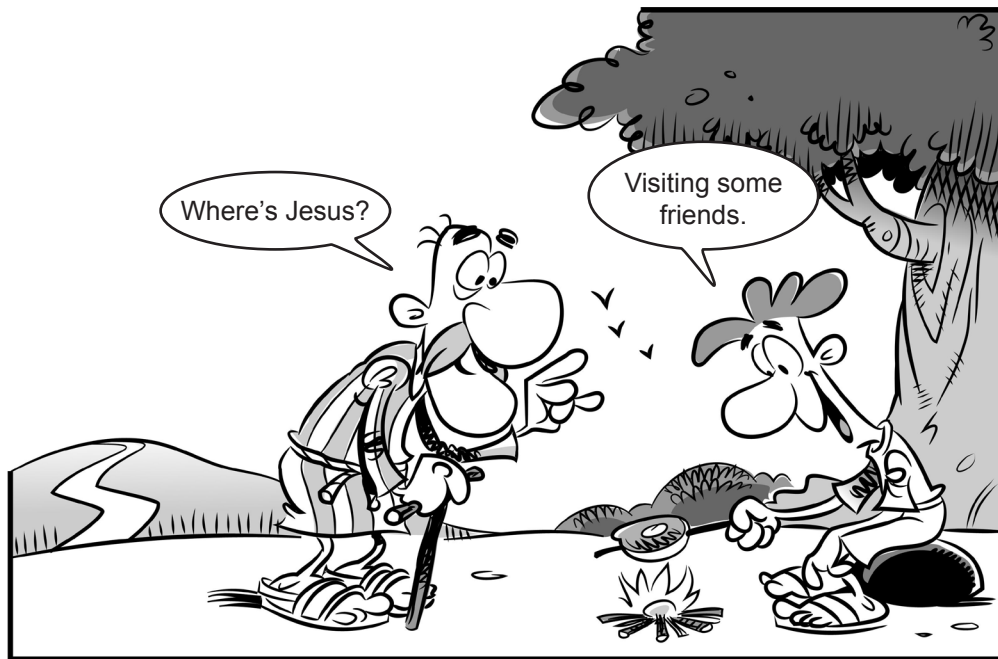
While Jesus was on earth, the disciples literally lived with the Word. Whatever Jesus did showed them an example of what was written in the Word, and whenever He spoke, He spoke the truth—the Word.



Then after Jesus died and sent the Holy Spirit to His followers, they became so full of His Spirit that nothing could stop them from teaching others about Jesus! You can read about some of what they did in the book of Acts.

Sometimes they were even beaten or put in prison, but they kept teaching people about Jesus and what He taught them. And the truth of His words marched on, even to the far corners of the world, and has changed many millions of lives throughout history!

Today, Jesus is closer to us in the spirit than He was to the early disciples during the time when He lived with them, before His death and resurrection. When He was with the disciples in His physical body, He couldn't be with each one of them every single second of the day. There were times when He went to the mountain to be alone with His Father and times when He visited friends and family. He also had times when He talked to only one person and times when He needed to rest and eat.



But after Jesus had risen from the dead and returned to His Father, He was once again omnipresent. That means that Jesus can be anywhere and everywhere at the same time. So even if Jesus is talking to His Father or to someone else, He is also with you.





Not only do we have more of Jesus with us than the disciples had when He was on earth, but we also have His written Word in the Bible, and there are many enjoyable children's publications that teach the Bible stories.

Jesus is the Word and Jesus is love. You can know and follow Jesus today by reading His Word, praying, and being an example of His loving, caring ways.

