

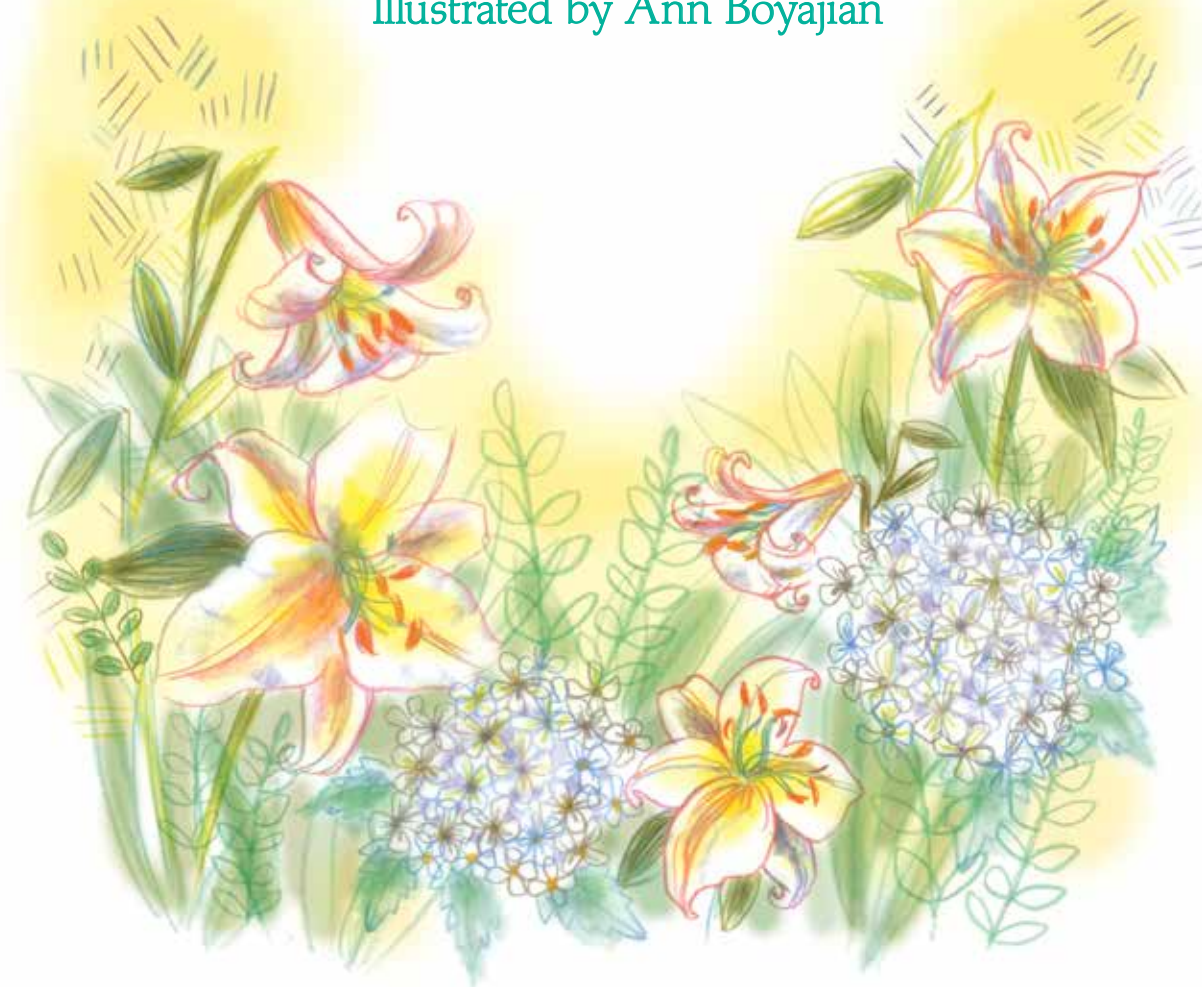


Make Room

A CHILD'S GUIDE TO LENT AND EASTER

Laura Alary

Illustrated by Ann Boyajian



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For Iain, Maggie and Miriam, my companions on the journey
—L.A.

For Winona and Delila, my muses and willing models
—A.B.



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Make Room: A Child's Guide to Lent and Easter

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Page 12: Mark 4:30–32; Matthew 13:31–32; Luke 13:18–19; Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20–21; Luke 17:21

Page 14: Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4

Page 21: For the image of the banquet see Luke 13:29, 14:13, 15–23. For Jesus and the children see Mark 10:13–16; Matthew 19:13–15; Luke 18:15–17

Page 27: John 13:34–35

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This is the Season of Lent.
The church is dressed in purple.





The world outside has its own seasons and its own colors.
These days we are in the gray time between winter and spring.
Some mornings the puddles are frozen hard
and the bare branches of trees scrape a snow-white sky.
Other days the air is warmer, ice is melting,
and the air smells faintly of damp earth and rotting leaves.
Under the ground seeds and bulbs are sleeping,
dreaming in shades of green.
We are all waiting for spring.

In church we are waiting too, waiting for Easter.
While we wait, we get ready.





Making Time

Long ago, Jesus went out alone into the desert to get ready.
Deep inside he felt that God had important work for him to do.
But he needed help to see clearly the way ahead.
For forty days and forty nights he was in the desert by himself,

Wondering
Talking with God
Listening
Making choices.



I wonder why Jesus went into the desert?
Maybe it was quiet and still.
Maybe Jesus thought he could hear God better there.
Maybe he needed to make time to listen
so he would know which way to go.



During Lent we make time to be with God.
Every day we talk with God in different ways.
Sometimes we pray with words.
Sometimes we sing or listen to music.
Sometimes we get out paints and crayons and create many-colored prayers.
Colors are like a different language we can all speak
Even when we have no words.
God understands.



At other times we make silence.
We turn off the television and the music
and stop talking for a while.
Then we practice listening.
Sometimes we read stories from the Bible
and we wonder about what God might be telling us.
Sometimes we just sit and rest in the quiet.
During Lent we pay attention to how we live.
We think about the choices we make every day.
We ask hard questions:

Does what we say and do make the world a better place?
Or not?
Does how we live make God happy?
Or sad?
Is there anything we need to change?

Lent lasts for forty days and forty nights,
plus six Sundays.
We count the days by lighting purple candles,
one for each week.
Forty days is a long time.
But it takes time to get ready.





Making Space

After Jesus came back from the desert
He left everything behind.

Trusting God to give him what he needed,
he began to travel from place to place
telling everyone who would listen
about God and the Kingdom of God.

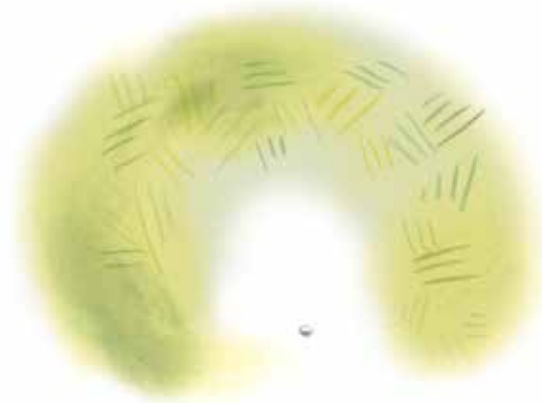
The Kingdom of God is the world
the way God imagined it in the very beginning,
the way God wants it to be.

Many people came to hear Jesus.

They were full of questions:

What is the Kingdom of God? Where is it? How do we get there?





Jesus told them:

*The Kingdom of God is like a tiny mustard seed
that grows into a huge plant,
so big and strong that birds can build nests in it.*

*The Kingdom of God is like a pinch of yeast
stirred into a big mixing bowl of flour.
It is only a speck, but it makes a big batch of dough rise.*

The Kingdom of God is inside you.
But it needs time and space to grow.



This is how to make space:
If you have done wrong,
Tell God you are sorry.
Sweep your heart clean and start fresh.



Be kind to all people,
not just the ones who like you.
Open your heart wide.

If someone hurts you
Ask God to help you forgive.
Do not store up angry thoughts.
Let them go.

Make space inside for better things.
Share so that everyone has enough.
If you have two coats
Give one to someone who has none.
Why clutter up your life with more than you can use?
Make space for what really matters.

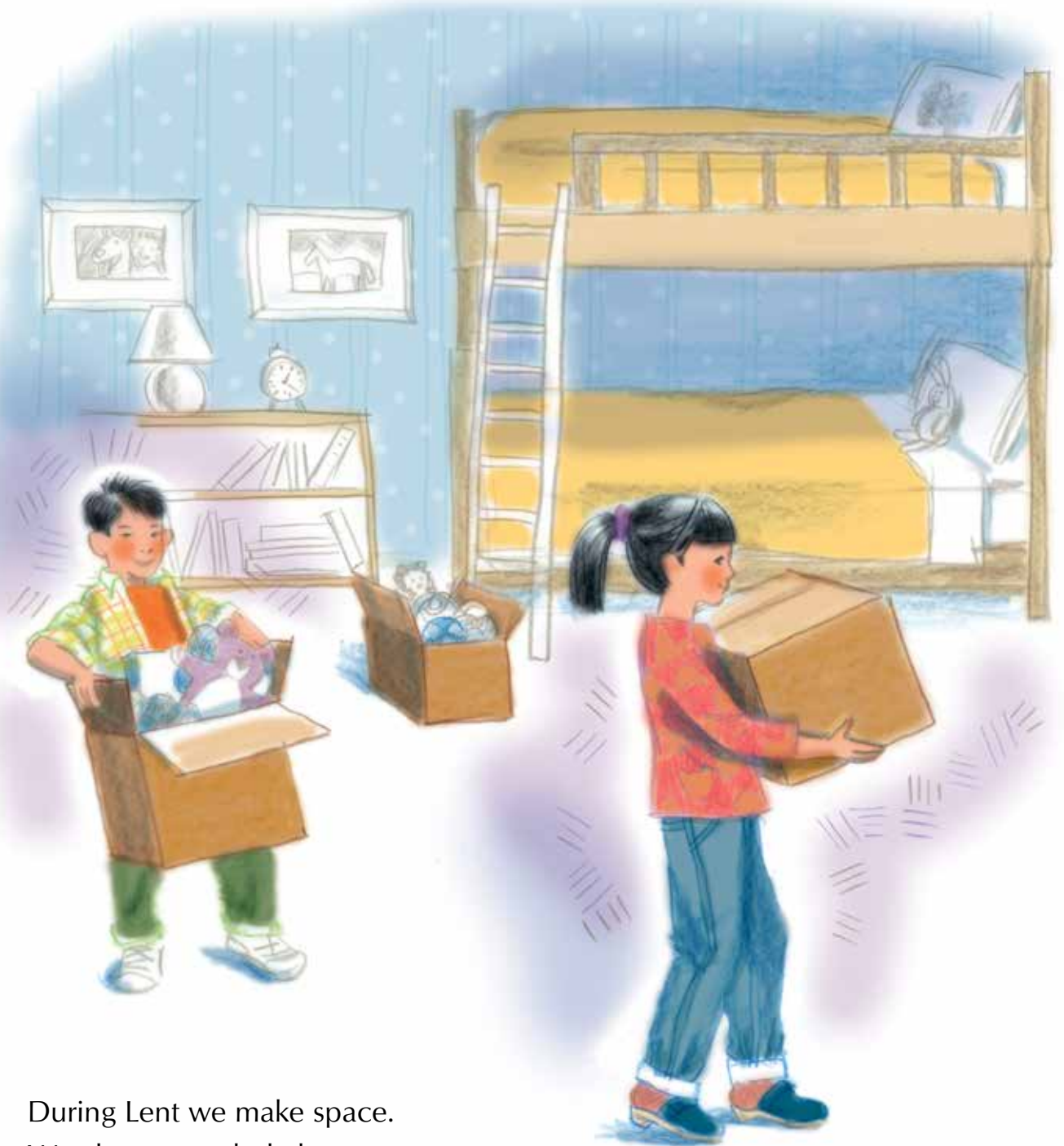




One day when his friends wanted to learn to talk with God
Jesus taught them to pray this way:

*Our Father who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.*

When we pray for the Kingdom of God to come
we are telling God what we hope for.
We hope that people everywhere will listen for God,
live the way God wants,
and make space for what really matters.
Imagine.



During Lent we make space.
We clean our whole house.
We sort our clothes and toys and books
and give away what we do not use.
It is hard at first.
I like my things and I want to keep all of them.
But someone else might need them more than I do.
Besides, I like having space in my room.
It makes me feel lighter.

During Lent we think about the Kingdom of God.
We plant seeds and wait for them to sprout.
We mix yeast into water and flour and watch the dough rise.
When the dough has risen,
we roll and twist it to make pretzels.
They look like little arms crossed in prayer.





At supper we cross our arms this way
And pray that the Kingdom of God will come.
I wonder how this will happen?
Maybe the Kingdom of God starts very small
but grows bigger and bigger
so slowly we hardly notice.
Maybe the Kingdom of God happens right around us.
Maybe it is happening now.

During Lent we make our lives more simple.
We eat plain meals, sometimes just bread and soup.
Everyone helps with the cooking.
We even give up buying some of our favorite treats and snacks.
Instead we put the money in a jar and save it.
When Lent is over we will buy groceries for the food bank.
Making do with less means that someone else can have enough.
That seems fair.

