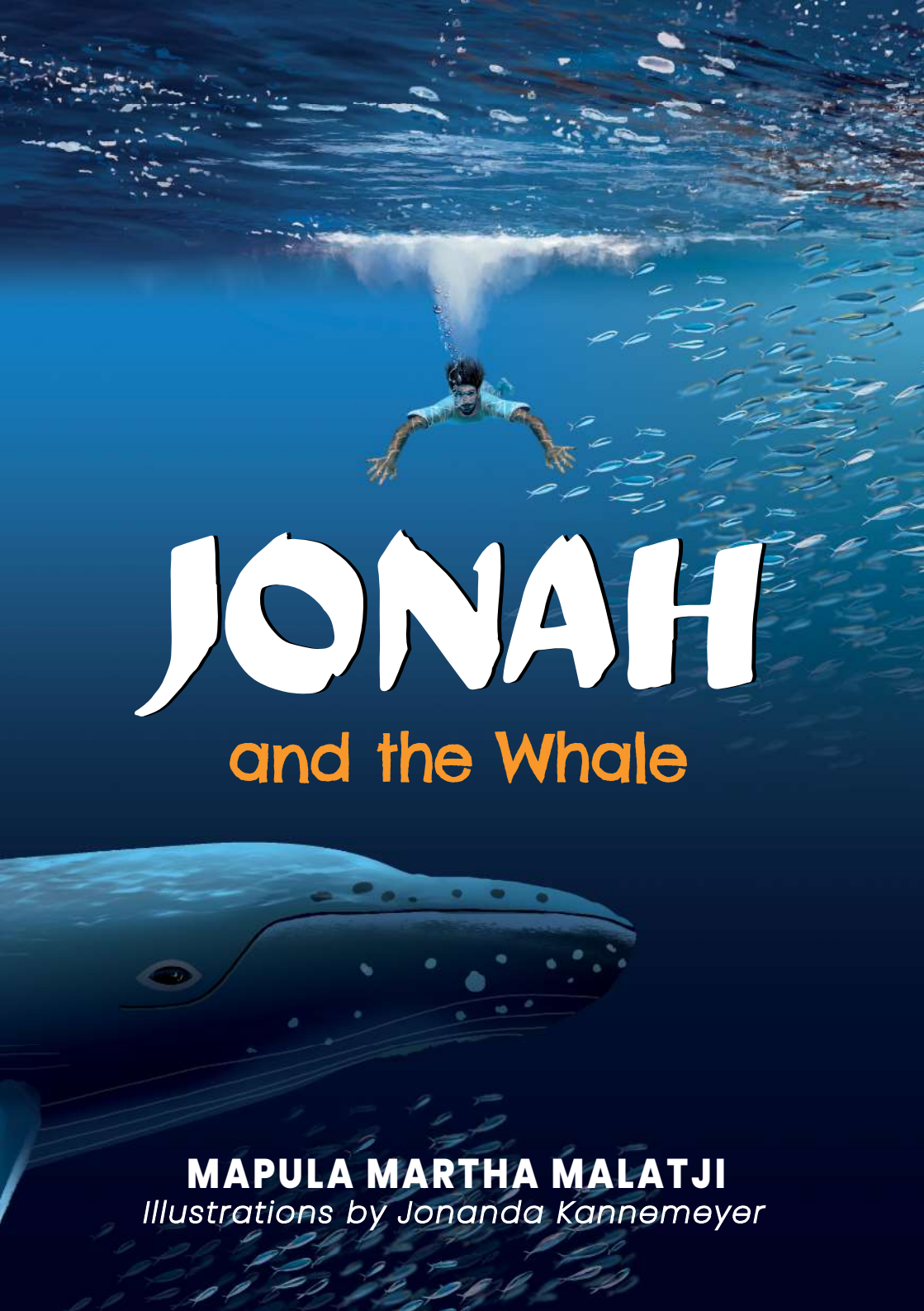
JONAH
and the Whale
MAPULA MARTHA MALATJI
Illustrations by Jonanda Kannemeyer

JONAH AND THE WHALE

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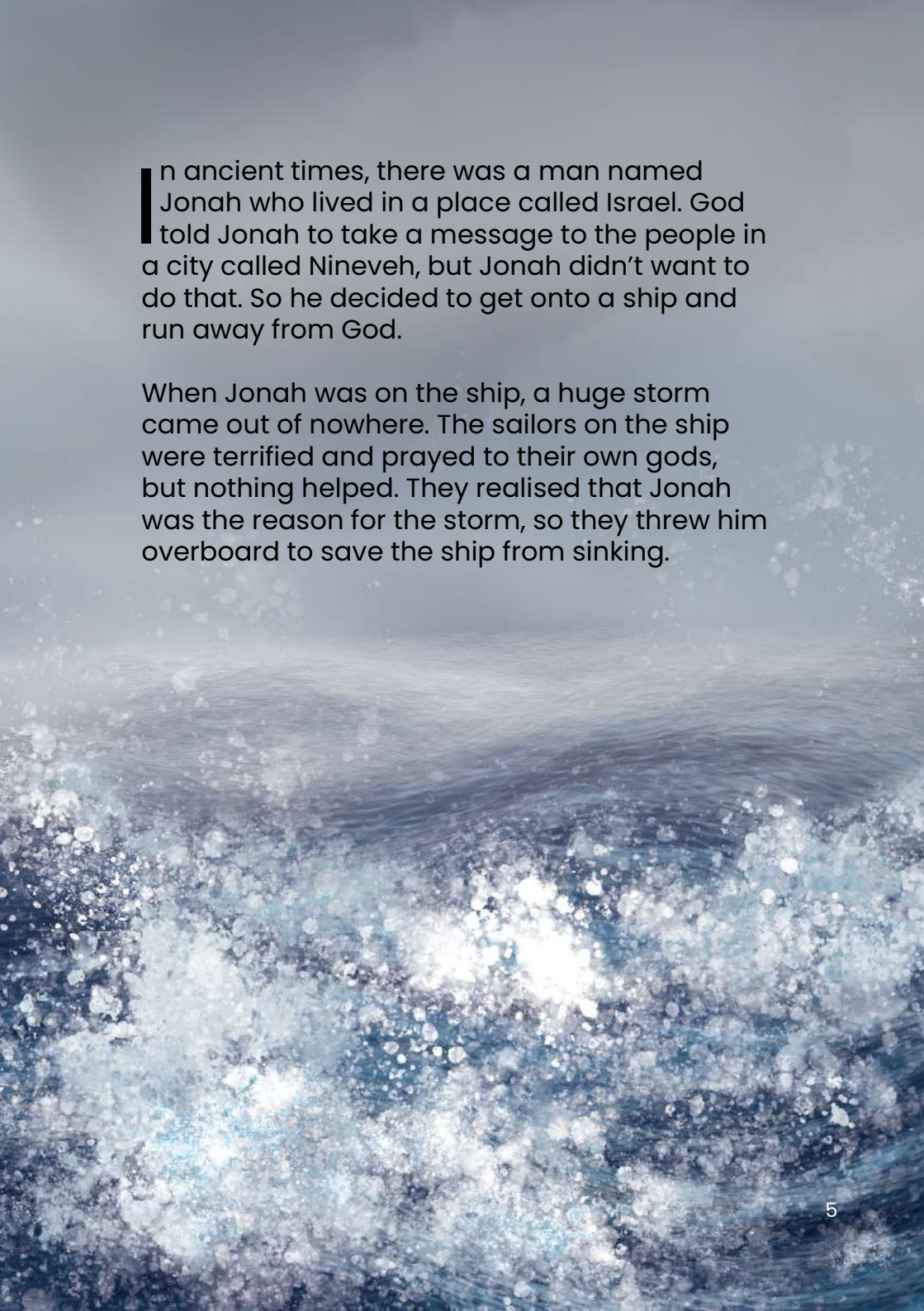
OLD TESTAMENT BIBLE STORY

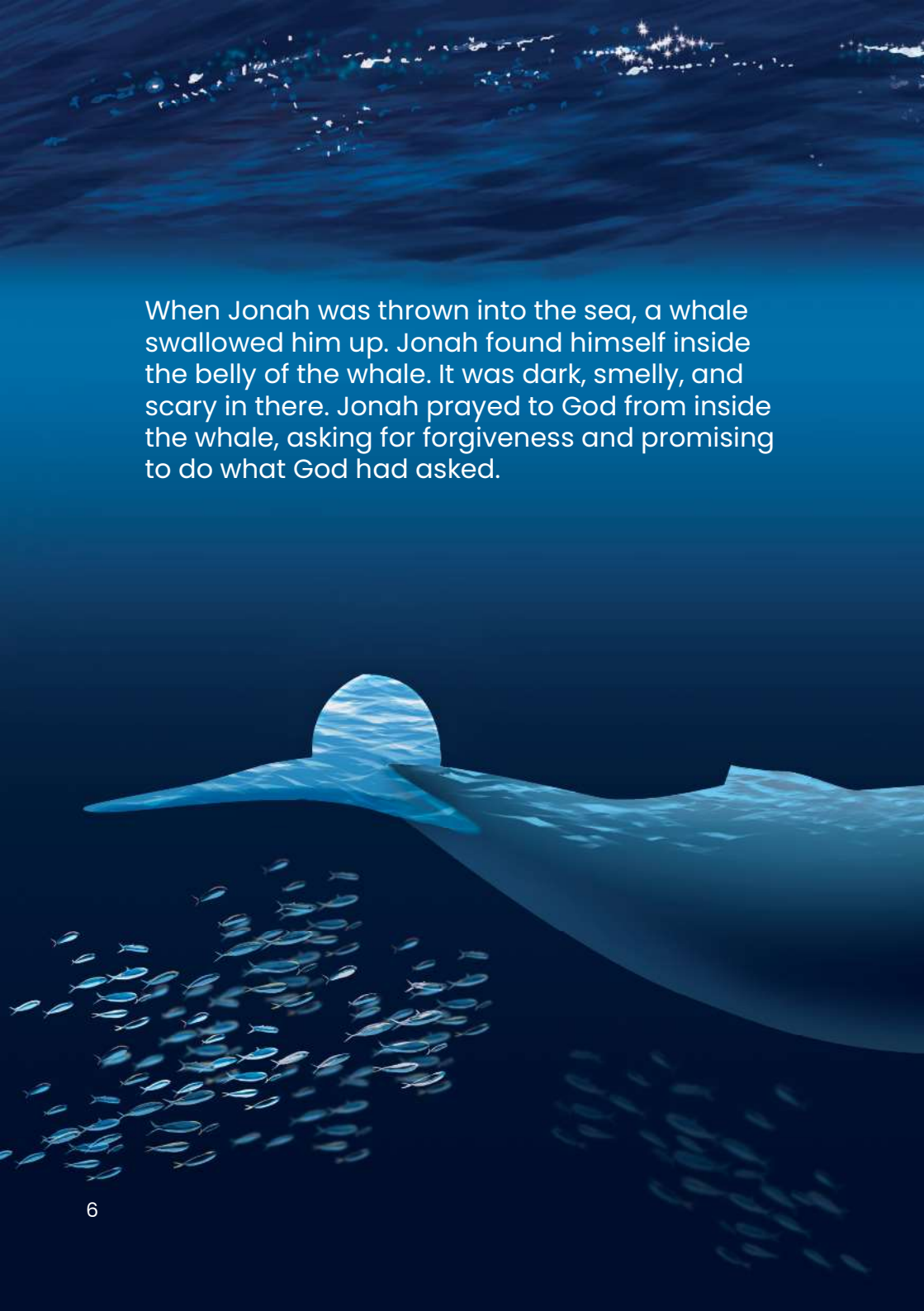
THE BOOK OF JONAH

In ancient times, there was a man named Jonah who lived in a place called Israel. God told Jonah to take a message to the people in a city called Nineveh, but Jonah didn't want to do that. So he decided to get onto a ship and run away from God.

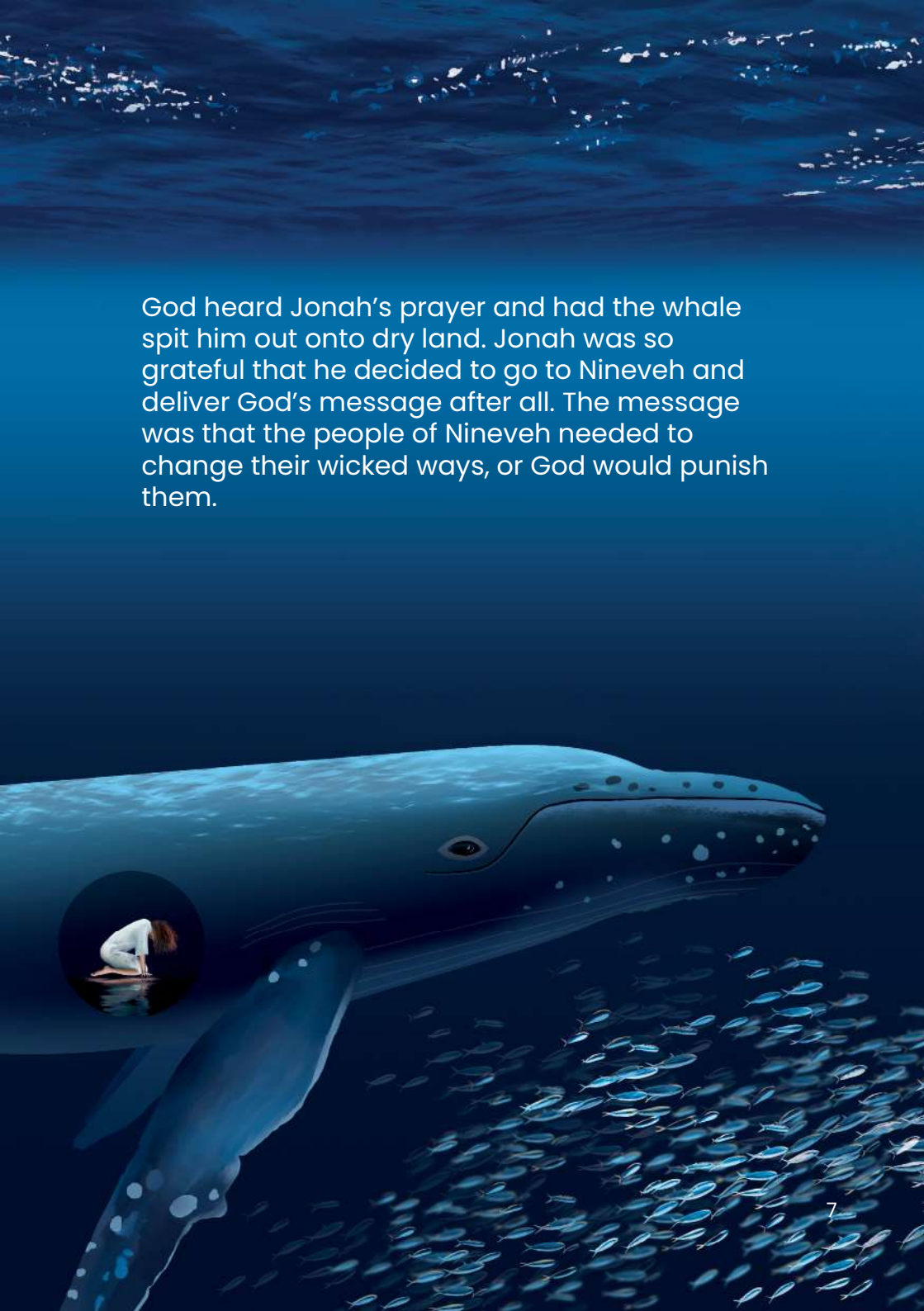
When Jonah was on the ship, a huge storm came out of nowhere. The sailors on the ship were terrified and prayed to their own gods, but nothing helped. They realised that Jonah was the reason for the storm, so they threw him overboard to save the ship from sinking.



When Jonah was thrown into the sea, a whale swallowed him up. Jonah found himself inside the belly of the whale. It was dark, smelly, and scary in there. Jonah prayed to God from inside the whale, asking for forgiveness and promising to do what God had asked.



God heard Jonah's prayer and had the whale spit him out onto dry land. Jonah was so grateful that he decided to go to Nineveh and deliver God's message after all. The message was that the people of Nineveh needed to change their wicked ways, or God would punish them.



Jonah went to Nineveh and delivered the message. The people from Nineveh decided to listen to Jonah. Even the king of Nineveh encouraged everyone to repent. They prayed for forgiveness and believed in God.

Because the people of Nineveh turned away from their wicked ways and asked for forgiveness, God had compassion on them and decided not to punish them.

This made Jonah angry because he wanted God to punish the Ninevites. He went outside the city and sat down, feeling upset.

God made a leafy plant grow up to provide shade for Jonah, which made him happy. But the next day, God sent a worm to eat the plant, causing it to dry up. Jonah became even more upset about losing the shade.

God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”

“It is,” Jonah said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”

But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, which has more than 120,000 people and many animals?”

Prayer

Dear Lord, please help us to follow Your plan, even when we don't want to, and please help us to forgive others, like You forgive us.

Questions

1. Where did God send Jonah?
2. Why did Jonah refuse to go?
3. What happened when Jonah disobeyed God?
4. What happened after Jonah spoke to the people?
5. Why did Jonah become angry?
6. What was God's response?

The School Truant Girl

Letletše was not happy about school. She noticed there were some children who did not go to school regularly, but the teacher did nothing about it. So Letletše decided that she would also stop going to school. Her father, Molepa, and her mother, Mmaletšatši, didn't know that Letletše was unhappy, or that she had refused to go to school.

Letletše decided to hide under her bed during the day, pretending that she had gone to school. Her parents worked every day. When they returned from work, Letletše would take out a little book as if she was scribbling, then she would go to the kitchen and get some food. Letletše started to get bored at home, so she began walking on the road outside her house.

On the road there was a goat, who always saw her. The goat decided to sing about Letletše's behaviour, and tell people that she was not going to school.

The goat's song reached far and wide, and soon the whole village started singing the goat's song. When the song was sung by some of the school children, Letletše's teacher spoke to her parents. After this, the parents went to look for Letletše's school books to check on her progress.

When Letletše saw her parents crying, she also began to cry. She told them about the other children who were not attending school. They told her that education is very important. Her father said, "Look, my daughter, your mother and I went to school and we have good jobs. You can be a doctor, or a nurse, or an artist, or anything you want to be, but you must go to school for the sake of your future." The parents started taking her to school regularly. When she did not understand her homework, they helped her, and other people helped her too.

At school the teachers began inviting parents to come and talk to them about their children's progress. Because of the great improvement in her work, Letletše was chosen to keep track of children who did not come to school. After this, the goat stopped singing and went back to grazing in the fields.

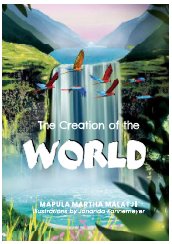
Prayer

Dear Lord, even when other children do what is wrong, please help me not to behave badly. Please help me to obey You and the people You have put in my life, like my parents and teachers.

Questions

1. What did Letletše do when she wasn't going to school?
2. Is it okay for your parents to look at your homework? Why?
3. What did Letletše's parents do after they spoke to her teacher?
4. How do we know that Letletše changed?
5. When the goat's singing job was over, what did it do?

Jonah and the Whale *is one of 20 books featuring 10 Old Testament (OT) and 10 New Testament (NT) stories, each with a practical reflection story based on the Bible story.*



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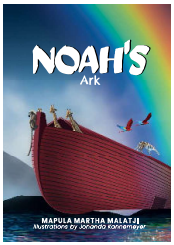

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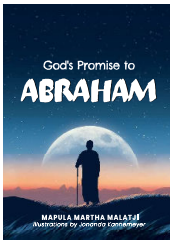

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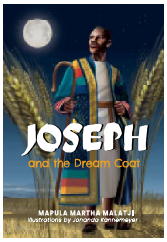

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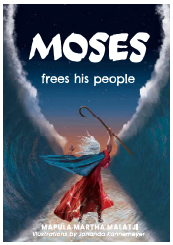

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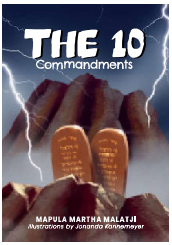

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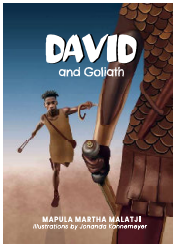

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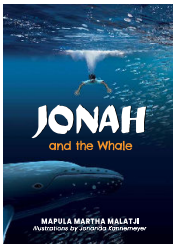

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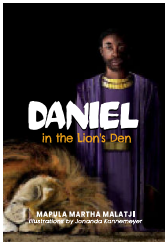

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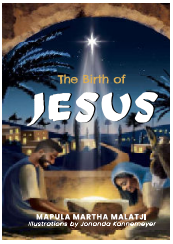

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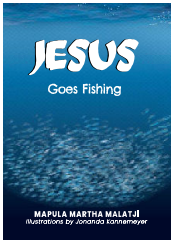

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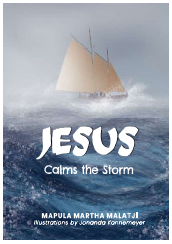

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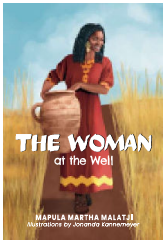

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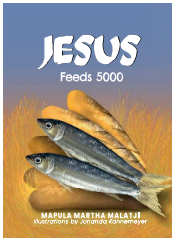

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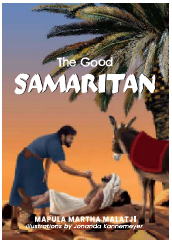

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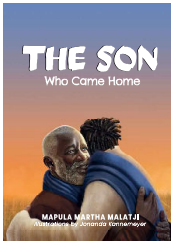

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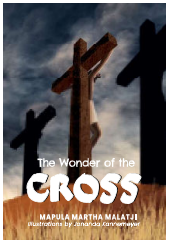

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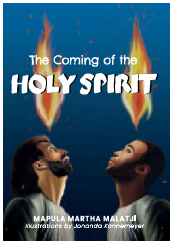

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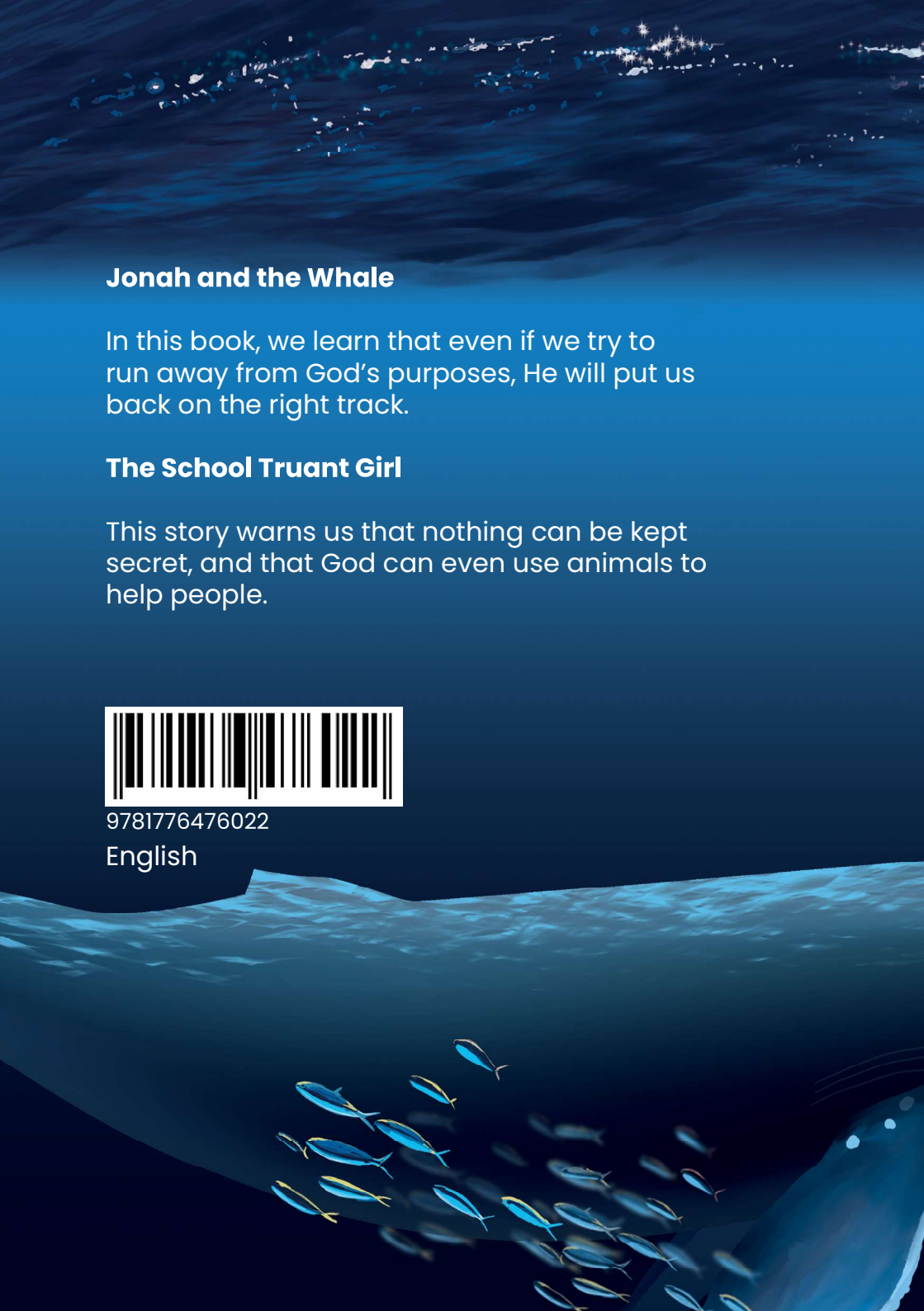

Jonah and the Whale

In this book, we learn that even if we try to run away from God's purposes, He will put us back on the right track.

The School Truant Girl

This story warns us that nothing can be kept secret, and that God can even use animals to help people.

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English