

The First Pope

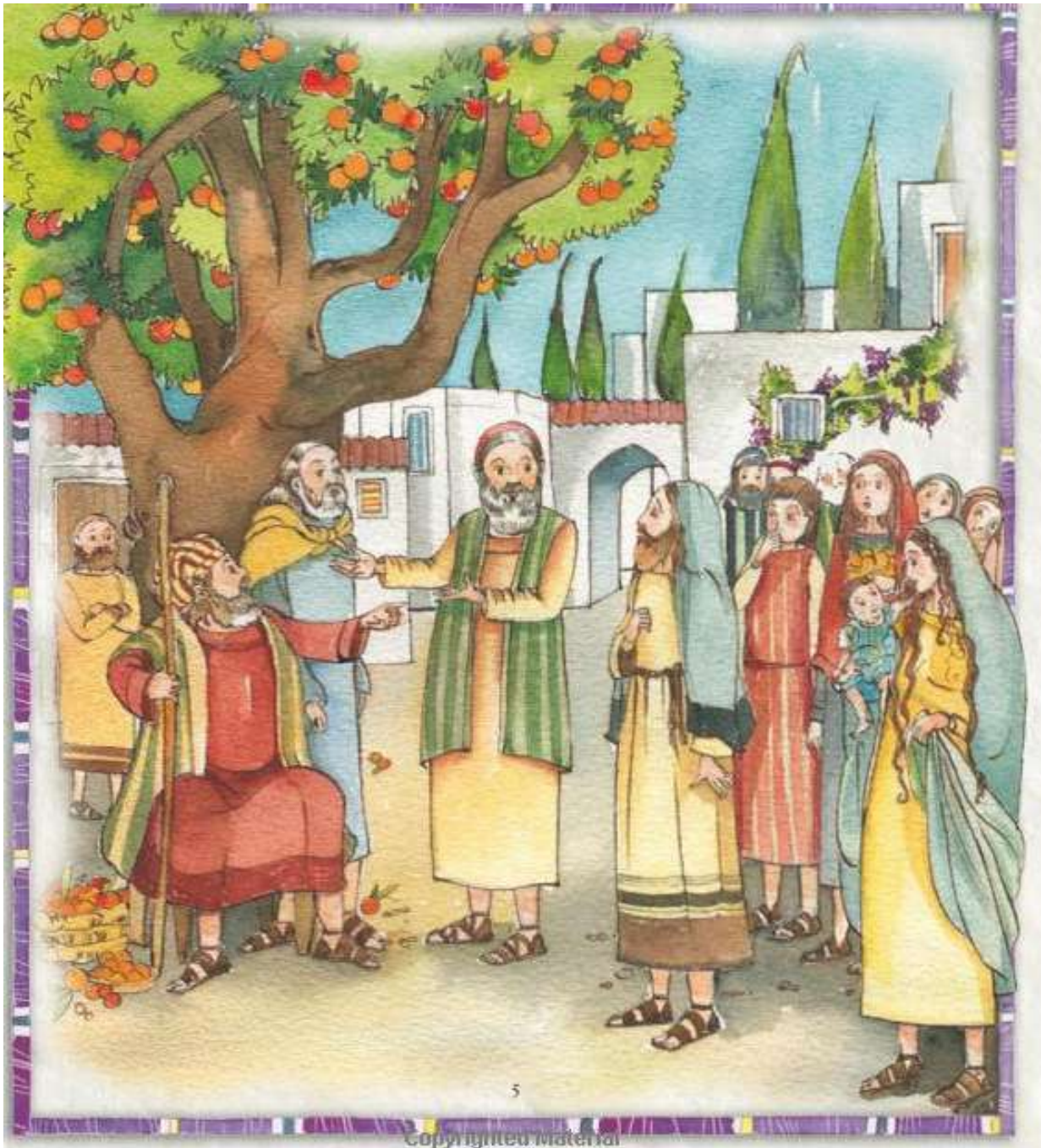
Do you remember St. Peter? He was one of Jesus' apostles. Jesus had a great plan for Peter's life. One day Jesus said to Peter, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

After Jesus rose from the dead, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and began sharing the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection with everyone he met. Just as Jesus said, Peter became the leader of the church. Peter went to Rome and was eventually martyred there. He is buried underneath St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

There have been many popes since St. Peter. Pope Francis, who is a successor of St. Peter, was elected Pope on March 13, 2013. Perhaps you remember when the white smoke appeared out of the chimney at the Vatican in Rome? When Pope Francis came out to greet all the people gathered in St. Peter's Square, he asked them, "Please pray for me." So why don't you stop right now and ask the Holy Spirit to help Pope Francis with all of his responsibilities as the head of the Catholic Church.

Pope Francis spends a lot of time speaking about how we can love Jesus and one another more. Did you know that Pope Francis tweets? Perhaps you can ask your parents to show you some of them!

In the following pages, you can learn some important lessons from Pope Francis. So please turn to the next page and let's begin!



“We Are All Called to Be Friends with Jesus”

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus when he came walking through his hometown of Jericho. But he had two problems. He was so short that he couldn't see Jesus over the crowds. And he was an unpopular tax collector. He often cheated people by making them pay more taxes and keeping the extra money for himself. Zacchaeus knew people didn't want to be near him.

So Zacchaeus spied a sycamore tree and decided to climb it. Suddenly, Jesus stopped and looked up at him and said, “Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house today.” On the way back to his home, Zacchaeus told Jesus, “I will share my money with the poor and I will pay back four times those I have cheated.” That day Zacchaeus began a special friendship with Jesus.

We are all called to be friends with Jesus. . . Let Jesus also call us by name! In the depths of our hearts, let us listen to his voice which says, “Today I must stop at your house,” that is, in your heart, in your life.

Jesus wants to be your friend! Take a few minutes now to talk to Jesus. Thank him for wanting to be most important person in your life. Invite him to come to your “house”—which is your heart—and tell Jesus that you love him.

Pope Francis wants me to invite Jesus to be my friend!



Pope Francis has lessons for all of us—young and old alike. In this beautifully illustrated book, the Holy Father talks about God's love, friendship with Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, prayer, taking care of the poor, getting along in our families, and more. Each "lesson" is paired with a story from the Bible—from the parable of the Good Samaritan to the wedding feast at Cana. This is a wonderful way for children to understand the Holy Father's teachings as they grow in their Catholic faith. For ages seven to eleven.



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