

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

Our God is the God of nature—the God who made the whole creation, and all the life that teems in it, from whales to algae, from mosquitoes to maple trees to monkeys, and who, surveying it all on the seventh day, said, “This is good—this is *very good*—this is *really great stuff!*” Our God is robust and exuberant, an artist who is drunkenly in love with his own work. Our God bids his creatures to eat and be full, to rejoice and give thanks, to be fruitful and multiply. The Creed calls the Holy Spirit the “Giver of Life,” a name for God which the Eastern Orthodox Church uses often in worship, and which would enrich our own prayer also if we used it more often.

When this God comes to earth, he preaches a Kingdom of abundant life, he heals and restores, he feeds the hungry, enriches the harvest of the waters, and gains a reputation as an unspiritual preacher, too fond of dinner parties and good wine. Invited to a wedding, Jesus celebrates whole-heartedly with the couple as they establish a new family, awaiting the gift of children from the Lord, sharing in new life. When the wine gives out, he understands how disastrous this is. Though he does not want to become famous as a wonder-worker in inappropriate contexts, he gives in. It’s as if he couldn’t help himself: the Creator of nature, he (like nature) abhors a vacuum, and finds himself creating whenever he is given half a chance. *Things are just so good.*

The goodness of creation, however, is tempered by death. All living things depend on the deaths of other living things; God’s people live on the life of wheat, grapes, fish and lamb. When the God of nature comes into his creation, he joins not only its life but its Passion. The “glutton and winebibber” who did not fast enough to suit his critics, not only makes the water wine but pours out his own blood to be for us the Wine of Life. The Good News is not shallow or simple, but deep, costly, and rich, like vintage wine. We have a special obligation to our children, not to water down the wine of our story, but to lift it up as the cup of salvation that it is—with awe and wonder, with gladness and thanksgiving.

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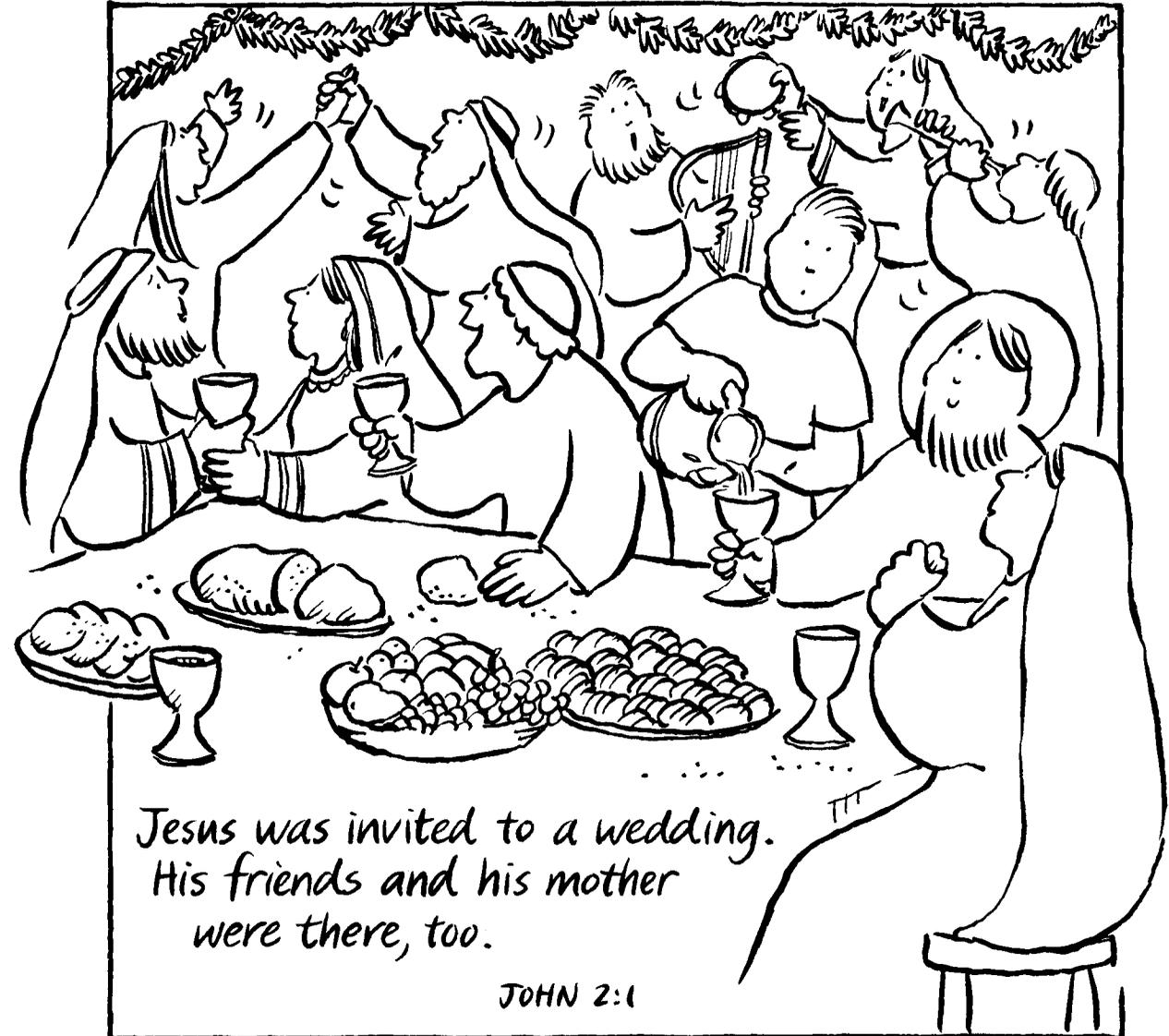
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Everybody was having a good time at the wedding. But then they ran out of wine.



Jesus's mother asked him to help. She said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."



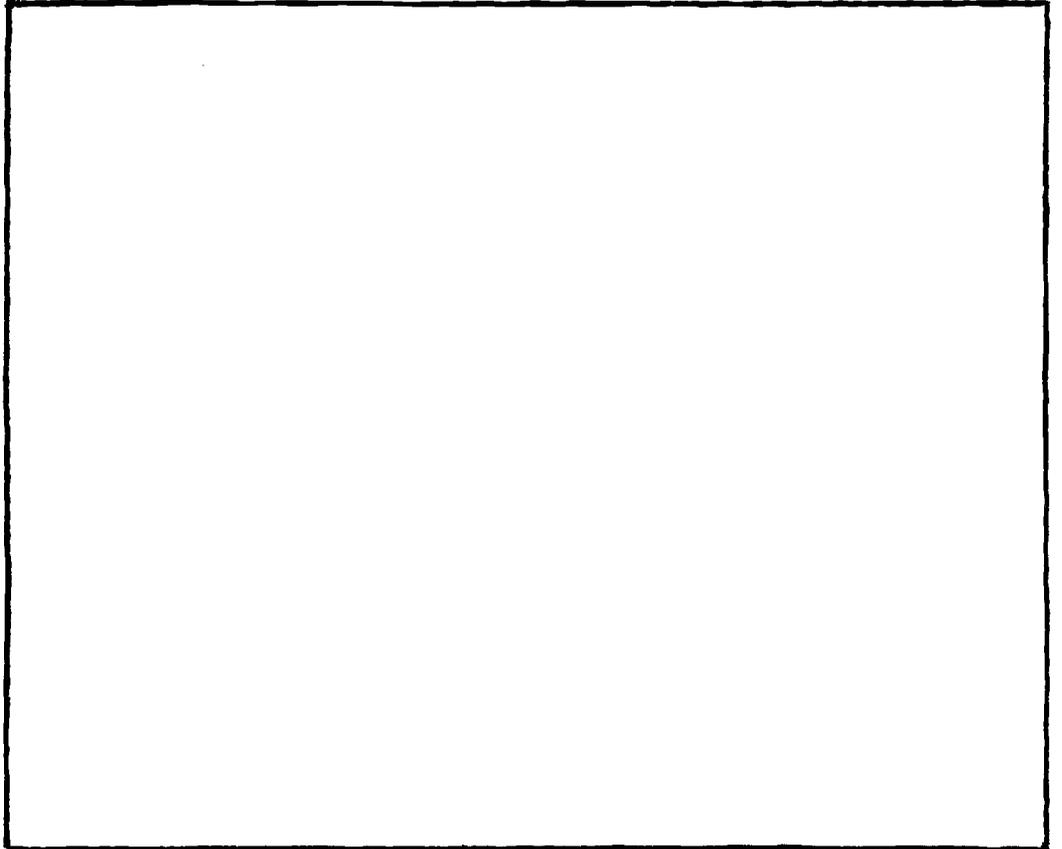
Jesus told the servants to fill six jars with water, and then pour it out.



When they poured it out, it was wine! The guests said, "This wine is the best so far!"



By making the water into wine, Jesus showed that the same God who made the world was now in the world. He showed that when God comes into the world, he brings happiness and blessing.



When God comes among us, we celebrate! Draw a celebration in your family or your church. What makes us feel that God is among us?