



**THE
BEST
GIFT
ever
GIVEN**

RONNIE MARTIN

Illustrated by Nathan Schroeder



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Let the Christmas Adventure Begin!

One of the most exciting things about Christmas is the moment when you finally get to open a beautifully wrapped gift that's been sitting under the Christmas tree with your name on it. Sometimes it seems like you've been waiting for so, so long...but then Christmas Day finally arrives, and you feel as if you're almost going to burst! It's one of the greatest things ever, isn't it?

What if I told you there was an even better Christmas gift than anything sitting under your tree—in fact, better than any gift you've ever received? And what if I told you that it

was given to you by the best Giver who ever was? And that the gift was so good that it could never be broken, never get lost, and never get old, but lasts forever and ever?

This is a Christmas story about many of the wonderful gifts God has given to us. It starts at the beginning of everything, when God gave us the heavens and the earth, and leads up to the most amazing, the most wonderful, the most fantastic gift of all.

All of God's gifts to us have special meaning because they come straight from His good hands and His great heart. But only one is the best gift ever given. What could it be?



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God Gave Us the Heavens and the Earth

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

GENESIS 1:1

A long time ago, God created the entire universe. In it, He put a big blue sky, a bright yellow sun, a round glowing moon, and billions of bright, twinkling stars.

The universe God created is so big that nobody but God can see how far it goes. Do you know what this shows us? Just how *big* God is!

In this huge universe, God created a special place for us to live—the earth. He filled the earth with amazing things, like oceans, mountains, trees, and waterfalls. God also created all the birds, fish, and land animals. So every time you see a brown, furry bear in the forest or an owl that says “*Hoo, hoo!*” or a big whale swimming in the sea, you can remember that God created everything so that we would worship Him, give thanks to Him, and take good care of all these gifts He gave us because He loves us so much.

God’s creation is a wonderful gift, but His *best* gift is even better. What could it be?

Of all the things God created, what are some of your favorites? What do they tell you about God?

Dear God,

Thank You for loving us so much that You created the universe with all the stars, the earth for us to live on, and all the beautiful oceans, mountains, and animals. We know why You gave us these good gifts—not because we deserved them, but because they show us how great and beautiful You are. Help us praise You right now and give thanks to You every time we see Your amazing creation.

Amen.



God Gave Us Good Things

God saw that it was good.

GENESIS 1:25

What are some beautiful things God created? How about the daytime so you can play and work? How about the nighttime so you can sleep while the moon lights up the sky? How about all the vegetables you pick in the garden or buy at the grocery store? How about all the apple trees and peach trees that produce yummy fruit? How about the ocean to swim in, streams to splash in, and ponds to catch fish in when you go camping with your family? How about all your friends and family and all the times you spend with them laughing, playing, eating, and worshipping God together?

After God made everything, what do you think He said? He said that it was good. Everything God makes is good because God Himself is good! So when you are outside and see a big oak tree, a furry little puppy dog, or a green grassy field to play on, you can know it is good because God made it! God has made these good things so that when we see them, we will think of Him and give Him praise. What does it mean to praise God? It means saying, “God, You are good

and great and the most wonderful person in the whole world. Thank You for everything You made because all of it is so good—just like You!”

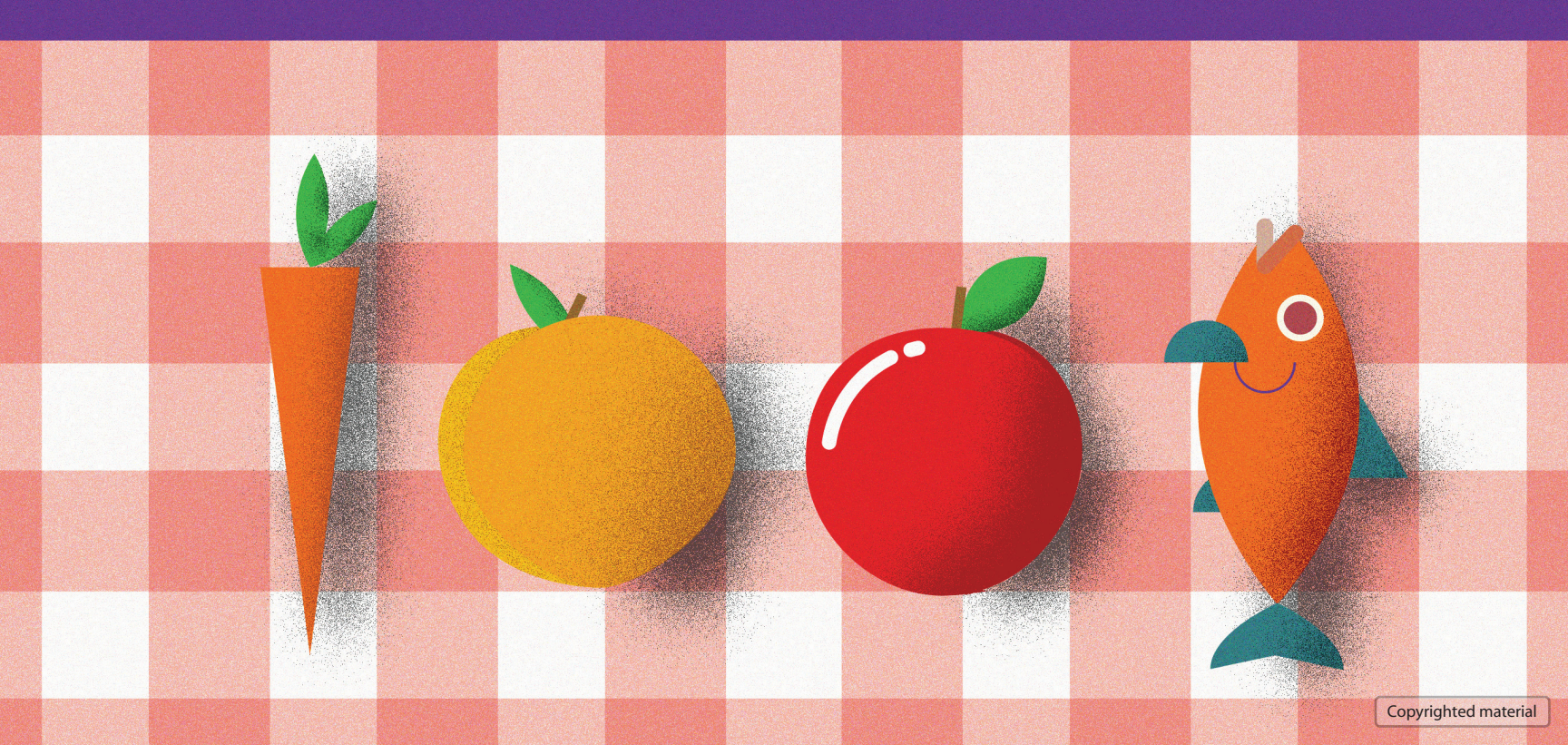
The things God made are wonderful gifts, but His *best* gift is even better. What could it be?

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Why did God say everything He made is good?
Why is it important to know that all good things come from God?

Dear God,

Thank You for all the good things You have given us. Please help us remember that You are even better than all of them. When some good things turn out bad, please remind us that in the beginning, You made everything good—and that someday, everything will be good again.

Amen.



God Gave Us Each Other

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:27

After God created the entire universe, He decided to create us! He made us even more special than the animals because we are made in His own image. Imagine that! Even though we aren't God, we are *like* God in so many ways. For example, just like God, we know how to be kind, loving, patient, gentle, and caring toward other people.

How did God create us? The Bible says that out of the dust of the earth, God formed the first man who ever lived and named him Adam. He gave Adam a beautiful garden to live and work in called Eden. But Adam felt lonely because even though he named all the animals God made, none of them were just like him.

Do you know what God did? He had Adam take a nap, He took out one of Adam's ribs, and He made Adam's wife, Eve, from that rib. Adam was so happy! He thanked and praised God for Eve because now he had someone just like him

to love and care for. Adam and Eve were able to serve God and worship Him together.

People are wonderful gifts from God, but His *best* gift is even better. What could it be?

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In what ways are we like God—made in His image? God made Adam and Eve to help each other. How can you be helpful to the people in your life?

Dear God,

We praise You today for creating us in Your image. We are sorry we don't always treat others as kindly as You treat us. Thank You for being patient and forgiving and for helping us be more like You—the way You made us to be.

Amen.

