

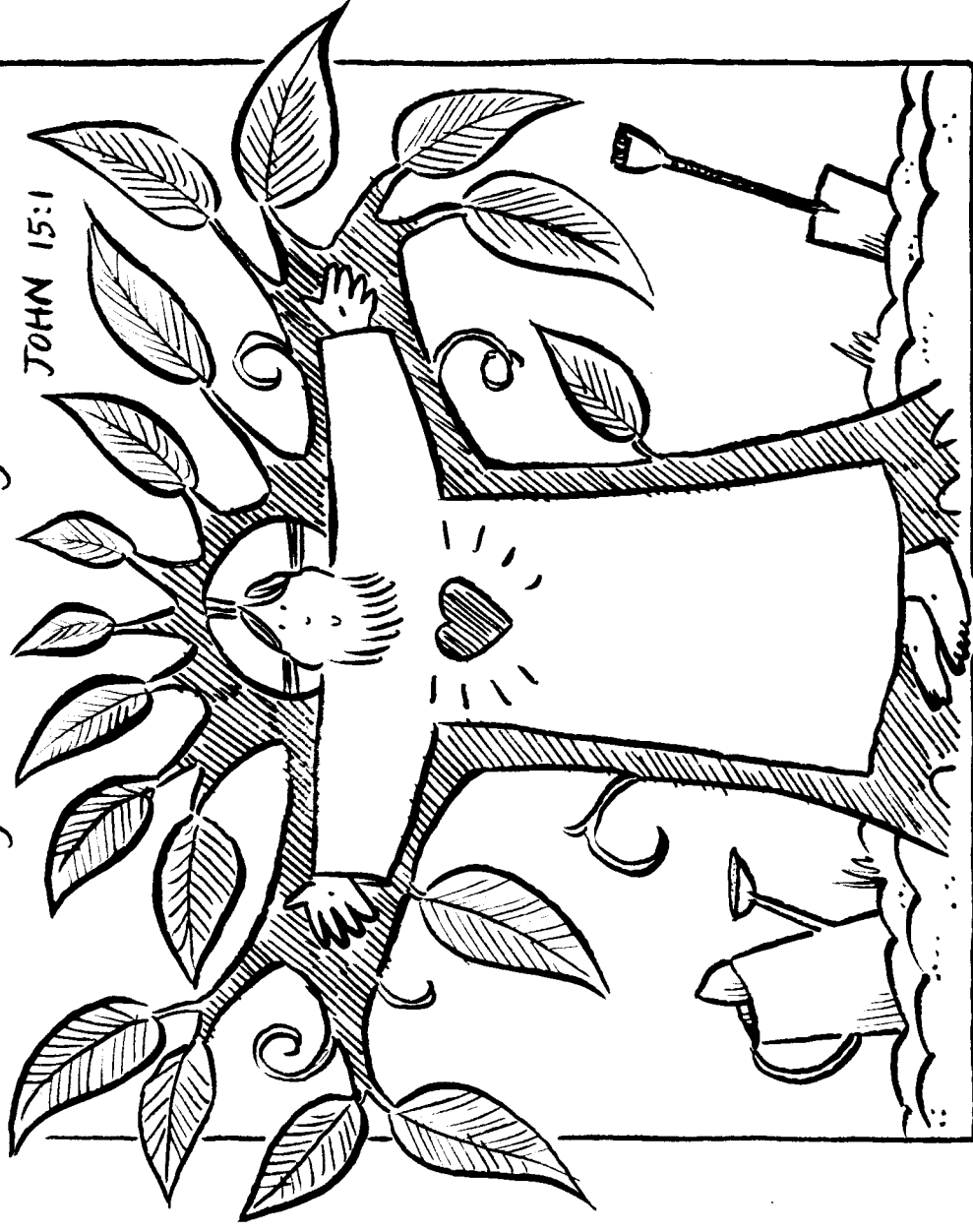
THE SUNDAY PAPER

JUNIOR

Year B
5th SUNDAY
of EASTER

Jesus said, "I am the True Vine,
and my Father is the gardener."

JOHN 15:1



A NOTE TO PARENTS

During the fifty days of the Easter season, it is customary to read from the Acts of the Apostles. We join the first Christians as they gathered in communities to celebrate the new life they had received in Christ. Their message, and ours, is a simple one, well expressed in the Gospel hymn,

He is Lord, he is Lord—

He is risen from the dead and he is Lord:

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess

That Jesus Christ is Lord.

From this message flows everything we do as Christians, together or as individuals. If our own lives are lit up by the light of Christ, rising in glory, then we will be filled with a desire to share that light, as Philip did with the Ethiopian traveler.

Did your family take on a service project during Lent—raising money for homeless or helpless persons; prayer and Bible reading; spending some time in service of others? If you did, did this project reach a satisfying climax at Easter, or did it fade away, or is it still going on? There is a danger in undertaking service projects during Lent: we may convince our children, and ourselves, that caring for our brothers and sisters is a penitential discipline which we take on temporarily during a season of special moral effort—the season of Christ's suffering—and then drop with relief when the Good News of the Resurrection is revealed and we can go back to being happy and normal. This shows a badly distorted understanding of what the Good News is all about.

You can help your children to see that if we set out to love our neighbor in Lent, when we were feeling the force of our own brokenness, we should set out all the more so in the Easter season, when we are nearly bowled over by the good news that all our brokenness has been made whole by Jesus' Cross and Resurrection. Did you start a service project in Lent? Don't stop it now: keep it up, or even enlarge it, using your own special gifts as individuals and a family. And if you never got around to making an effort in Lent, now is a grand time to start.

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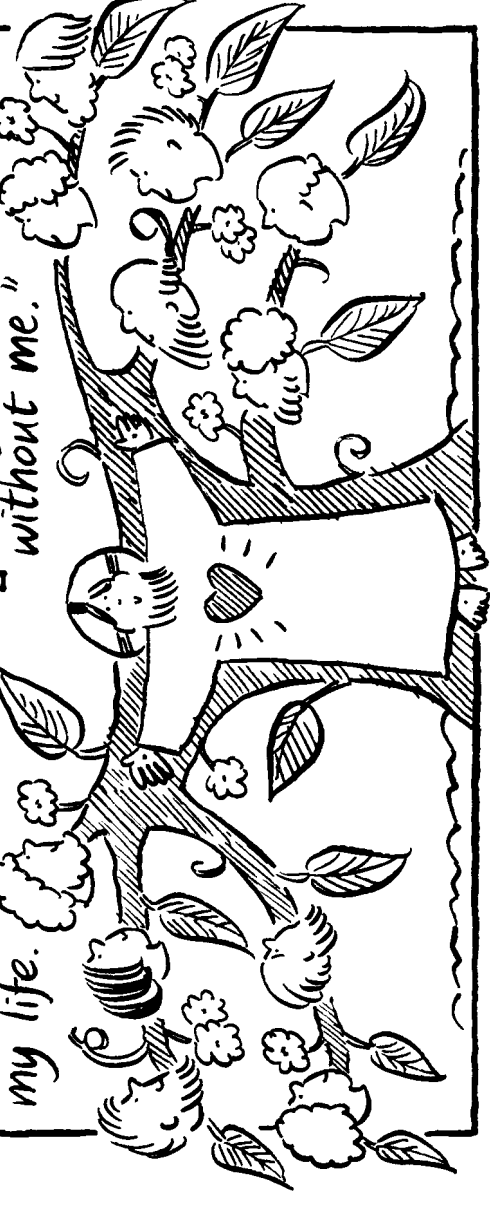
The night before he died, Jesus was eating supper with his friends. Jesus talked to them.

He wanted them to understand how God would give him new life to share with them.

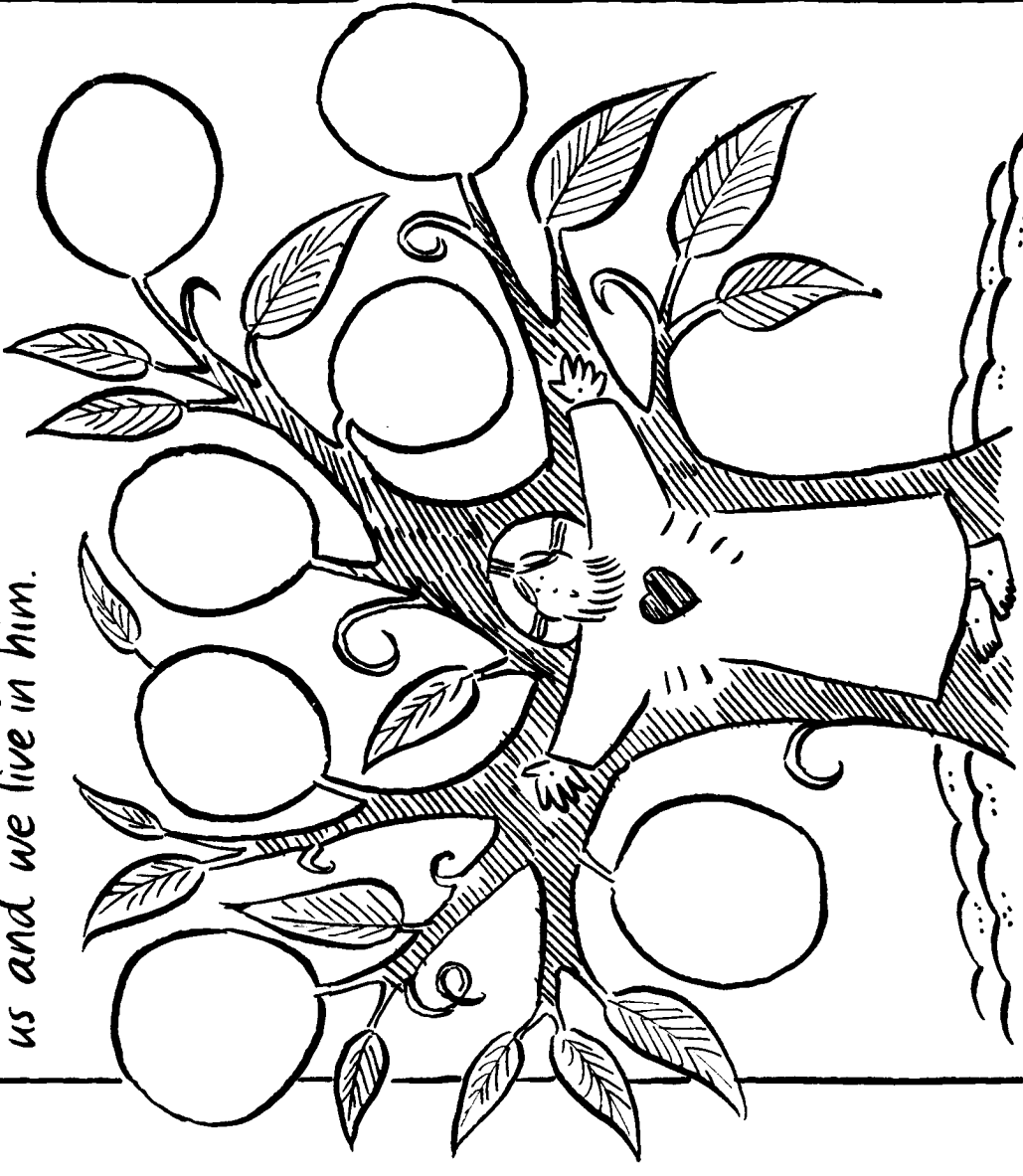


He said, "I am the vine, and you are the branches. You get your life from my life.

"Keep on being a part of me. Grow and be strong. You can't live without me."



After Jesus died and rose again, he had a new kind of life. He was with his friends in a new way. The Bible says that Jesus lives in us and we live in him.



Draw yourself, and people from your family and your church, as parts of the True Vine.