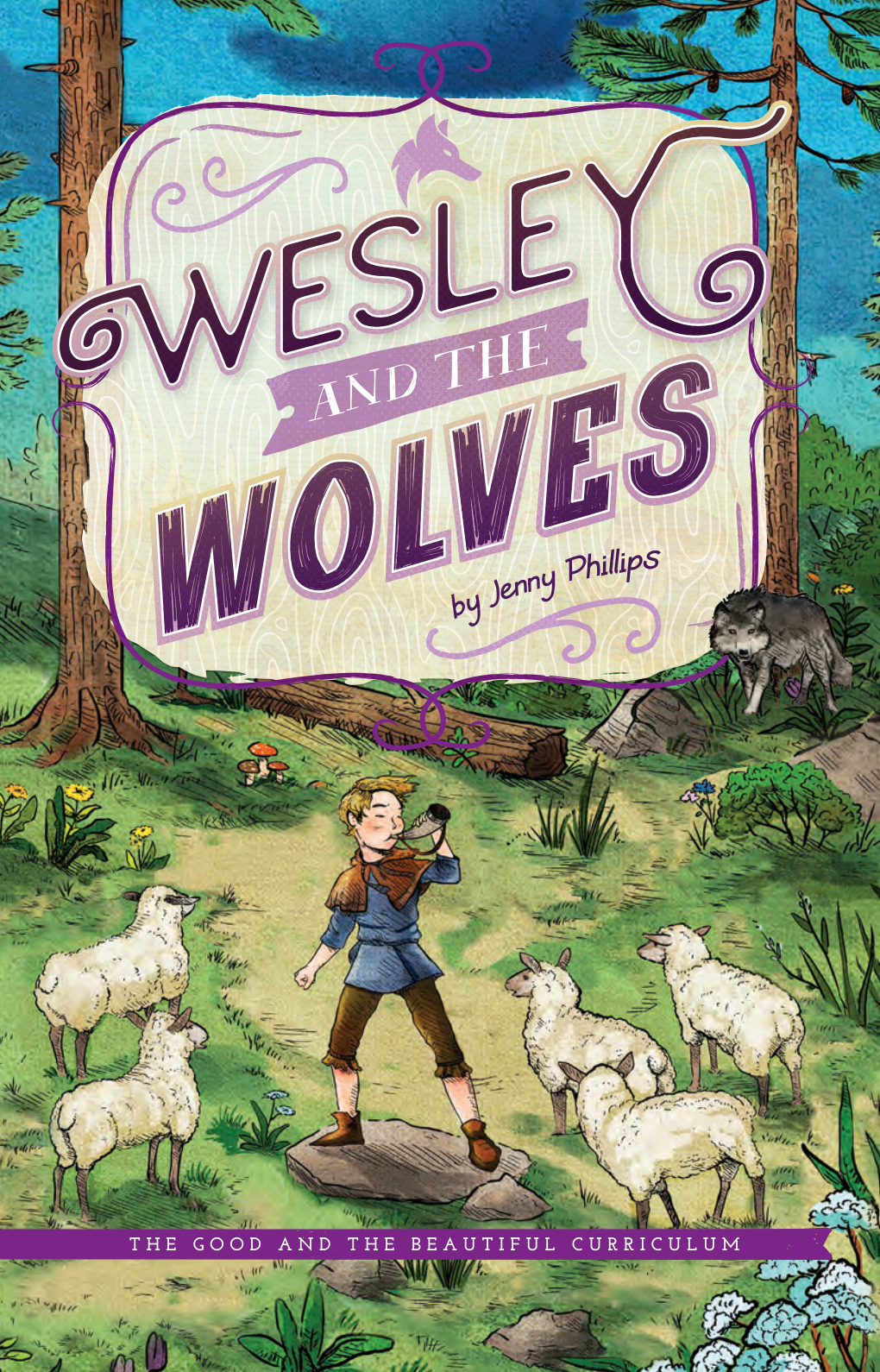

WESLEY
AND THE
WOLVES
by Jenny Phillips
THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL CURRICULUM

WESLEY AND THE WOLVES

by Jenny Phillips

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Challenge Word:
pasture

Chapter 1

QU

Student

The sun had just risen over the quiet valley, and rays of light danced around Wesley's home.

The squirrels darted quickly from tree to tree, and the birds chirped quite joyfully.

Wesley pulled off his quilt and jumped out of bed.

Parent/Teacher

After saying prayers by his bedside, Wesley followed his usual morning routine. He quickly pulled on some shorts and ran outside, barefooted.

"Hello, sheep! Hello, squirrels! Hello, birds! Hello, sky!" he called as he dashed across the dew-covered carpet of grass.

He then splashed into the gurgling stream for his daily morning dip. He sat down in his favorite spot where the water was the deepest. Refreshing coolness flowed around him, almost to his shoulders. He looked up and watched the pine trees waving back and forth gently in the breeze.

Ten minutes later, Wesley's mother called from the front door. "Wesley, time for breakfast!"



In the house lived Wesley, his little sister Alice, and their mother and father.

Wesley sat at the table and watched as his mother set a bowl of berries and cream, a quarter of a loaf of bread, a yellow square of butter, and a mug of sweet-smelling liquid in front of him.



"Wow," exclaimed Wesley. "Thank you, Mother. This is the biggest breakfast I've ever had."

"There's a reason for that," replied his mother with a sparkle in her eyes. "It's a special day."

"A special day?" Wesley wrinkled his forehead. "What do you mean?"

Wesley's father cleared his throat. "Son, you are twelve years old now. We feel it is time for you to take on more responsibility."

"Responsibility?" questioned Wesley. "What do you mean?"

"Well," said his mother. "We think it is time for you to take our herd of sheep to the green pastures up in the mountains each day. You can start today after you milk the cow."

Wesley was thrilled. He felt like a man as he gulped down his mother's special fruit juice and chewed on the delicious bread. He had been waiting for this for so long.



Student

Wesley's cow, Queen, was calm and sweet-tempered. With big squirts, Wesley squeezed the white liquid into the pail until it was filled.

"Looks like about twelve quarts," Wesley said to Queen. "You give the best quality milk."

Wesley then scooped up some hay to feed to Queen and noticed a square of wood on the floor where he had taken the hay.

Parent/Teacher

The square of wood was a slightly different color than the rest of the wooden floor, and the square seemed to be tilted just a little bit. Wesley got on his hands and knees and pushed on the wooden square. To his surprise, the square flipped down, revealing a little, dark hole. Wesley lit a lamp and set it beside the shallow hole.

"A key!" he exclaimed as he put his hand into the hole and grasped a heavy, golden key that looked old and worn.

Wesley's first thought was that he should tell his father about the key. He put it back in the hole and put the square of wood back. However, he forgot all about the key when he saw his father next.



Student

Later that morning, Wesley herded the sheep together and started leading them up to the pasture.

Wesley's little sister Alice decided to walk with him partway. They were great friends and hardly ever quarreled, but Wesley could be quite a teaser sometimes.

Parent/Teacher

As the siblings walked together beneath the wide blue sky, they talked about the beautiful pear orchard their family owned. The pears were still green, but were getting big.

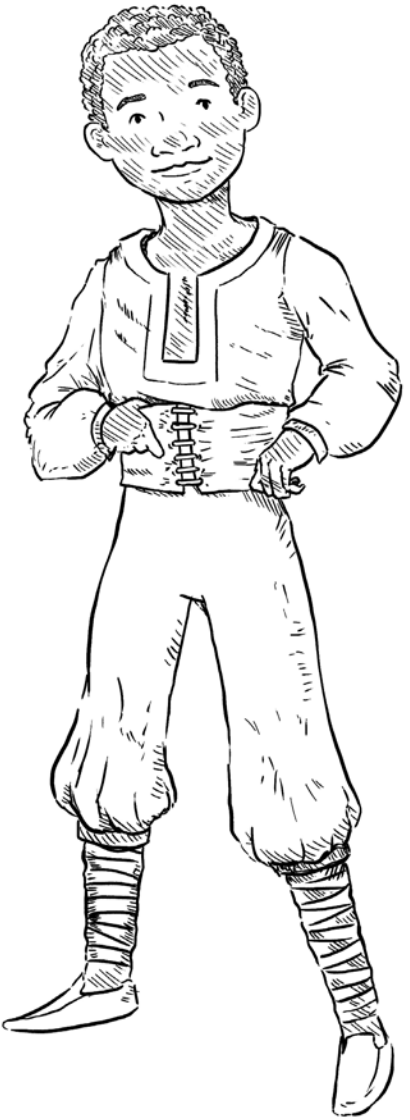
A quarter of the way up the trail, Wesley saw his friend, Arthur, who was his closest neighbor.

Arthur walked along the pathway with Wesley and the sheep.

"I have big news—HUGE news, HUMONGOUS news," Arthur proclaimed.

"What is it?" asked Wesley, giving all his attention to his friend.

"Well," began Arthur, "do you remember how we both want to learn how to read? Well, our village is going to have school at the town hall. They hired a school teacher, and school starts on Monday!"





"School!" cried Alice. "Oh, that is the best news ever!"

"That's amazing!" cried Wesley. "I have dreamed of going to school."

Wesley stopped, and then he became quiet.

"What's wrong?" asked Arthur.

"I can't go to school," Wesley said quite sadly. "I have to take care of these sheep."



"Don't worry!" Arthur said in his usual cheerful voice. "Since most of the children in our village have to help their parents with the farms and animals and chores during the day, our teacher said he will start school mid-afternoon. You can make it in time if your parents let you bring the sheep home in the early afternoon."

"Oh, I'm sure they will!" exclaimed Wesley joyously. "They have always wanted a school here in the village for Alice and me. They never had the chance to learn to read, so they can't teach us about letters and words. Have you met the school teacher?"

"Yes, I have," replied Arthur proudly. "He's young. He told me that he has a special gift to give each student on the first day of class. I have no idea what it is."

Parent/Teacher

For the rest of the day, Wesley dreamed about going to school in just a few days.

"What could the special gift be?" Wesley asked himself. "I can't wait to find out."

Challenge Words:
dangerous
area

Chapter 2

KN

Student

Before leaving the house the next morning, Mom was kneading the bread, Alice was knitting a sock, and Dad was sharpening a knife. They were all quietly working.

"A mouse!" shouted Wesley loudly.

Mom jumped, and Alice screamed.

Parent/Teacher

Wesley started laughing, and everyone realized there really was no mouse. Mother wore a little frown—something Wesley hardly ever saw on his mother's bright face. Alice looked at Wesley sadly and left the room.

Wesley stopped laughing. He had a funny feeling inside, but he pushed the feeling down and left the house with a whistle.

The day was overcast and mist hung around the mountains like a thick cloak. It had rained the night before, and mud caked Wesley's shoes as he walked up the mountain path. With wet grass in the pasture and moist air clinging to Wesley, everything felt heavy to Wesley today, but the sheep didn't seem to mind the weather. They were already chomping away at the thick pasture grass.



Wesley sat down on a flat rock and started to daydream. In his mind he was a knight in shining armor, and then he was in a hot air balloon.

Suddenly, he snapped out of his daydream and looked around. He was scared out of his knickers! "Seven, eight, nine . . ." Wesley didn't know where the tenth sheep was.



"Oh, dear!" said Wesley, shooting up from the rock. He knew each of the sheep by name and loved each of them. A quick inventory of the sheep in the pasture revealed that Jasper was the lost sheep—he was a little, young sheep.

Not wanting to leave the other nine sheep, but knowing he had to, Wesley didn't know where to go to find the lost sheep. The mist was already disappearing as the sun rose higher in the sky, but Wesley saw no clue that would show him which way Jasper went.

"Help me know which way to go, Father in Heaven," Wesley pleaded in a silent prayer.

Realizing that he wasn't familiar with the land above the pasture, he decided to follow the river so he wouldn't get lost.

Quietly, so the other sheep wouldn't follow, Wesley slipped into the trees and found the river.

Student

The river was swollen and raging from the melting snow of spring. Wesley knew that the river was dangerous when it was this high. He made his way along the riverbank, but he went too fast and fell, banging his knee and his knuckle.

Parent/Teacher

After 15 minutes of searching, a fierce wind began blowing, whipping Wesley's hair into his eyes. However, Wesley had spotted sheep prints! He was on the right track and kept pressing forward.

Relief washed over Wesley when he went around a bend in the river and saw the young sheep. He gathered Jasper in his arms and was about to return to the pasture when he spotted something.

"Is that a door up on the mountain?" he asked himself.

He brushed the hair out of his eyes to make sure he was seeing things right. There was a group of tall bushes partway up the steep hill.



Student

When the wind blew the bushes apart, Wesley saw part of an old wooden door.

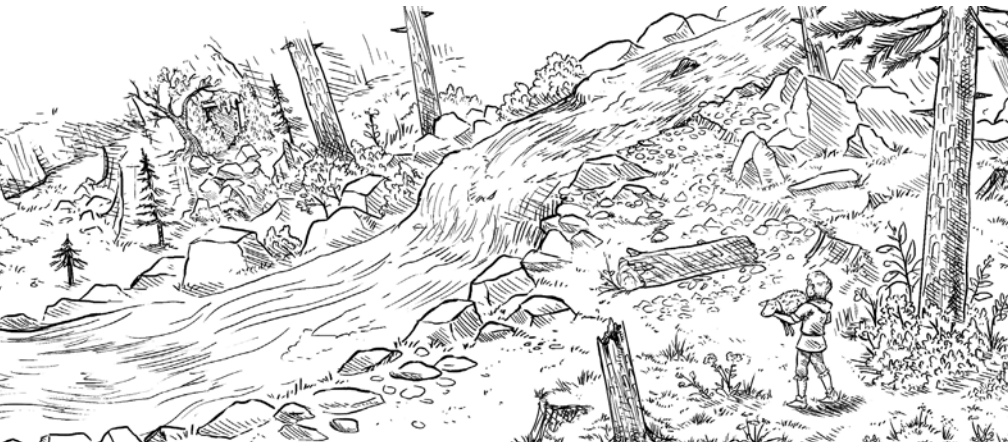
"A knob!" Wesley cried into the wind. "I see the door's knob. I bet there is a keyhole."

He remembered the golden key he found in the barn and wondered if the key opened the door. In his mind it made sense—a secret key would be likely to open a secret door.

Parent/Teacher

There was no way for Wesley to get to the door, however, because it was on the other side of the swollen, raging river.

"Someday soon," he thought, "I will find a way across the river and go see what is behind that door. I'm sure that secret key opens it! For now, I need to get back to the rest of the sheep."



Student

When Wesley returned to the pasture, he found Mr. Boyle there watching over the sheep. He lived not too far away. He was known as the smartest man around—he seemed to have knowledge of everything.

Parent/Teacher

"I came to see how you were doing with your new job up here. I was worried when I didn't find you, but it looks like you were looking for a lost sheep and found it."

"That's right," replied Wesley. "Jasper here gave me a big scare."

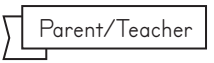
Mr. Boyle sat down on the grass, took out a pocketknife and a stick, and started whittling. "Do you mind if I keep you company for a while?"

"That would be wonderful!" said Wesley, who really enjoyed this kind and smart man. Mr. Boyle's wife had died a few years ago, and Wesley knew he was lonely.





"I need to remember to tell Father about the key," Wesley said to himself. "I want to know about that door! Maybe Mr. Boyle knows. No one has more knowledge about this area than he does."



"Mr. Boyle," Wesley started. "I saw something very interesting when I was out looking for Jasper. I believe it was a door in the mountain."

Mr. Boyle looked surprised. "A door?"

"Yes! It was hidden by some tall bushes, but it was really windy, so I could see it when the wind was bending the bushes down. Do you . . . have any idea what a door might be doing on a mountainside?"

Mr. Boyle looked off into the distance with a quizzical look on his face. He didn't say anything for a full minute as he sat thinking. Then he turned to Wesley and said, "No, I have never heard of a door in the mountainside up here. If there was one, I think I would know about it. Perhaps you were seeing things."

Wesley wondered to himself, "Was I seeing things? Maybe, but one day I've got to find out for myself."



Challenge Words:
field
group
pears
several

Chapter 3

OR Can Say /ER/

Student

On Monday, the w<u>or</u>ld seemed wonderful to Wesley. He had finished his w<u>or</u>k with the sheep and was leaving for his first day of school. From over in a field, his father waved.

Parent/Teacher

Wesley waved back and then hurried down to the village, holding Alice's hand. Arthur joined them along the way.

"Do you think our teacher still has a gift for each of us?" Wesley asked his friend.

"Yes, I think so," replied Arthur. "I can't wait to find out."

"Look! A bald eagle!" Wesley suddenly cried, pointing to a grove of trees.

"Where?" asked Alice, who loved bald eagles. "I don't see it."

"Made you look," Wesley said with a laugh.

"That's not really funny," Alice said.

"Come on," Arthur urged. "Let's go faster. I don't want to be late for the first day."

They finally reached the village hall. It barely held the 22 excited students.

"Welcome!" said the school teacher when everyone had quieted down. "I'm Mr. Duncan."

Student

Wesley looked around. A world map hung on one wall. Books of many colors lined a shelf on another wall.

"We are first going to divide the class into two groups," the teacher said, "a junior group and a senior group."

Parent/Teacher

Wesley waited for the teacher to say something about a special gift he had for each student. He did not have to wait long. Mr. Duncan plunked a heavy box onto his desk.

"I have something special for each one of you," he began. "Place it on the edge of your desk, and I will explain why this gift is so valuable in a few weeks."

The room seemed to be holding its breath as the teacher opened the box. He pulled something out and put it on Alice's desk. It was a rock.

"A rock!" Wesley was confused. It looked like just a plain, ordinary, smooth gray rock.

"I could find those any day down by the river," Wesley thought. "Why does our teacher think these are so special?"

When the teacher set a rock on Wesley's desk, Wesley picked it up. Yep! It looked just like an ordinary rock. He felt all around it and even tapped it on his desk. He did not see anything special.

"Maybe there is something inside of it," Wesley wondered as the teacher began giving a lesson.


ABCDEF
GHIJKL
MNOPQR
STUVW
XYZ
12345
678910

Student

Wesley was excited as he left school. He had learned several letters that day, and his teacher said it would only be a few weeks until Wesley would be able to start reading words.

However, when he got home, his father looked worried.

"I have bad news," he said.

"Did our cow get loose?" Alice asked.

"It's worse than that," Father said.

Parent/Teacher

He held up a pear from their pear orchard. It was covered in brown holes.

"Codling moths," Father said. "They have invaded the pears this year."

"Oh, no!" Wesley said. "What are we going to do?"

"Well, we have to pick all the fruits this year and burn them. Then somehow we have to get a bunch of chickens."

"Chickens?" cried Alice.

"Yes," said Father. "The pesky insects will stay in the ground over winter. The chickens will find them and eat them, so we won't have this problem next year. But that means we won't have any pears this year—if we can even get chickens. We don't have any money to buy them."





Wesley frowned. The pears were a major part of their farm. In fact, without the pears, his family would not have money for things like flour, sugar, cloth, and candles.

The family had some savings, so they would make it through this year, but they had to prevent the moths from coming back next year.

Wesley made a worthy goal. "Somehow, I will find a way to help buy those chickens!"

Challenge Words:
favorite
bear

Chapter 4

Sight Words: Group 1

Student

"Hello, sheep! Hello, beautiful birds! Hello, tulips! Hello to the entire country!" laughed Wesley as he ran to the river for his daily dip.

Breakfast that morning was mush with sugar and milk—Wesley's favorite dish.

Parent/Teacher

As soon as he was done eating, Wesley went to milk the cow. Leaning against Queen as he milked her, Wesley practiced the alphabet with Alice, who sat beside him.

Alice suddenly stopped. "I smell smoke!"

"So do I!" declared Wesley. The siblings dashed outside the barn and found their father standing by a burning pile of pears and twigs.

"Oh, you've started burning the pears," said Wesley. "Do you want help?"

"Thank you, Wesley, but it's time for you to get the sheep up to the pasture. Alice can help me pick pears and burn them today."

The sun was still low in the sky, spreading its morning light across the pasture when Wesley arrived. He sighed. "This job is getting just a little boring," he said.

Student

Wesley leaned against a tree. The blue sky above did not hold any clouds to watch. Wesley was so bored; he felt it was almost too much to bear.

Arthur came to visit, and Wesley asked him to watch his group of sheep.

Parent/Teacher

"I'm going to sprint as fast as I can to those bushes to see if I can find that door again," he said. "I'll be back in a jiffy." Wesley flew along the riverbank, jumping over big rocks and weaving around fallen logs. It took ten minutes to find the spot. There were the tall bushes. But with no wind today, Wesley couldn't see even a bit of a door.

Disappointed, Wesley looked around to see if there was any way to cross the river that was still high and swollen. The water swirled around and tumbled loudly between boulders.

"What about logs?" thought Wesley. "If I could put one log across to that first big boulder a ways out, I might be able to then jump from boulder to boulder."

For a few minutes, he tried to move a fallen log he found at the edge of the forest, but he couldn't even move it an inch, so he decided to rush back to the pasture.



Student

All the sheep were safe, and Arthur left. Wesley was bored again. He took a stick and drew shapes in the dirt: a square, a triangle, an oval, and a circle. Then he opened his knapsack to get out his lunch. His horn caught his eye, so he pulled it out.

Parent/Teacher

"It would sure be exciting," he thought, "if there were a wolf, and I could blow this horn."

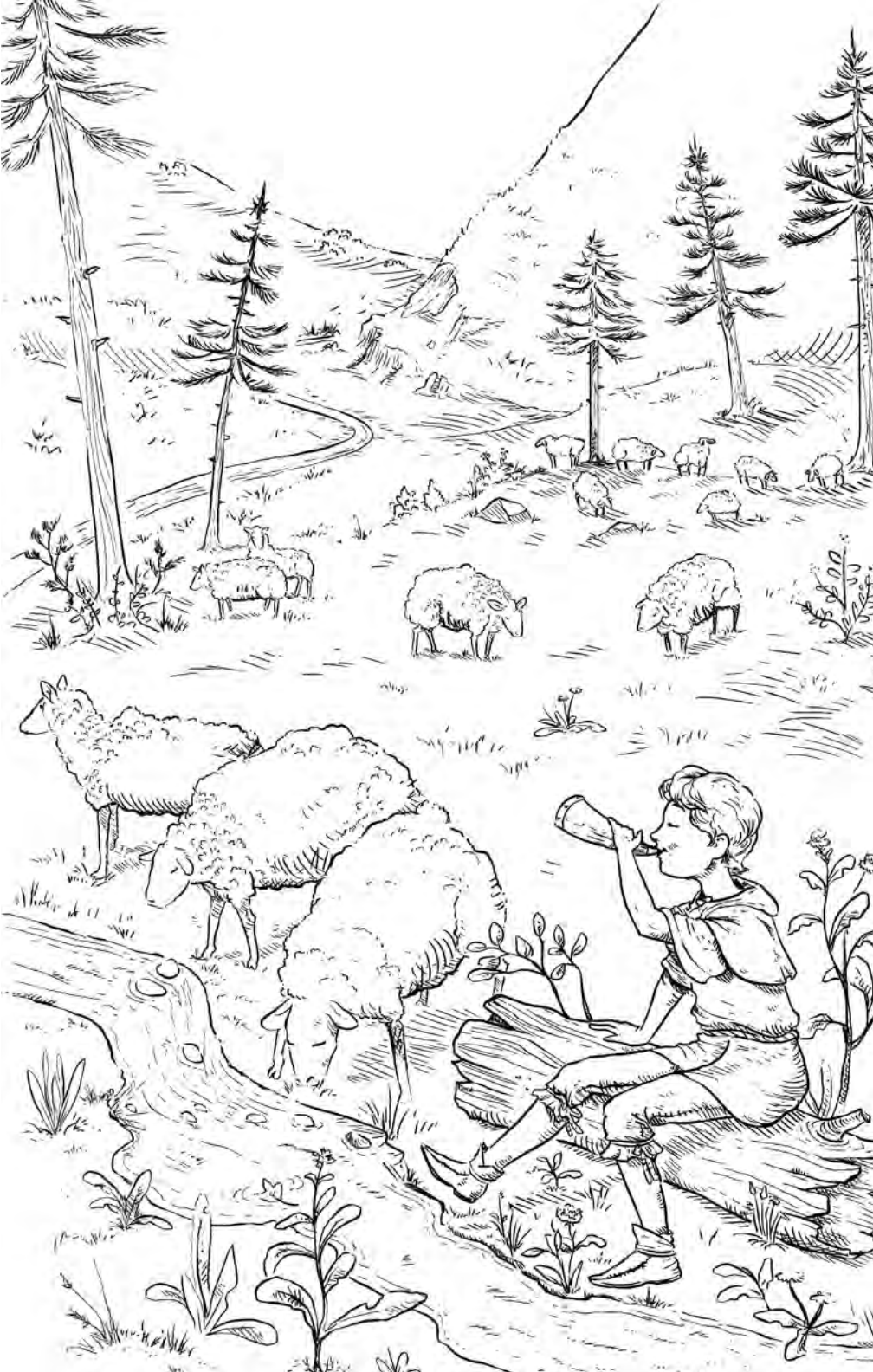
Wesley sat on a log and looked at the horn. "Maybe I will blow it," he said aloud. He felt excited.

Wesley picked up the horn, but he hesitated. A voice was practically blaring in his ear: "This is a bad idea!" But, oh! He didn't listen to that voice. He lifted the horn to his lips and blew and blew.

Within five minutes, men from the village began to arrive. They came with pitchforks and shovels. They came shouting. Soon, they were spread out looking for the wolf. Wesley began to feel terrible. Then, Wesley's father arrived. Red-faced and sweaty, Wesley ran to his father and told him what he had done.

"Oh, Father, I'm so sorry!" he sobbed.

Wesley's father sat down by Wesley. "Son, I am sorry, too. We all make mistakes, but our mistakes do have consequences. Once trust is lost, it can take a while to earn it back."





The men searched for the wolf for a long period of time, and Wesley felt bad. He was glad when the men finally returned to the area around the pasture.

He was almost too scared to tell the men the truth. However, a feeling in his heart was telling him what he needed to do, and he didn't want to ignore it this time.



"I need to tell you all something," Wesley said. In his mind he said a quick and silent prayer for strength. Then he took a deep breath and spoke.

"There was no wolf. I'm really very sorry." Wesley felt even worse when he saw the disappointment in the men's faces.

None of the men said anything. They just quietly left, and Wesley found himself alone with his father. He could not remember ever feeling so terrible.



That night, Wesley went straight to bed after dinner. He laid in bed and looked up at the moon and the beautiful stars sprinkled across the dark sky.

He sure wished he hadn't blown that horn.





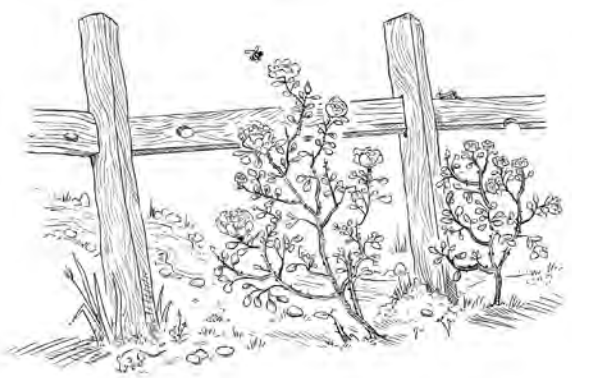
Chapter 5

Sounds of OO

Student

Wesley walked slowly across the w<u>oo</u>d fl<u>oo</u>r and went outside.

The morning beamed as golden and beautiful as any day, but Wesley felt gl<u>oo</u>my. He did not greet the sheep, the flowers, the trees, or the stream. He didn't notice the waving trees or even that the roses had finally bl<u>oo</u>med.



Parent/Teacher

Instead of jumping into the gurgling stream like he normally did, Wesley just dangled his feet in the stream for a couple minutes before returning home.

Student

Inside, Alice was looping wool on a spool, and Father was cleaning soot out of the fireplace. Mother was making cookies, but even that didn't boost Wesley's droopy mood.

Parent/Teacher

As Wesley walked up to the pasture with his sheep, he thought about how he teased people so often. He realized it wasn't really nice to scare people by telling them there was a spider in their hair or that there was a mouse when there really wasn't—even if it was just a joke.

It was great to be fun and even funny, but it wasn't funny to scare people or to say things that were not true.

Wesley determined then and there that he wouldn't say things that were not true anymore, even as a joke. As he walked with the soft, woolly sheep jostling around him, he prayed aloud and asked God to forgive him. He felt a comforting warmth fill his heart. He compared the feeling to the terrible feelings he had had, and his eyes became misty as he thought about the goodness of God's way.

Then, Wesley's thoughts turned to the ruined pear field. He wondered how he could help raise money to buy chickens that would eat those pests that were ruining the pears.

"Oh!" he cried aloud. "What if there is treasure or gold coins or something behind that secret door? I HAVE to remember to tell Father about the key."





Student

As Wesley sat watching the sheep that day, he was so grateful that God was able to lift the gl<u>oo</u>my feelings he had because of the p<u>oo</u>r choice he had made the day before.

One of his sheep stepped into a deep gr<u>oo</u>ve in the field and cut her leg. Wesley gently cleaned the little trickle of bl<u>oo</u>d that <u>oo</u>zed from the cut. He loved his sheep!

Parent/Teacher

"Hello!" a little voice called from across the field. It was Alice. "Mother sent me because you forgot to take your lunch. She said I'm old enough to walk up the trail alone now."

"It's so good to see you," Wesley said.

"You too," Alice said.

Alice suddenly stopped. "Look!" she cried, pointing to the edge of the woods. "Two wolves!"

Wesley spun around. She was right. He grabbed his horn and blew and blew!

He then started gathering the sheep and kept Alice right next to him. No one seemed to be coming. He blew the horn again. Soon, Father appeared through the trees.

"Father!" cried Wesley. "There really are wolves, but no one believes me now."

"I believe you," said his father. He shot his gun into the woods to scare off the wolves. Soon, Wesley and his family and his sheep were safely home.



Challenge Word: cellar

Chapter 6

Sounds of EAR

Student

Early the next week, Wesley and Alice walked to school. Summer had arrived, and it was usually clear and bright this time of year, but the day was overcast and dreary.

Wesley searched the sky and saw dark, angry clouds in the distance. "I fear a storm is coming," he said to Alice.

Parent/Teacher

Sure enough! It began to rain as soon as class started. Wesley was surprised when the first thing the teacher did that day was say, "Each of you pick up the rock I gave you and come outside."

Wesley was excited. "Maybe we'll find out what is so special about these rocks," he said to Arthur.

The teacher had all of the kids sit in a circle, even as it rained. He had them set their rocks on the ground, and he put a small pile of sand in the middle of the circle.

"Look what happens to this sand as it is rained on."

Parent/Teacher

Wesley watched as the rain quickly washed the little sand pile away.

"Now," said the teacher, "notice that your rock has not washed away. I gave you this rock to remind you of a parable in the Bible."

The teacher had everyone go back to the schoolroom, where everyone was grateful to be sheltered from the increasing rain as they listened to the teacher read the parable:

> "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
>
> And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.
>
> And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:
>
> And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

The teacher closed his Bible. "These rocks may not look special. They may look ordinary, but they are strong. The rain cannot wash them away. We can be like these rocks. We may look ordinary. We may not do any grand thing, but if we follow the teachings of Christ, we can be strong and immovable."

Student

Wesley felt a yearning in his heart to build his life upon the teachings of Christ.

He dearly wanted to earn back the trust of the villagers.

Suddenly, Wesley heard a thundering sound on the schoolroom roof. It was hailing hard!




GENERAL
STOR

Student

With the storm raging outside, it was hard to learn anything.

The teacher went to the window and looked out. "Oh, dear!" he cried, pulling on his short beard. "It appears there is a tornado coming this way! Everyone follow me! The general store across the street has a cellar."

Everyone dashed out in a line with the teacher in the rear. The sounds of the storm filled Wesley's ears.

Parent/Teacher

As the group sped across the street, they could see the tornado in the distance.

The teacher was deeply concerned about the situation. He looked over his shoulder to see how far away the tornado was, and he didn't see a rock in front of him, causing him to trip. He tumbled onto the dirt. Quickly, he arose, but he was limping badly.

"Are you OK?" Wesley called above the whipping wind.

"It's my ankle," said the teacher. "I've twisted it."

Once they were safe in the cellar, and the cellar door was shut, much of the sound of the storm was shut out. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

"Do we have everyone here?" asked the teacher.

Student

"I don't see my little sister, Pearl," a boy named Earl said.

"Oh, dear!" moaned the teacher. "We need to check the schoolroom, but I cannot bear the pain in my ankle. I can't walk."

"I'll get her!" cried Wesley.

"She is wearing a bright pink dress," said Earl. "Hopefully you can find her!"

Wesley dashed into the street and was filled with fear when he saw the tornado coming closer.

Parent/Teacher

However, he thought about the rock his teacher had given him. "I will be brave for Christ's sake," he said to himself.

He flung the schoolroom door open and searched the room. A little spot of bright pink showed from under a desk.

"Pearl!" Wesley cried as he ran to the little girl and picked her up.

"I was scared and hid," she said through her tears.

"It's OK! You're safe now," said Wesley as they left.

After everyone waited in the cellar, the storm finally passed. The group timidly opened the cellar door. Patches of blue sky shone through the overcast sky, and the tornado was gone.

"Let's go make sure our home is OK," Wesley said to Alice.





Challenge Words:
believe
pieces
cousin

Chapter 7

EY

Student

Wesley and Alice started off for home, but then Wesley had a thought. He turned to Alice. "Mrs. Bailey lives alone in a part of the valley that was closest to the tornado. We should go see if she is OK before we go home."

After jogging for three miles, they finally turned around a corner and saw Mrs. Bailey's home. Wesley and Alice could not believe what they saw. Mrs. Bailey's chimney was the only thing that was left standing. The tornado had totally smashed her home.

Parent/Teacher

"Mrs. Bailey!" Wesley called, but there was no answer. They could not see her anywhere.

"Come on! We need to get help!" Wesley said to Alice.

As fast as their legs could carry them, they dashed to the nearest farm, which was not close—it was two miles away.

Sweaty and out of breath, the siblings finally arrived on Mr. Stanley's doorstep. Wesley banged on the door.

Mr. Stanley opened the door. "What is all this banging about?" he asked.

Student

"The tornado that was in the valley—it smashed Mrs. Bailey's home to pieces. Only her chimney remains intact. Please come help! I'm not sure if she is OK."

"Don't monkey around," said Mr. Stanley. "I have been deep in my cellar organizing my bags of wheat all day, but I don't believe you."

Parent/Teacher

"It's true!" cried Wesley. "There really was a tornado!" Alice nodded her head in agreement.

The man shook his head. "I was one of the men that came running up the mountain to help you when you cried wolf and there was no wolf. How can I trust you? This is just another one of your jokes."

Wesley started to protest, but Mr. Stanley just shook his head and went back into his house.

"Oh, Alice!" cried Wesley. "No one believes me anymore."

Alice took Wesley's hand. "I'm sorry, Wesley. We need to find a way to help Mrs. Bailey. Who else lives close by?"

"Mr. Owens lives a mile from here," said Wesley, "but he also came when I cried wolf. What if he doesn't believe me?"

"You're right," said Alice. "Father believes you. We need to get him, but it is so far from home, and I am so tired. I feel like I can hardly take another step. Let's pray for help."

The two siblings dropped to their knees right there, and then after a prayer, they began wearily walking.

Student

After about ten minutes, they went around a corner, and next to the big field of barley, they saw a donkey on the road. It had a silver bell on its neck.

"It's Honey. It's my donkey!" Alice cried, going to the donkey. "Come here, Honey."

Parent/Teacher

"Wow," said Wesley. "How did Honey get here?"

"I believe it's an answer to our prayer!" Alice said. "I am thanking God right now in my heart. Come on, let's get on!"

Blessedly, Honey was willing to go at a steady trot, and they got home in just over half an hour.





Student

Wesley was so glad to see that the tornado had not reached his home and farm. His mother was in the yard with a basket of kidney beans and parsley that she was picking.

Parent/Teacher

"Oh! You are both safe!" she cried. "Your father went to town to check on you when we saw the tornado."

The siblings quickly told their mother about Mrs. Bailey's house.

"Oh, it's OK," their mother reassured them. "Mrs. Bailey is far away visiting her cousin right now."

Wesley and Alice were relieved, and soon their father returned and they all went inside to have dinner.



Father said, "Mrs. Bailey is fine. She wasn't even home."

Wesley explained what else happened and said, "The villagers will never believe me again."

"Gaining trust can take time," Father said.

The talk then turned to the ruined pears and how they could possibly raise money for the chickens they needed.



Wesley remembered the key he had found and finally told his father!

Father shot up from the table. "Oh, Wesley! I'm so glad you told me. I think I know what that key goes to!"

"You do?" Wesley asked. "Is it to open a mysterious door in the side of the mountain?" He then explained the door he had found on the other side of the river.

"Well, it actually might!" exclaimed Wesley's father. "My father inherited a big chest of gold coins when his wealthy brother died. He was worried the gold would get stolen, so he made a place somewhere, and he hid the gold. All I know is that the place had a big metal door. He hid the key somewhere. My parents died before they told any of us where the key or door was."

"Oh, Father!" said Wesley. "I can show you where the door in the mountain is. Let's go see it tomorrow!"

Chapter 8

Soft C and G

Student

After a breakfast of apple cider, cereal, and slices of ham with a spicy sauce, Wesley and his father took the golden key and set out to find the door in the mountain. Father had the golden key in his pocket. The dawn was spreading gentle pink and orange rays of light across the green hills.

"I'm certain I can show you the place," Wesley declared to his father. "I really did see a door in the mountain."

Parent/Teacher

It felt wonderful to Wesley to be out in the cool morning with his father. Wesley felt sure that the door in the mountain contained the chest of gold.

"We can buy the chickens we need to save the pear orchard!" Wesley thought.

When they came to the river above the pasture where Wesley watched the sheep, his heart beat with excitement. They were almost there.

Student

Wesley was full of energy. He scanned the mountainside as they walked.

"There it is!" he cried, pointing to a group of tall bushes and a single wide tree. "The door is behind those bushes. I didn't just imagine a door was there—I saw it when it was really windy and the bushes were blowing around."

Parent/Teacher

"I believe you," Father said as he looked around. The river was still high and moving fast.

"We can't cross the river now, Wesley. We need to wait for about two weeks. Now that summer is here, the water will really start to go down."

"Can't we build a bridge or go over on a raft or something, Father?" Wesley pleaded.

"I'm sure we *could* find a way," Father said. "But it would take a lot of work to build a raft or a bridge, and it might even be dangerous. I know it is hard to wait, but it is only two weeks."

Wesley was disappointed. Two weeks felt like an eternity to him.

Student

"I understand, Father," Wesley said, although he was disappointed. "I think we should—" Wesley stopped in the middle of the sentence.

"Look, Father! Do you see that giant hornets' nest hanging from the tree?"

Father nodded his head. "I see it. We are going to have to be really careful when we come back."

Parent/Teacher

That afternoon, Wesley arrived at school. As he was walking up the school steps, he noticed that the girl in front of him named Cindy had a big venomous spider crawling on her shoulder. It disappeared into her hair.

"A spider!" yelled Wesley. "I think it's a venomous kind!"

Whirling around, the girl put her hands on her hips. "I am not going to fall for any of your teasing anymore, Wesley. My father was one of the men that ran up the mountain when you called wolf. Did you know that he left so quickly that he forgot to close the gate, and all the cows came in and trampled our corn patch? Don't tease me anymore."

"But, I'm telling the truth!" Wesley cried.

The girl didn't listen, but a minute later, she screamed. The spider had bitten her. The teacher rushed her to the doctor.



Student

As Wesley and the class waited for news about Cindy and for the teacher to return, they practiced math facts.

Wesley felt absolutely terrible. He thought about what might have happened if Cindy had trusted him. Maybe the spider would not have bitten her.

He thought of the ruined corn of Cindy's father.

Then, he took his pencil and wrote an apology message to Cindy's father.

Parent/Teacher

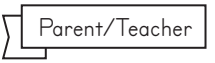
Wesley then noticed the rock his teacher had given him. A desire welled up in him again to build his life on the example of Jesus Christ.

"Oh, please help me become like Thee," he prayed in his heart. "What can I do to make things right?"

An idea started to form in Wesley's mind. Not only would he write an apology letter to each man who had come when he cried wolf, but he would spend a half a day helping them around their farms to help make up for the time they lost.

He told Alice his plan as they walked home, and she





squealed with delight. "What a wonderful plan! And it will help you pass the time until you can cross the river and see what is behind the door in the mountain."

Challenge Words:
instead
exhausted

Chapter 9

PH and TCH

Student

Wesley woke up and stretched. Never before had he awoken before the sun rose. As he tugged on his boots and ate breakfast in the kitchen, he could hear the crickets chirping outside.

He did not have time to take his usual morning dip. Instead, he rounded up the sheep and started up the hill just as the sun started to rise. A little gopher poked his head out of his hole and watched the quiet group starting up the trail.

Parent/Teacher

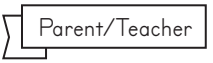
Wesley had decided to bring the sheep up to the pasture very early each day so that he could bring them home early and have time to help the men in the village.

He had also brought a cart so that he could collect firewood to bring to the families that he was going to help.





Keeping a close watch on the sheep, he took out his hatchet and chopped up a large pile of wood. It took all morning.



With his cart loaded, and with his sheep having had hours to graze on the rich green grass, Wesley headed home.

He visited Cindy's father first, and was relieved to find out that Cindy had recovered from her spider bite.



Wesley gave Cindy's father a bundle of firewood and the note that he had written.

Cindy's father read Wesley's paragraph. He then looked up. "Well, thank you, Wesley. I do have a ditch that I need dug."

For the next week and a half, Wesley visited several families. He patched roofs, stitched ripped nets, and fetched water.

He also wanted to help his mother and father, so he kept Alice busy by telling her stories of dolphins, elephants, and pheasants.



Student

Wesley was exhausted, but he felt good inside. He had done what he could to make things right, and finally it was time to see if he and his father could cross the river and go to the door in the mountain.

Once again, Wesley and his father headed up the mountain. Mr. Boyle and his grandson Arthur wanted to come too, so they met them in the sheep pasture.

Parent/Teacher

Wesley's heart beat with excitement as the small group followed the river along. Already, Wesley could tell that the river was much lower. It moved slowly and only made a small tinkling and gurgling sound rather than the roar and rush it made earlier in the year.

"This is it!" Wesley called as he saw the bushes. Sure enough, the group was able to cross the river with no problem. They first jumped across some rocks, and then they waded across the rest of the river, the water going up to Wesley's knees.

Arthur smiled at Wesley. "This is so fun! What an adventure."

Finally, the group was across the river. Wesley had waited a very long time for this.



Student

He felt a sense of triumph. "Let's go!" he exclaimed, leading the way up to the bushes. He was sure he had seen a door that one time, but he had not seen it since, so he did wonder a little bit if there really was a door there or not.

They clambered over a patch of rocks and clutched the big roots coming out of the hillside as they climbed up.

Parent/Teacher

The group reached the bushes. Wesley pushed through the bushes and found himself standing in front of a huge metal door. The blue paint was worn, chipped, and peeling off. There was a knob on the door, but—

"Oh, no!" Wesley exclaimed. It looked like the doorknob had been broken, and the door was barely open. Someone had already been there.

Before Wesley opened the door, he wanted to see if the key fit in the hole. His father had given him the key that morning. With trembling fingers, he took the key from his pocket and inserted it into the hole. It fit perfectly, and it turned the knob. This was the place his grandfather had built to hide his chest of gold.





Wesley was itching to find out if the gold was still there. After he swung the door open, it took a few seconds for his eyes to adjust to the dim little area, only the size of a small closet.

It was empty.

Wesley's heart fell. "How will we ever buy the chickens and save our pear orchard now?" Wesley said sadly.

Wesley's father laid a comforting hand on Wesley's shoulder.



However, just then the group heard a loud buzzing sound and turned around. The hornets from the nearby hornets' nest had become aware of their presence, and they weren't happy to have them as guests. A huge cloud of the hornets was darting toward the group.

"Run!" Arthur shouted as a hornet landed on his arm and stung him.

"No!" said Mr. Boyle, who knew so much about the animals and insects of the area. "Hornets can fly much faster than you can run. Crouch down low, and cover your head."

Parent/Teacher

The group did crouch down, and moved slowly, covering their heads. By the time they got home, they each had several painful stings and ripped clothing. Wesley was dirty, tired, in pain, and very discouraged. The day had not gone as he had hoped.





Challenge Word:
couples

Chapter 10

O Can Say the Short U Sound

Student

Wesley did not feel up to his morning dip the next day. He trudged up the mountain with his sheep. He did feel a little better after watching a d<u>o</u>zen l<u>o</u>vely birds flying in a V in the sky and seeing a c<u>o</u>lorful hummingbird h<u>o</u>ver in fr<u>o</u>nt <u>o</u>f him.

Parent/Teacher

Nevertheless, he couldn't stop wondering how they were going to be able to save their pear orchard.

Dark clouds moved in, and Wesley wondered if it was going to rain.

He never felt any rain, but several strikes of lightning flashed alarmingly close to the pasture. The loud crack of the thunder jolted Wesley, and then its boom echoed throughout the valley. The sheep were scared and huddled together.

Gently and calmly, Wesley kept his beloved animals together. Just as he decided to go home early, he smelled something. It was smoke!





Wesley scanned the area and quickly discovered that a tree close to the pasture was on fire. It only took him a second to realize that it had probably been hit with lightning.

The tree was barely on fire now, but when it started to blaze, the fire would spread to other trees, and then it would be almost impossible to contain the fire.



Without delay, Wesley grabbed the horn out of his knapsack and blew loud and long. In his mind, he wondered if anyone would come. Would anyone believe him now? Had he earned the trust back from the villagers?

His question was answered within several minutes. Yes! The men from the village had come. When they saw the tree, which was now completely ablaze, they set to work. Wesley's heart swelled within him. He was so grateful that he had worked so hard to regain the trust of these men.

Mr. Boyle, with his wonderful wisdom, directed the project. As Wesley watched his father join the men, he was filled with gratitude for these hardworking, good men of his village who had always worked together to protect their village and to help one another.

Within half an hour, the fire was out.



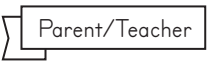


Later that day, Wesley and Alice went out their front door, intending to go to school, but Wesley stopped in complete surprise.

Several couples from the village were there, and several more were coming up the street. Many more were coming!

"They each are carrying one chicken," Alice observed as Mother and Father came out too.

Each couple lovingly placed a chicken in front of Wesley.



Mr. Boyle came up to Wesley and explained what was going on. "The villagers wanted to do something to thank you for all you have done for them. They are proud of you."

Wesley couldn't believe this was happening. His mother took Wesley's hand and whispered to him. "You did not need a chest of gold to save our pear orchard, Wesley. You only needed a heart of gold."

Wesley counted the chickens and then turned to his father and asked breathlessly, "Will fifty-four chickens be enough to save our farm?"

His father nodded with tears in his eyes.



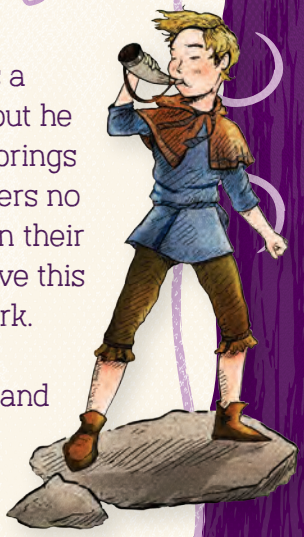
The next morning, just as the sun started pouring over the land, Wesley shoved off his quilt, knelt by his bed, and said his prayers, and then ran out of the front door.

He sped across the dew-covered grass with his bare feet toward the little river that wound around the side of his home—ready for his morning dip.

"Hello, sheep!" he called. "Hello, squirrels! Hello, pine trees! Hello, sky! Hello, beautiful world!"



WESLEY AND THE WOLVES



In this timeless tale, Wesley is a cheerful, good-hearted boy, but he likes to tease. When his teasing brings serious consequences, the villagers no longer trust him. How can he gain their trust again? Wesley wants to solve this problem, even if it takes hard work. He also wants to solve mysteries about two items he found: a key and a hidden door in a mountain! Kids will love following Wesley's story while learning new reading skills along the way.

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