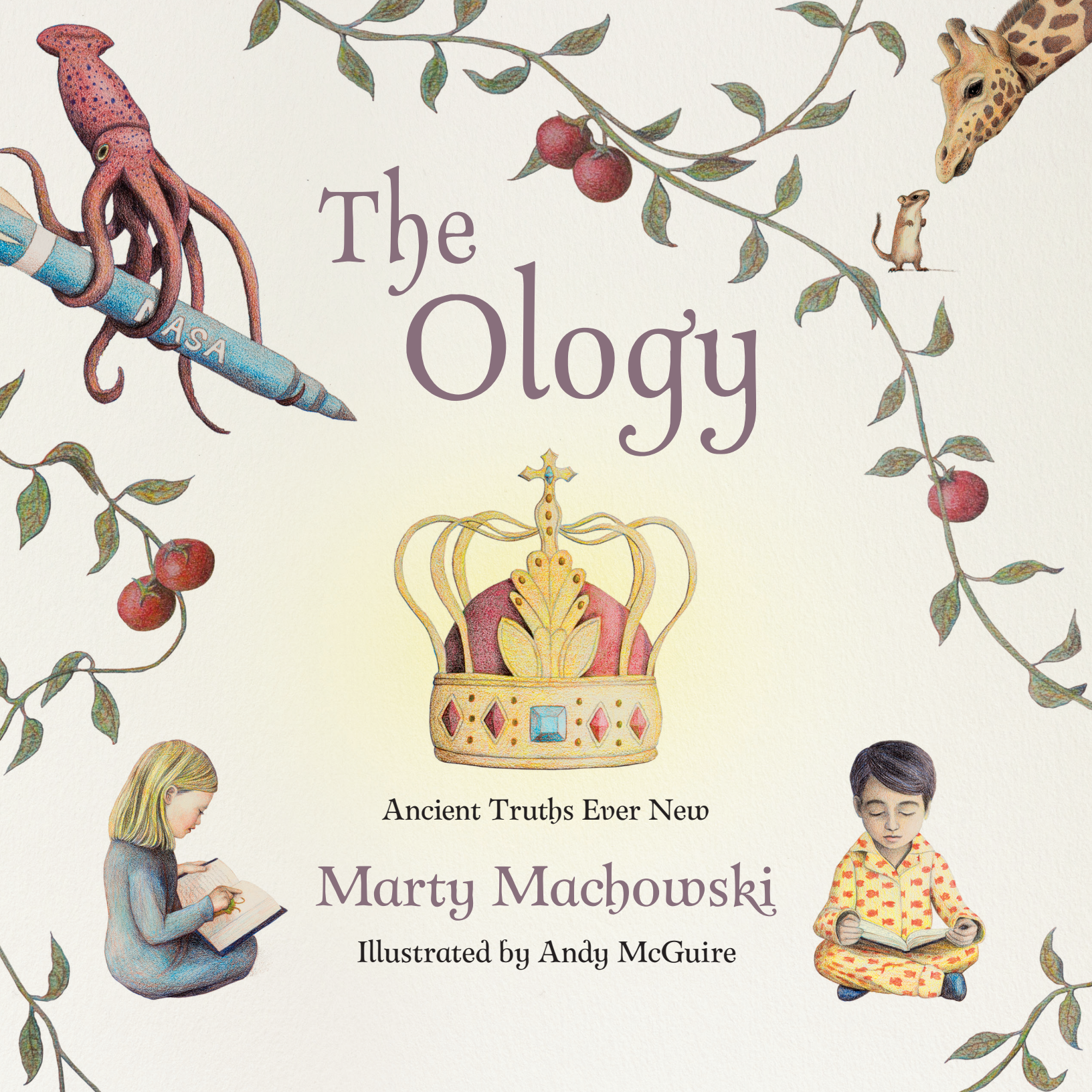

The Ology

Ancient Truths Ever New

Marty Machowski

Illustrated by Andy McGuire

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Parent Guide

As a parent picking up this book, you may be wondering if your children are too young to study theology. Theology is simply the study of God. Whether you realize it or not, our children learn about God every day. We teach them about God's power and beauty when we marvel at a rainbow or the power of the ocean waves. We teach them about God when we explain right from wrong, or how to pray before bedtime, and the importance of forgiving a friend. This book lays out theology in a simple and clear way that presents deep, important truths about God in an easy-to-understand format for you and your children.

The Ology is a multilayered educational resource for grade school children. While the illustrations are geared to the younger grades, Bible references provide another layer of learning to extend the use of this book for upper elementary students. Each chapter looks at a different topic. So, although they are short, it might be good to stick with one chapter a day. Then take some time throughout your day to discuss the different things your children are learning about God with them.

Early elementary students (ages 6–9). Parents of first graders can read the book straight through from cover to cover the first time, then come back to individual topics and ask their children about the illustrations, helping the children to connect the artwork with the truths the pages present. The more abstract theological truths are presented with easier to understand analogies, so that the youngest children can begin to learn the concepts presented through them.

The Ology is a perfect book to challenge early readers and expand their theological vocabulary. Of course they will need a little help. So we've defined some important theological words in a glossary at the back of the book and provided kid-friendly definitions to these words. This should help children understand these concepts so they become a part of their vocabulary.

The early elementary age is also the time to point out the Bible references and use them to talk about how the theological truths contained in *The Ology* are all found in the Bible.

Ask children if they know if a particular reference is from the Old or New Testament, and see if they can learn the correct genre of literature—narrative (historical stories), poetry (Psalms), wisdom (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes), law (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), prophetic (Isaiah to Malachi), gospel (Matthew to John), letters (Romans to Jude), apocalyptic (Revelation).

Also, use the discussion questions in the "Think Theology Talk Theology" section for this age group. While children in the younger elementary grades won't be able to answer those questions in writing, you can use them in conversation as you read through each section.

As you go through the book, ask the children to repeat the Scriptures and see if they can connect them to the larger truth presented.

Upper elementary students (ages 10–12). *The Ology* can be used to teach upper elementary students systematic theology. (You could even use *The Ology* as the basis for a Bible curriculum.)

Once students have read through the book to get a big picture view of the theological landscape, have them read it through again, section by section, looking up the Scripture references.

Give them a journal in which they can list Scriptures and explain how they connect to the larger truth presented in each section.

In addition to looking up the Scriptures, have children write out answers to the discussion questions included in the "Think Theology Talk Theology" section. If you are using *The Ology* as a Bible curriculum, their answers can be used as homework.

Scripture memory. Children of all ages can memorize Scripture. *The Ology* can be used as a resource for Scripture memory by having your children memorize the verses written out on the pages. Choose one from each section to memorize along with the written work that they do.

Teens and adults. *The Ology* is a children's book, however, it can be helpful to provide the framework for a solid biblical worldview for teens and young adults as well. Assign it to high school students as a children's book (they will not be fooled) and have them write a paper on the worldview presented within its pages and whether they agree or disagree and why.

If you are looking for the next step beyond *The Ology,* consider *Big Truths for Young Hearts* by Bruce Ware and *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.

There is also a companion album to *The Ology* by Sovereign Grace Music that celebrates these wonderful theological truths through worship music that the whole family can enjoy. You can purchase it at http://sovereigngracemusic.org.

The Ology of God

1. God Always Was and Always Will Be

Oak trees sprout from acorns and toads begin as tadpoles, but God never had a beginning. When you look at photos of yourself that were taken years ago, you can see how much you've grown and changed. But there was never a time when God was smaller or younger. God is the same today as he was yesterday, and God will be the same tomorrow.

The day ends when the clock strikes twelve. The race ends at the finish line. But God will never end. God has always lived, and he will always live. That means that God is *eternal*. No matter how far you think back into the distant past, God has always lived. No matter how far you think ahead into the distant future, God will always be there.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

REVELATION 1:8

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

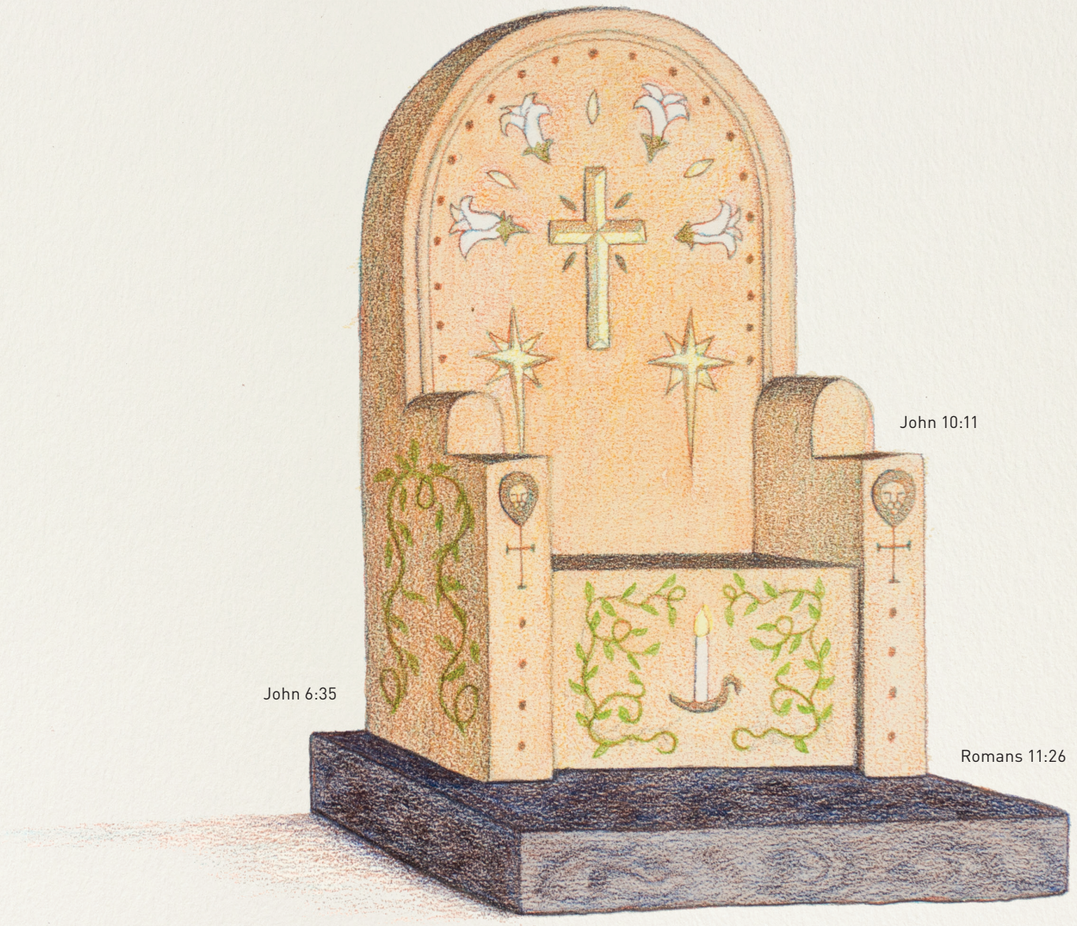
PSALM 90:2

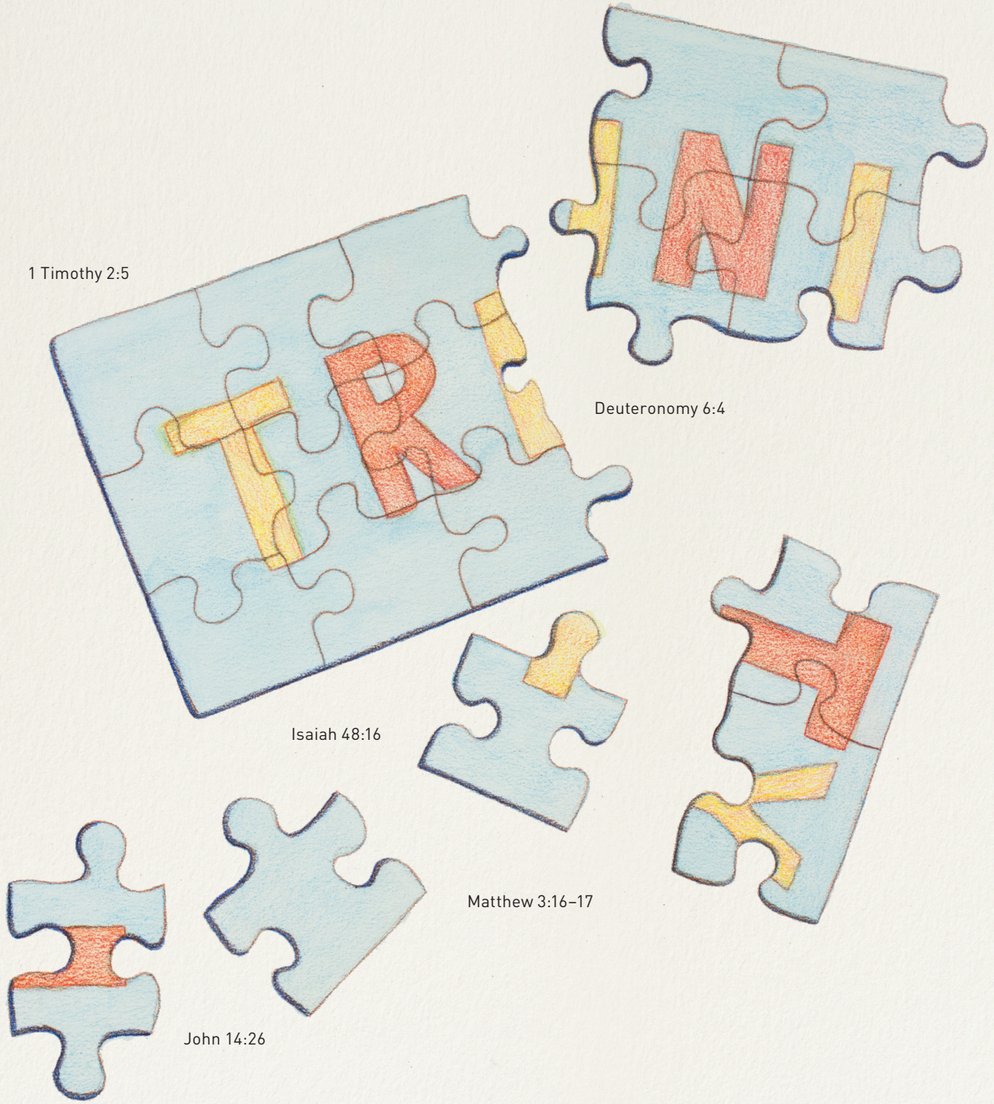
Names are special. That is why when you write your name, you start with a capital letter, like the "J" in Jack or the "S" in Sophie. That is also why we write an upper case "G" when we write about the one true God.

The names of Bible characters often tell us something about a person. Abraham means "the father of many," and he became the father of God's people. In the Bible, God himself, who can't be described by just one word or name, has many names; for example, Almighty, Bread of Life, Counselor, Deliverer, Everlasting Father, Fountain, Good Shepherd, Holy One, Immanuel, Jesus, King of Kings, Light of the World, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Rock, Savior, Truth, Vine, Wonderful Counselor, and Lamb. God is even named the Alpha and Omega, after the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet because he is the first and the last. Each of the names the Bible uses to describe God tells us something about who he is.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH 9:6





2. God Is Three in One

When you put together a jigsaw puzzle, you have to figure out how all the different pieces fit together to make a picture. God can be like that. The truths that the Bible tells us about God are a little bit like pieces of a puzzle. The more we learn about God, the clearer our picture of him will be, the more amazing he becomes to us, and the more we love him.

Here are a few truths about God, written in a poem. Read each line on its own and see if you can understand it, then read them all together:

The Bible teaches that our God is one,
Made up of three; Father, Spirit, and Son.
The Father and Son are one, it is true!
The Son and the Spirit, also one too.
Each one is distinct, yet fully divine,
United eternal in love for all time.
Trinity means the three persons are One;
Our one God is Father, Spirit, and Son.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are distinct persons, but they are equally God. Each person in the Trinity shines forth the glory of the others. The Father glorified the Son when at Jesus's transfiguration he told us to listen to the Son. The Son shined forth the glory of the Father by going all the way to the cross out of love for his Father and for us. The Spirit shines forth the glory of the Son as he reminds us of all that Jesus taught and makes us shine like Jesus too. Each person in the Trinity loves the others in an eternal love relationship. That's one of the reasons that the Bible tells us that God is love!

One day, we will see God face to face and enjoy the same pure love the Father, Son and Spirit share with each other.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
MATTHEW 28:19

Think Theology, Talk Theology

(Questions)

The Ology of God

1. God Always Was and Always Will Be
List all the names and characteristics for God mentioned in the Scripture verses in this chapter.

2. God Is Three in One
Which of the verses mentions all three persons of the Trinity together in one place?

Read John 14:26. How does it explain the Trinity?

3. God Created Everything out of Nothing at All
Who does Colossians 1:16 refer to?

What does the passage from Isaiah tell us we can learn about God from his work in creation?

4. God Is All-Powerful
What proclaims God's handiwork?

What verse tells us that people have no excuse for refusing to believe in God?

5. God Is in Control
What does God command to fall upon the earth?

What does every man and woman get from God?

6. God Knows All Things
Which verse tells us that God knows everything?

Rewrite Hebrews 4:13 in your own words. Describe how this verse makes you feel.

7. God Is Everywhere
Rewrite Psalm 139:7–10 in your own words.

8. God Is Perfect
Which verse(s) tells us what perfect love looks like?

Who do you find hard to love? What can you do to love them better?