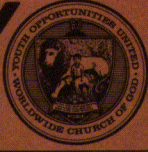


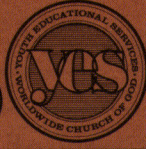
YOUTH



LEVEL 3

BIBLE

LESSONS



SPECIAL FEAST LESSON



The Spring Feasts

SPRING FESTIVAL
EDITION

THE SPRING FEASTS

During the long, cold winter many of God's creatures and plants have been asleep. But as spring approaches, the earth begins to receive more sunlight. The days become longer and the nights shorter. The soil becomes warmer and seeds which are in the ground begin to sprout or grow.

According to God's way of counting time, a new year has begun. The first month of God's calendar begins during the spring when new life appears everywhere!

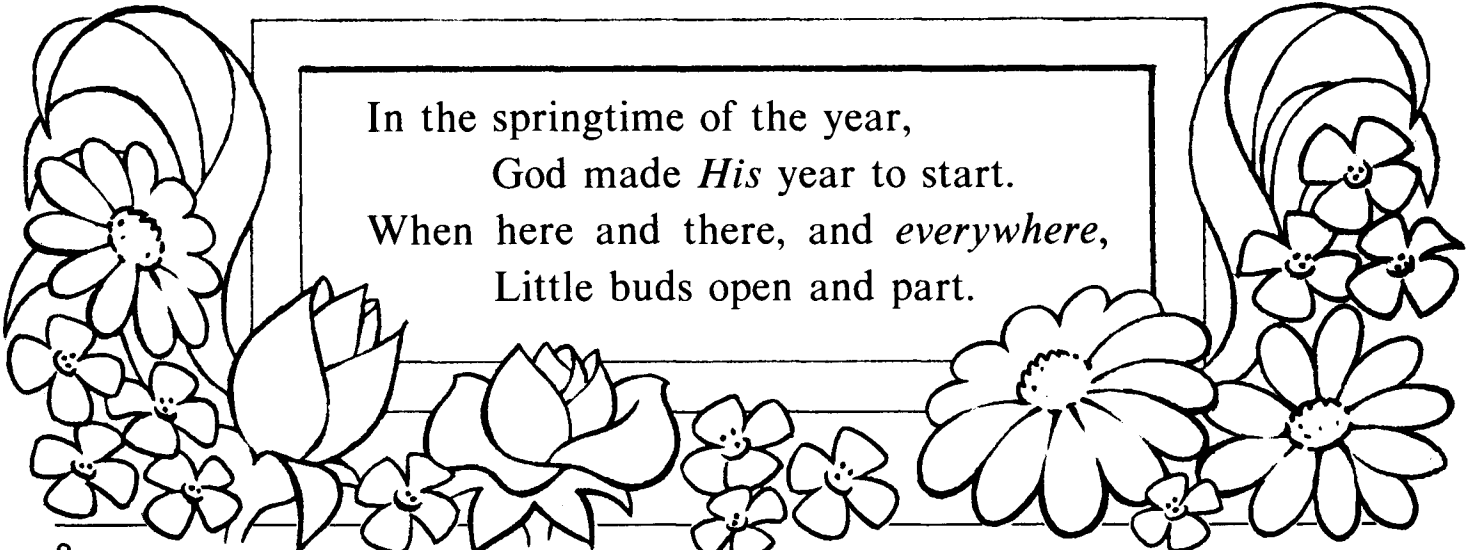
During this time each year, God's people observe the spring festivals. They are the Passover,

the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost. These festivals picture the first three steps in God's great plan for mankind.

God wants everyone who has ever lived to become members of His Family. This is His great purpose for creating man! And God's plan, pictured by the annual, or yearly festivals, shows *how* we may come into God's Family. Let's learn about the spring festivals.

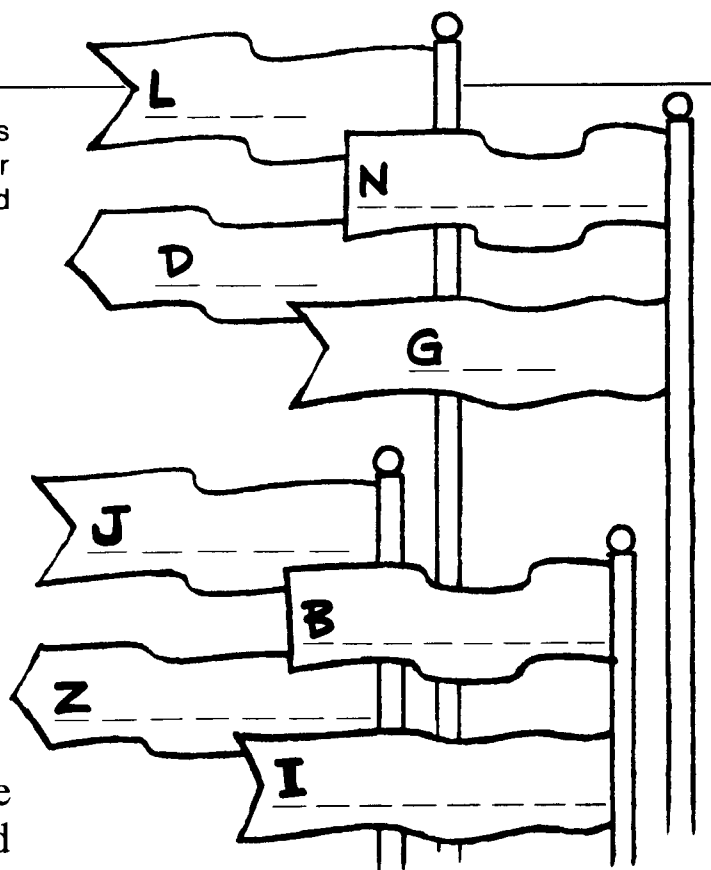
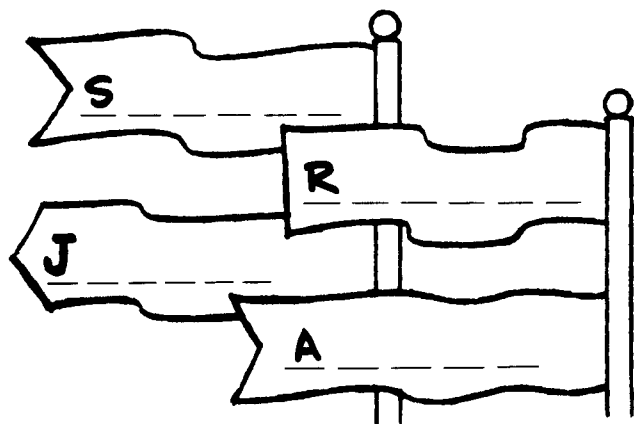
THE FIRST PASSOVER

Long ago in the land of Egypt, the children of Israel were slaves of the Egyptians for several hundred



In the springtime of the year,
God made *His* year to start.
When here and there, and *everywhere*,
Little buds open and part.

Do you remember the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel? Write each name on its correct banner and color it. The first letter of each name is filled in for you.



years. As slaves, they lived terrible lives. The Egyptians beat them and made them work very, very hard.

God knew about their suffering. He had promised many years before that He would bring His people out of Egypt. It was now the time for Him to keep His promise. So God chose a man named Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

God sent Moses and his brother Aaron to speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. They told Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But Pharaoh would not let them go. Instead he made them work harder!

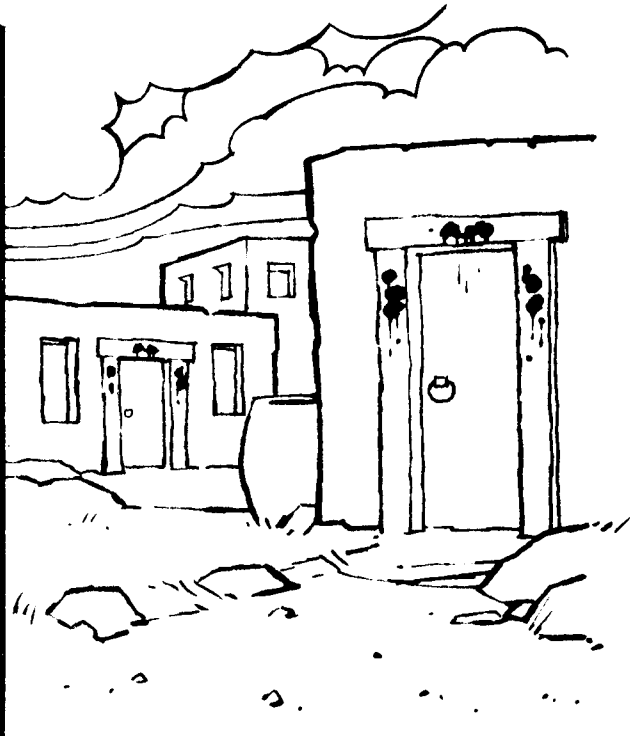
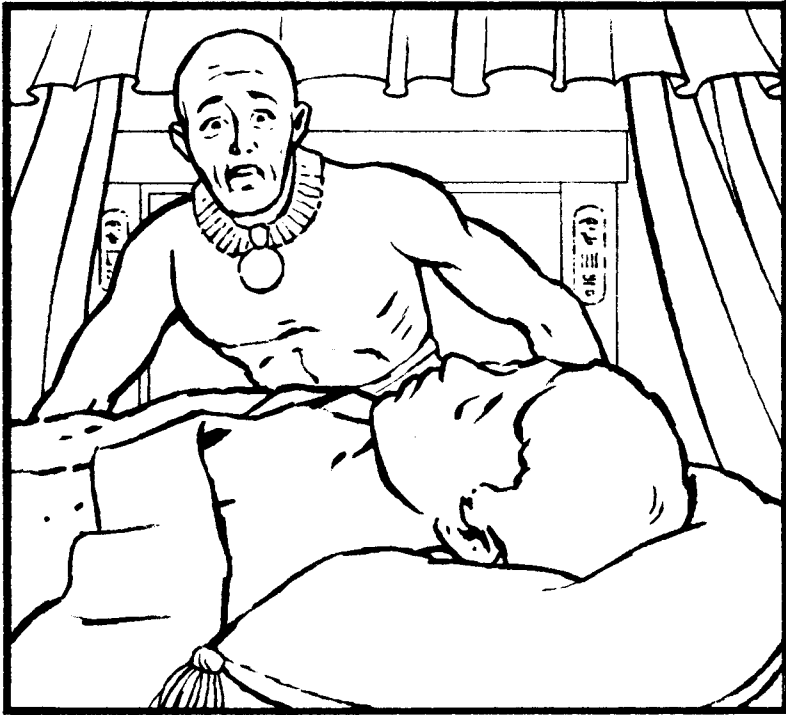
Next, God instructed Moses and Aaron to warn Pharaoh of the terrible plagues He would send upon the land of Egypt if Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go. But Pharaoh still refused. So God sent

plague after plague upon the Egyptians until their land was ruined. But Pharaoh still would not free the Israelites!

Nine plagues had now been sent. God told Moses He would send one more plague upon Egypt.

God protected the Israelites from most of the other plagues. But to be protected from the tenth plague, they would have to do something special. God told Moses to instruct the Israelites what they must do.

Moses then gave God's instructions to the people. "On the tenth day of the first month [Abib]," Moses began, "each man is to select from his flocks a beautiful,



healthy, young male lamb for his family. The lamb should be less than a year old, and must not have bruises or marks on it.

“He should take care of this lamb until the beginning of the fourteenth day. At sunset he should kill it and smear some of its blood upon the top and sides of the doorposts of his house.

“Roast the whole lamb, including its head, legs and inner parts,” continued Moses. “Be sure not to eat it either raw or boiled. If one family is too small to eat the whole lamb, they should share it with a neighbor.

“When it is time to eat the lamb, everyone should be dressed for a journey. But no one should go

outside the house—everyone is to stay inside all night.

“Eat the lamb quickly, and with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Any part of the lamb that is not eaten should be burned. Be careful not to let any of it remain until morning,” Moses instructed.

Then Moses explained what the people who followed these instructions would be protected from.

“On that night God will send an angel to kill all the firstborn of both man and animals in the land of Egypt,” said Moses. “But the angel will not kill the firstborn of your families if they are inside the houses marked with blood. When the angel sees the blood, he will *pass over* you. This day will be

called the Lord's Passover.

"We are to keep the Passover every year in the springtime so that we will not forget how God protected our firstborn from death" (Exodus 12:1-14).

That night the death angel passed through the land of Egypt, killing all the firstborn of the Egyptians. Even Pharaoh's first-born son was killed!

At last Pharaoh changed his mind. After the terrible tenth plague, he did not know what other plagues God might send next if he did not free the Israelites. So he sent a messenger to Moses to tell him that they were now free to go.

In the morning, Moses told the Israelites to ask the Egyptian people to give them of their gold, silver and clothing. The Egyptians gave the people whatever they wanted. They were anxious to have the Israelites leave. They were afraid of what might happen to them next!

THE PASSOVER TODAY

As we have seen, God commanded the Israelites many years ago to observe the Passover. He commanded them to keep it from generation to generation.

Today, thousands of years later,

God's people are also commanded to keep the Passover. But it is kept in a manner much different from the way the ancient Israelites kept it.

Little did the Israelites who kept that first Passover know that the Passover was to picture the very first step in God's great plan for mankind. The Passover lamb that they killed pictured Jesus Christ. Jesus is called the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29) and "our passover" (I Corinthians 5:7). He came to earth hundreds of years later to be killed to pay for our sins and the sins of all mankind.

Jesus was about 33 years old when He was killed. But before His death, He kept the Passover that spring just as He had every year before. While Jesus was eating the Passover meal with His disciples, He showed them a *new way* to keep the Passover from that time forward. No longer were they to kill a lamb as the Israelites had been instructed to do.

The first thing Christ did was to wrap a towel around His waist. Then He poured some water into a basin. One by one He washed the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel. Then He explained the lesson He wanted them to learn from this special footwashing ser-

vice—that we should *love* and *serve* one another!

Jesus then took unleavened bread, broke it in pieces and told His disciples to eat it. After they had eaten the bread, He gave them a cup of wine to drink.

MEANING OF BREAD AND WINE

Passover is a very solemn, or serious day. It was on this day that Jesus was crucified, or killed. He was killed in a very painful way. First, He was beaten and then He was nailed to a stake and left to die. Why did this have to happen?

In the Bible, God tells us that everyone has sinned, or disobeyed His Ten Commandments. God says that unless our sins are forgiven, we will suffer the punishment of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). The death would be *forever*—eternal death! However, God has a plan to save us from the punishment of sin. That plan also makes possible the opportunity to *live forever* as a part of God's Family!

But only Jesus could pay the penalty for our sins and for the sins of all who have ever lived. This is because Jesus was God before He came to earth as a human being. He was the other member of the God Family. He also was the Creator of all life. Therefore His

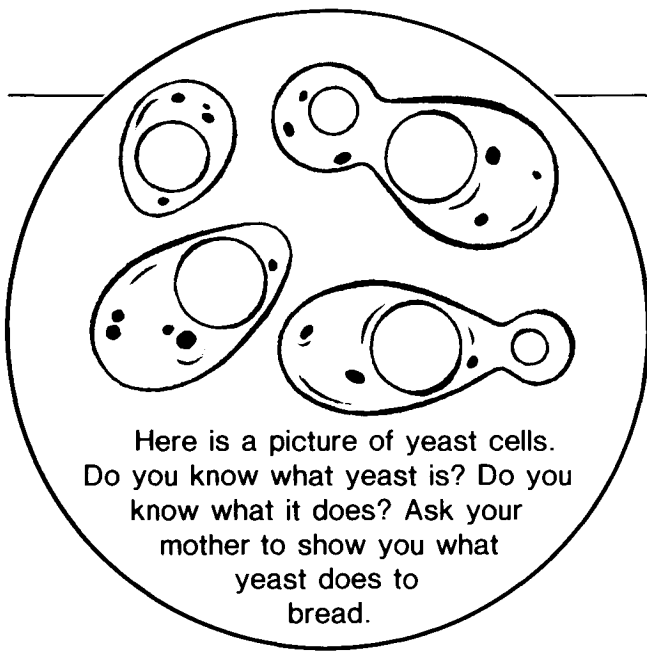
life was worth more than the rest of all mankind put together. But also, Jesus Christ never sinned—He was perfect—and as a result, did not deserve to die. This is why as the “Lamb of God,” His sacrifice could pay for the sins of all mankind. His death makes it possible for God to forgive us of our sins when we repent of them.

And so the broken, unleavened bread eaten during the Passover service stands for Christ's body that was cut and bruised. This reminds us that God will heal us when we are sick (I Peter 2:22, 24). Jesus suffered very very much to pay for our sins which cause sickness and disease. The wine taken during the Passover service stands for Jesus' blood which poured out from His body, causing His death. It reminds us that Christ's death makes possible the forgiveness of our sins.

THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The Days of Unleavened Bread begin on the day after the Passover. For seven days we are to eat unleavened bread, a flat bread that is made without leavening.

What does yeast or leavening do to foods like bread, cake and cookies? You probably already



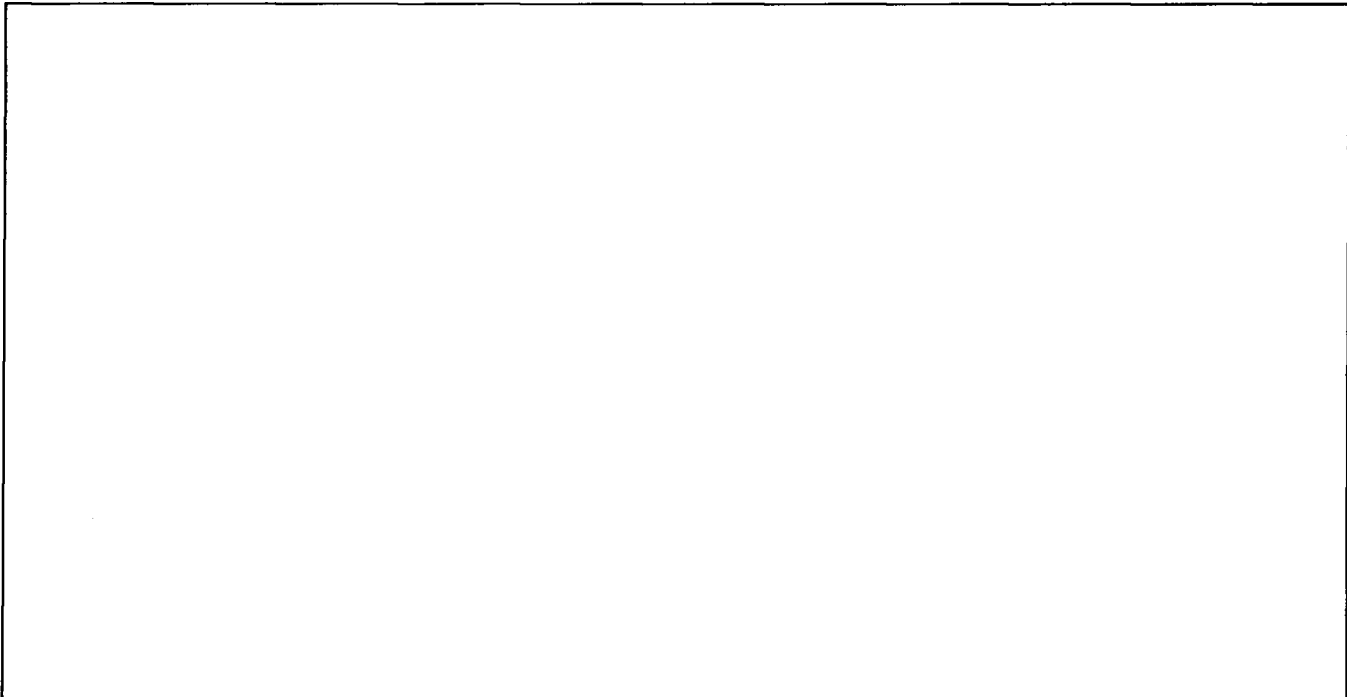
know that it puffs them up! Draw a picture of unleavened bread in the empty box on this page. Then draw some leavened bread.

God commands us to put out all leavening and food made with leavening from our houses before the Days of Unleavened Bread begin. This is why you and your

parents are busy putting out leavening before the first of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

List all the places you might find leavening in your home. _____

But what does all this have to do with God's plan? God commands us to put all the leavening out of our houses at this time because leavening is used in the Bible to picture *sin*. Leavening does to bread what sin does to us. It puffs us up! Once you have committed one sin or wrong action, it leads to other sins. For example, you might end up not telling the truth when you are asked about something you shouldn't have done. This is how



sin spreads—just like leaven.

The seven Days of Unleavened Bread are a special time to *remind* us that we should be busy getting all the sin out of our lives. Just as we try to get all the leavening out of our houses, we must also try to get rid of all sin or wrong-doing in our lives. We must try to do what is right by obeying God's commandments.

After much hard work in removing leaven from your home, you are now ready to celebrate the "Night to be Much Observed," which marks the beginning of the Days of Unleavened Bread. How will you observe it this year? _____

Do you know what this night pictures? It reminds us about what happened to the Israelites on this night thousands of years ago. Remember that during the daylight part of the fourteenth of the first month, the Israelites received precious things from the Egyptians.

That evening, the night of the fifteenth of Abib, under a beautiful full moon, the Israelites left Egypt with great happiness and joy. They were free from slavery! This event is also called the *exodus* from Egypt.

God commanded His people to

celebrate this night each year forever so they would remember how He rescued them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12:42). Today God's people celebrate this same night every year. This night is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the next spring festival following the Passover, and the second step in God's plan for mankind.

The first day of unleavened bread is a Holy Day and so is the seventh day. These are the first Holy Days of the year. God commands us not to work, but to attend special Sabbath services on these two holy days. His people are to keep these Holy Days forever (Exodus 12:17).

PENTECOST

The third festival picturing the third step in God's plan is Pentecost. Did you know that we must be able to count in order to figure out the day on which this feast is to be kept? We must be able to count to fifty! That's what Pentecost means—"fiftieth (day)." It is the only Holy Day that is set by counting.

Pentecost is the anniversary of God beginning His Church. God's Church began on the day of Pentecost in 31 A. D., exactly fifty

days after the Sabbath that came during the Days of Unleavened Bread. And it was on the Day of Pentecost that God sent His Holy Spirit to the disciples of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift from God. It is a special help that He puts in the minds of those who have repented (turned from their disobedience to God) and been baptized, and have had hands laid on them by one of God's ministers. The Holy Spirit makes one a member of God's Church. It helps those who have it to overcome

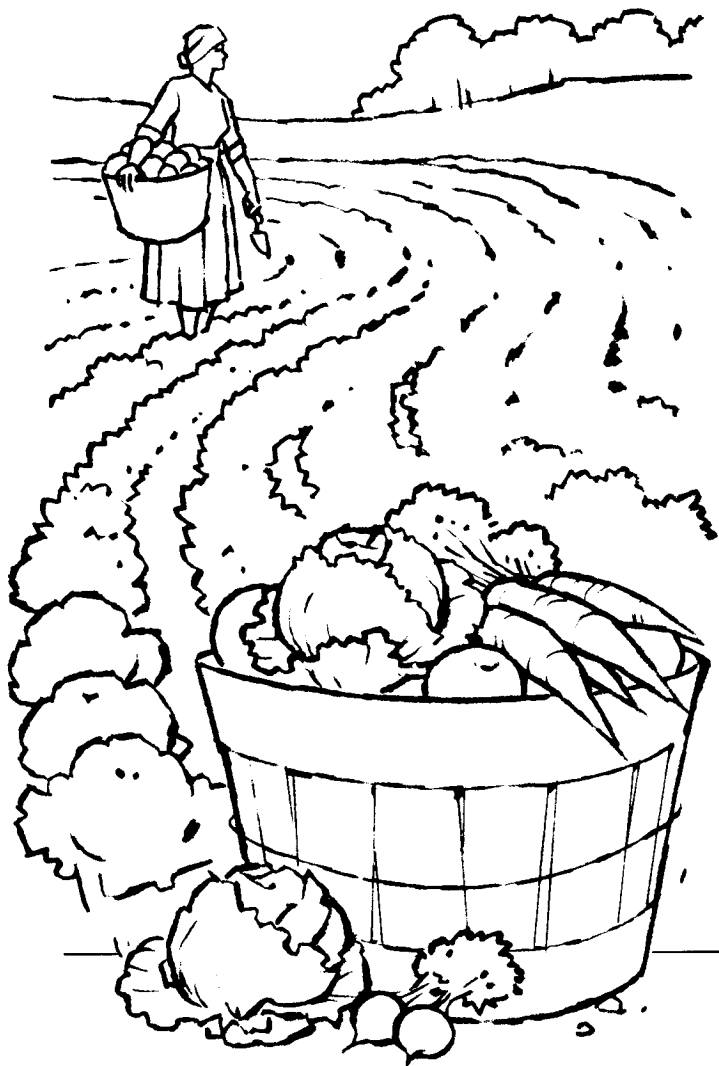
sin, to understand God's truth and to grow in God's character.

In the part of the world where Jesus lived, which is often called the Holy Land, there are two harvests each year. First is the spring grain harvest, which is the early or small harvest. Second comes the great fall harvest.

Pentecost, which comes at the time of the spring harvest, pictures the "firstfruits," or the *first spiritual* "harvest" of people who will become members in the Family of God. The firstfruits include all past, present and future members of God's Church *before* Christ returns to earth.

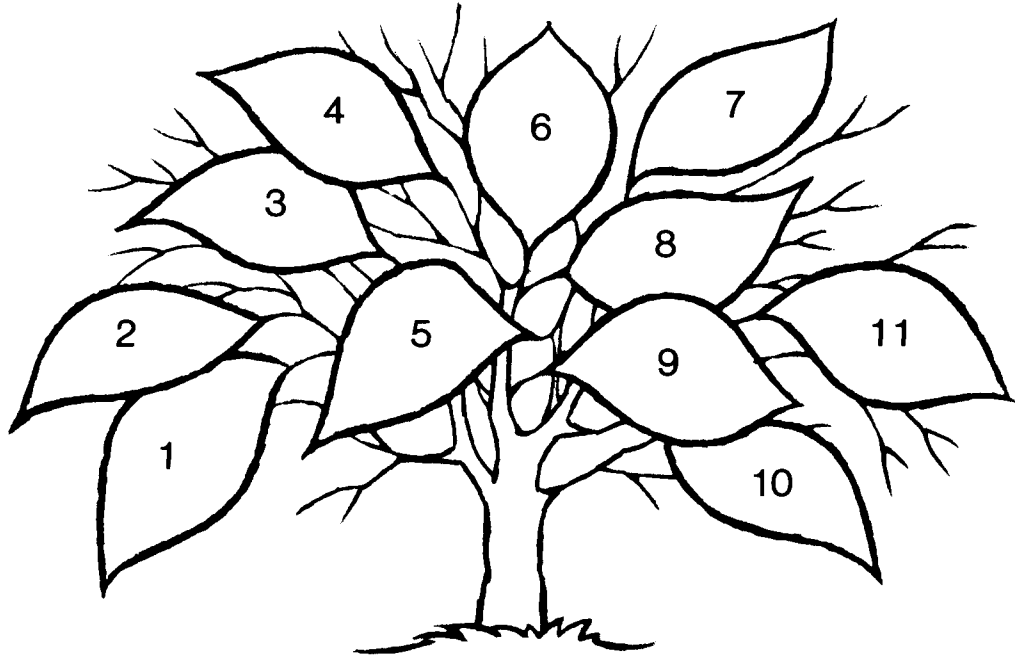
Those in God's Church are among the first few He has called out of this big world, which to God is like a large field or garden. Part of this field is to be harvested at Christ's return. The "firstfruits" will be the *first ones* to be resurrected as spirit beings, born into God's Family.

As we will learn in the Fall Festival Lesson, the rest of the world will then have their chance to become members of God's Family after Christ returns to earth. During this period, pictured by the big fall harvest, the biggest part of mankind will learn God's truth and be "harvested" into His Family!



COLOR THE LEAVES

Color each "green ear" on the tree that has the same number as the statement you completed. When you have filled in all blanks correctly, the tree will look like it should in the spring of the year.



1. God's year begins in the S _____.
2. God calls the first month of the year A _____.
3. The Israelites were told to select a perfectly healthy L _____ on the 10th day of the first month.
4. On the ____ th day of the first month is the P_____.
5. On the first Passover, the Israelites were to put lamb's B _____ on the top and sides of the doorposts of their houses.
6. If the Israelites followed God's instructions, the D _____ A _____ would P_____ over them.
7. Today, God's people eat unleavened B _____ and drink W _____ during the Passover service.
8. The Israelites left Egypt on the N _____ to be Much Observed, the ____ th of Abib.
9. During the Days of Unleavened Bread, T _____ annual holy days occur.
10. Pentecost means F _____ (day).
11. Pentecost pictures God's people as the F _____ of those to become members of His Family.

SCRAPBOOK

EDITOR IN CHIEF: Herbert W. Armstrong

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