

The book cover features a vibrant background of overlapping circles in various colors including cyan, yellow, orange, green, and pink. A central white rectangular area is framed by a pink dashed border. Inside this frame, the title is written in a mix of bold sans-serif and cursive fonts. The subtitle is in a smaller, green, sans-serif font.

The Story of

Joy

A true story from the Philippines



Let's go on a journey together. We are going to the Philippine Islands to meet a little girl. Her name is Joy. Joy doesn't live in the big city of Manila, the capital of the Philippines, but in a small town on the Island of Mindanao.

Let me introduce you to Joy and her family. Here she is with her father and mother, and her younger brother, Joey. Joey is 3 years old and Joy is 5 years old.





Let's visit Joy's home. It is a simple wooden house with a bamboo fence outside, and lots of pot plants around it. We will call to see if she is there, "Maayu!" That is the Filipino word which means, "Are you there?" Yes they are, and they are inviting us to come in.

Inside the floors are concrete, but have been polished to a shine with a coconut husk. There is a big bedroom where Joy and Joey sleep with their father and mother.



If you come at breakfast time they will be eating rice and dried fish, a Filipino favorite.



Joy's father works at the university as a teacher and her mother is in charge of a kindergarten. Of course Joy and Joey enjoy going with their mother, so they can play with all the children there.





One day Joy's mother told the children:
"Missionaries are coming to stay in our house. They
were excited. What would these missionaries be
like they wondered. At last they arrived.

They came in a blue van and seemed to have so
many suitcases and boxes. Joy's father and mother
rushed outside to meet them, but Joy and Joey hid
behind the door and peeped out. It didn't take long
though for their shyness to disappear, and they
began to sit beside the missionaries.





Sundays were special. The family would go to church in one of the jeepneys or motor cabs that often roared past their house. Joy and Joey went to the Sunday School. Their mother was the teacher.



That Sunday she invited the missionary lady to the Sunday School. "Could you tell a story to the children?" she asked. "You tell the story in your language and I will interpret it in our language, so the children can understand."

Sadly, when Sunday came, Joy and Joey were sick and had to stay home. They were disappointed as they wanted to hear the missionary's story too.





As soon as Joy's mother came back to the house, Joy said, "Mummy, please tell us the story." So Joy and Joey sat in front of their mother on two little chairs, while she told them the story. "Well," said their mother, "the story was about a special book called the Wordless Book." "How can a book have no words?" Joy asked.

"I'll tell you if you listen carefully," Joy's mother replied, as she opened the first page of the book. The page was a gold color. Then she said, "Although there are no words on this page, it tells us something wonderful."

"Gold speaks of Heaven. In Heaven the streets are made of gold." Joy thought that would be good because where she lived the streets were muddy and very bumpy. "Heaven is a beautiful place and Jesus tells us that he is preparing a home for each one of his children." Then Joy's mother said, "In Heaven there will be no crying and no sickness, but the most wonderful thing about Heaven is that Jesus lives there."



"Oh," said Joy, "I would like to go to Heaven."



But there was another page in the Wordless Book, and Joy's mother turned to it now. It was black. "What does that page say?" Joey asked. "This page speaks of our sin. We cannot go to Heaven because of the sin in our life. Sin is all the wrong things we have done that don't please Jesus. It is when we are disobedient to our parents, when we fight with our brothers and sisters, or when we get angry or tell lies."

Even though Joy and Joey were only 5 and 3 years old, they knew they had done some of those things - things that didn't please Jesus.

Joy was feeling sad. "How can we go to Heaven then?" she asked. Her mother smiled and turned to the next page in the Wordless Book."

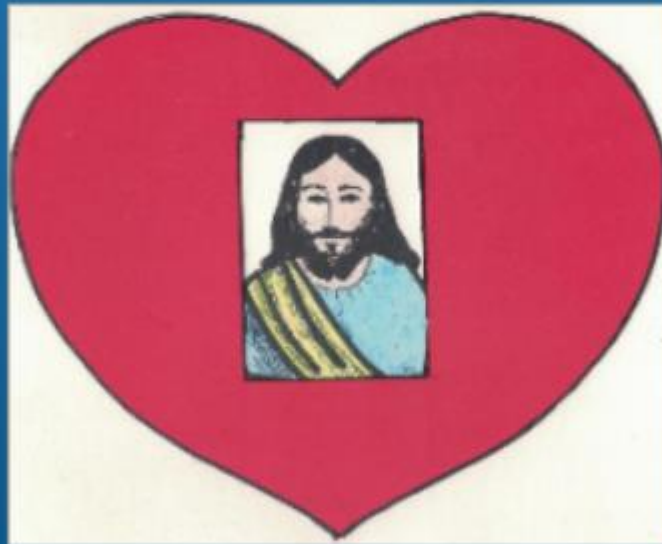


"What color is this page?" Both children answered at the same time. "Red," they said. "Yes," their mother replied, "It's red and it tells us about Jesus. Jesus is God's Son and he died for us. We deserve to be punished by God for the things we have done that don't please him, but Jesus was punished in our place. He died on the cross and shed his blood, so we could be forgiven by God." Then Joy said, "I want Jesus to forgive me."

Her mother turned to the next page and continued, "When you ask Jesus to forgive you for all the wrong things you have done, he washes them away and makes you clean and white inside. Just like this white page."



Joy's mother showed the children another picture. It was a picture of a heart with Jesus inside. Then she said, "Jesus wants to wipe away all the wrong things you have done and come to live inside you. If you invite him to do that, you will become one of God's very own children, and he will prepare a home for you in Heaven."



When their mother finished the story the children were very quiet. Joy said, "Mummy, I want to ask Jesus into my life." Joey added, "Me too." "That's wonderful," their mother said, "Why don't we pray and ask Jesus to do that right now."



Joy knelt beside her mother and Joey folded his hands on her lap. Their mother prayed, and then the children prayed after her.

"Lord Jesus, thank you that you love me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please forgive me for all the wrong things I have done, and come into my life. In Jesus' name, amen."



When Joy opened her eyes they were shining. "Where is Jesus?" her mother asked softly. "In my life," Joy replied. Joy's mother went on to tell them about a book God has in Heaven. It is called the Lamb's Book of Life. "The moment you asked Jesus into your life he wrote your name in that book," their mother said. "So your names are there now - Joy and Joey."

Joy was so happy. Jesus was her friend. Often at night she would whisper to her mother as they lay on the wooden bed, "Let's talk to Jesus." Then they would pray together. Other times she would sing the songs she learnt in Sunday School. Joy was different now. And your life will be different too if you ask Jesus to live inside you.



One day Joy was thinking about Heaven and the gold page in the Wordless Book, so she asked her mother, "Will I really go to be with Jesus if I die?"

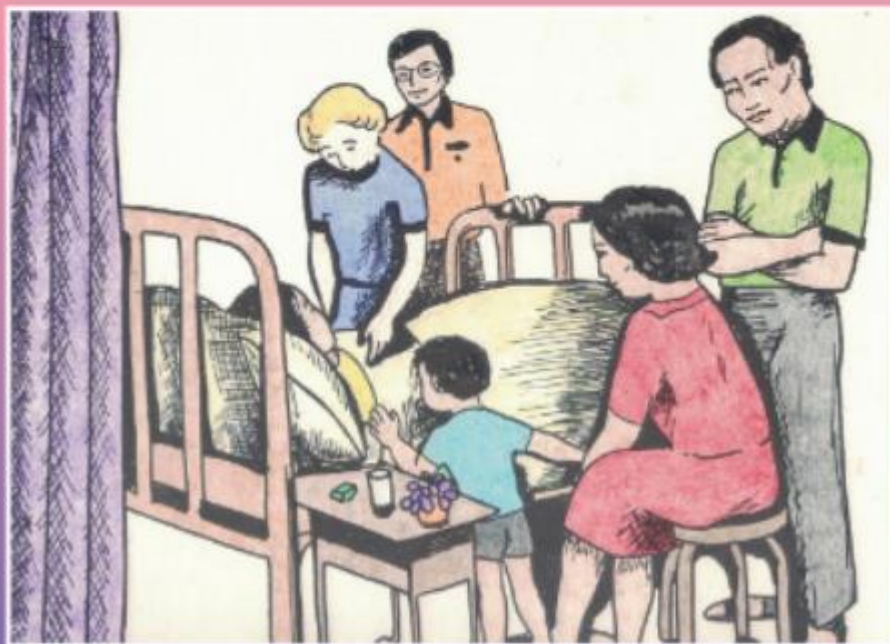
"Yes of course you will, because you have asked Jesus into your life," her mother replied.



That afternoon Joy became very sick and her father and mother took her to the hospital near their home. The doctor told them Joy had to stay in the hospital that night.

Many people came to visit Joy in the hospital. The missionaries came and so did people from the church, as everyone loved her. Sadly Joy became so ill the doctor advised her father and mother to take her to a bigger hospital.

That hospital was far away on another Island.





Joy's father gathered her up in his arms and carried her to the boat. That night they sailed to the Island of Cebu. When they arrived the next morning, Joy was taken to the hospital there.



As Joy was lying in the bed in that big hospital, something wonderful happened. Suddenly she opened her eyes and looked up, and said, "Jesus." She wasn't sad, but full of joy. Then she lifted her hands, as she had done in church and said, "Praise the Lord! The Lord is my Shepherd."



Jesus had come to take little Joy to be with him, to that beautiful place called Heaven.





It was hard for Joy's father and mother. They missed Joy very much. Everyone did! Joy's mother often thought of her own little girl when she went to teach in the kindergarten. She told the children the story of the Wordless Book, and many of them wanted to ask Jesus into their lives.

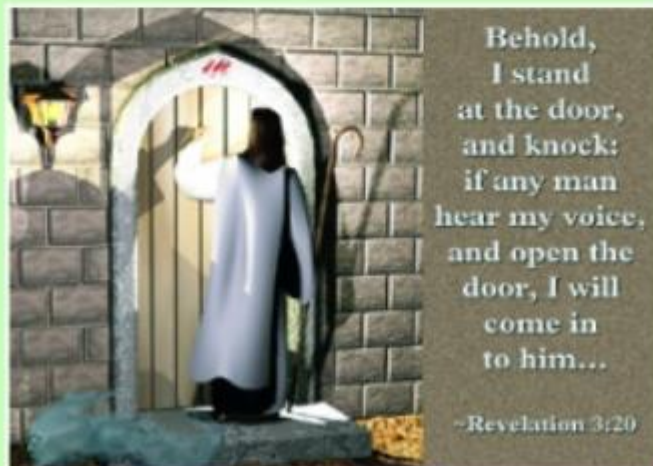
One day they will see Joy again. Joy's father and mother, Joey, and the missionaries will also see her again, because their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Perhaps you would like to ask Jesus to forgive your sin, and come into your life, just as Joy and Joey did. If you would like to do that, why not pray the same prayer they did?



"Lord Jesus thank you that you love me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please forgive me for all the wrong things I have done, and come into my life. In Jesus' name, amen."

Jesus promised he will come in if you ask him. Then you too will become a child of God, and your name will be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.



The story of Joy was written by Marian Than. The events in this story are true. Marian and her husband, William, were missionaries in the Philippines from 1978 to 1980. They were the ones who drove the blue van and stayed in Joy and Joey's home on the Island of Mindanao.

Since that time Marian has told the story of Joy many times, and others have come to know Jesus, just as Joy and Joey did. If you asked Jesus into your life after reading this story, perhaps you would like to write and tell them:

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Marian & William in
the Philippines

The blue van





Written by Marian Than