

# RHODA

## Book 8

### A CHILD'S BIBLE KIDS

Katheryn Maddox Haddad

Northern Lights Publishing House



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NOTE: The author used mostly one-syllable words.  
Longer words were used sometimes  
but hyphenated to help the child pronounce them.

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# 1 ~ Smiles & Tears

11-year-old Rhoda looked down but blew upward to get the hair out of her eyes.

"Mummy," she said while scrubbing the cobblestones in the courtyard of their house, "I wish papa was still here so he could make some house traps for us. I hear them in the loft every night."

"You mean mouse traps, dear,"

her mother corrected.

"Yeah, that's what I mean."

"I have some small baskets. I will prop them open with a small stick and put some cheese inside to trap them," her mother said. "Now, as soon as you are done with the floor, I need you to do some clothes washing."

Rhoda stood up, then stooped to pick up her pail of now dirty water. "Of course, Mummy. Who could wash something that is not close? They'd have to have awfully long arms to do far-away washing."

"Tee-hee."

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"You know what I mean, Rhoda. Now I am going to the market to sell a few pears. Before you say it, I am not going to sell bears. When I get home, I expect the clothes to be washed and hanging on their hooks."

Martha left out the gate and headed toward the market. Half way up the street she tripped on a stone that had worked its way up out of the ground. She fell and hoped no one had seen her.

When she stood she saw she had torn her long tunic. There was a bench beside the street. She went to it, sat, and put her head in her hands.

**"What's wrong, Martha?"**

**Martha looked up just in time to watch a neigh-bor sit on the bench beside her.**

**"Oh, nothing," Martha said, sniffing and blowing her nose on the bottom of her tunic.**

**"Yes. there is, and it isn't just because you tripped," the neigh-bor said.**

**"You saw that? I was hoping no one had."**

**"Now, out with it. Why are you crying?"**



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Martha looked into the eyes of her neigh-bor. "My husband's dead, I just tore my tunic, and I don't have enough money to buy food for tonight's meal."

"Oh, my poor, poor Martha," the neigh-bor said, putting her arm around her and laying Martha's head on her shoulder. "Shhh."

The tears began again. Martha stood up facing her neigh-bor and raised her hands toward the sky. "What am I suppose to do? Just what?"

"I don't know how you have survived this long, Martha."

**"I sell pears off my tree, but that isn't enough. I have a chicken and sell the eggs. That isn't enough either."**

**"Well," the neighbor said, "I have one idea for you but you may not like it."**

**"What's that?" Martha asked. "I will try anything."**

**"Hire Rhoda out. She can do household chores or laundry or something else that's easy."**

**"But she's only 11 years old. And sometimes she doesn't understand people very well."**

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## THINK & DO

1. Have your parents gone through a time when they could not buy things that were needed by the family? Maybe they needed a car to go back and forth to work. Maybe they needed to rent an apartment away from a bad neighborhood. Maybe they needed money to go to the doctor. Maybe they are going through one of those problems right now.

Think of something you can do to help them. Maybe you can rake leaves for enough money to buy meals for one day. Maybe you can wash cars. Maybe you can sweep someone's

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porch.

Would you be willing to give them the money to pay bills, or would you want to keep the money to buy a toy?

2. When Jesus was a little boy, what do you think he would have done with the money he earned?

## 2 ~ Job Hunting

"Rhoda," her mother said when she returned home "I need to talk to you about grownup things."

"Growing up things?" Rhoda asked. "That's silly. I'm already growing and growing."

Martha sighed. "Yes, you are growing, but you are still a child. I need to talk to you about doing something that grownups do."

"Oh. Tee-hee," Rhoda responded.

"Just be serious a moment. You may not like this. I don't like it. But I do not know what else to do."

"Then don't do it, Mummy."

"I cannot buy enough food for us anymore. We are getting skinnier and skinnier all the time. Every time we wash our clothes, the holes get bigger. I just cannot replace everything we need."

"Oh, Mummy," Rhoda said moving over to sit next to her mother. "We don't need a lot of food or fancy cloths."

**Martha resists the urge to respond to her daugh-ter's on-purpose use of the wrong word.**

**"Rhoda, I am going to have to hire you out as someone's servant. You may end up planting seeds in a field or sweeping people's floors or cooking for a family. I do not know which."**

**Her daugh-ter jumped up. "No, Mummy. I don't know how to do those grownup things."**

**"Yes, you do. Quit pretending you don't. Now I will try to find a job for you here in Jeru-salem so we can visit each other often. Maybe they will let**



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you come home on weekends."

Rhoda put her hands on her hips.  
"But, Mummy, I love you."

"I love you too, my sweet one.  
But, for a while, we are going to have  
to do this. Maybe some day we will  
not have to and can live together  
again."

Rhoda looked at her mother with  
a tear in her eye.

"Tomorrow we will begin job  
hunting," her mother said. "I will take  
you with me. That way they can meet  
you and you can meet them. I will not  
hire you out to someone you do not  
like."

**"I will not like any of them,"  
Rhoda replied now folding her arms  
and looking away from her mother.**

**\***

**Morning came. Martha put her  
best tunic on her daugh-ter, combed  
her hair, and gave her a hug.**

**"Here we come, world," Martha  
said, opening their gate4**

**Rhoda smiled as they walked out  
to the street. "Yes, world. Where  
ever you are, here we come."**

**Their first stop was the market.  
They went from one booth to another.**

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**"Might you be in need of a helper? My daughter is a hard worker and very cheerful."**

**"No. Maybe the potter needs someone."**

**"Might you be in need of a helper? My daughter is a hard worker and very cheerful."**

**"No. Maybe the baker needs someone."**

**"Might you be in need of a helper? My daughter is a hard worker and very cheerful."**

**The answer was no. Always no.**

**What were Martha and little Rhoda  
going to do?**

## THINK & DO

1. Do you know what a piggy bank is? A long time ago like when your grandparents were your age, children used to have little glass pigs with a hole in their back. Children would put coins in their piggy bank to save up for something special.

Instead of asking your parents to buy your next toy, why don't you save your money and buy it yourself? If you don't have a toy bank, maybe you have a little box or tin can to put your money in. What will you use?

Your parents will be soooo proud of you.

## 3 ~ A New Home

Rhoda and her mother continued to go to one booth after another in the market. Always the answer was "No." They did not need a helper, no matter how cheerful she was.

"Well, this is the last booth. If we cannot find you a job here," Martha whispered to her daughter, "we will have to go to a differ-ent market in a differ-ent part of Jeru-

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saalem tomorrow."

Ma'am," she said to the lady who made and sold per-fume and spices. "Might you be in need of a helper? My daughter is a hard worker and very cheerful."

"No. You'll have to try..."

"Excuse me," a cus-to-mer with a kind voice said.

Martha and Rhoda turned toward the voice. They saw a fancy lady wearing silk clothes and a gold necklace and earrings. Her tunic was green and her robe was blue.

"Did I hear you are looking for a

job for this fine young lady?" She looked at Rhoda and smiled.

Martha's heart beat fast. Thump, thump, thump. She smiled as much as she could stretch her mouth.

"Yes. This is my daughter, Rhoda. She is a very hard worker. She helps me all the time. But ever since my husband died..."

"What kind of work do you do?" the fancy lady asked Rhoda.

"Well, I wash close—tee-hee, and..."

Martha pinched her daughter on the arm so she would talk right, and



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hoped the fancy lady did not see her do it.

"I wash clothes and I bake and I scrub floors, though I've never scrubbed a dirt floor. Tee-hee."

Martha pinched her daugh-ter again.

"Well, I could see that would be an imposs-ible task since the whole world seems to be made of dirt," the fancy lady replied with a slight grin.

The stranger turned to Martha. "Would she be allowed to live in my house? I would need her at all hours of the day and sometimes at night."

Martha tried to hide how excited she was. "Yes, she understands that."

"Mummy said maybe I can go home on weekends," Rhoda said. Martha pinched her daughter once again.

"That might be possible sometimes," the fancy lady said. "Now, how much pay will you need for her?"

"Oh, ma'am," Martha said, "whatever you think her work is worth will be fine with me."

"I have company quite often in my

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home. People seem to always be coming and going," the fancy lady told Martha. Then she turned to Rhoda.

"Child, I think you would be a good maid. I will use you to sweep the floors and go to the market with me to carry my baskets full of whatever I buy."

"Oh, thank you, my lady," Martha said, bowing.

"Oh, don't bow to me. I am just a lowly Christian and servant of Jesus Christ. Oh, and my name is Mary."

Mary looked at Rhoda. "Now, please carry my basket for me."

## THINK & DO

**1. Have you ever been paid money for working for someone else? Maybe you swept the floor or babysat. Maybe you read a story to someone. Maybe you washed something. There are things everyone can do, even if they are 2 years old.**

**What about working for your family? That is different. You must never charge for doing things around your house or apartment. Your mother does not charge you to fix your meals. Your father does not charge you to take you to school or help with your homework.**

**2. If you would like a job that**

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**pays money, ask the grownups in your family for ideas. And tell them what you would like to do with your money.**

## **4 ~ New Job**

**Rhoda hugged her mother and took the basket her new mistress had just handed her.**

**Martha turned away, walked a few steps, then turned back to see if her daughter was still looking at her.**

**Rhoda not only had the basket, but she was skipping along beside Mary going away from Martha.**

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**"I believe the hired help walks behind their mistress," Mary explained with a slight smile.**

**"Yes, ma'am," Rhoda replied while slowing down. "I am going to work for you so hard, that by the time I go to bed at night, I will be the tired help. Tee-hee."**

**Mary called back. "Yes, I believe that will happen."**

**When they arrived at the edge of the market, Mary walked over to a carriage.**

**"But where are the horses, Mistress?" Rhoda asked as someone pulled back the curtains and helped**

**Mary inside.**

**"Come along, Child. See those 4 men standing at each corner. They are my horses. Now climb in beside me."**

**Rhoda grinned. "They are your horses? Where are their tails? Tee-hee. And where are the reins to snap and make them go?"**

**"They do not need either, Child. There are long poles at each corner. They just pick up their pole and run or walk until I get where I want to go."**

**"Giddy-up," Rhoda giggled.**



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When they arrived at Mary's fine home and went inside, Mary introduced her to her son, John Mark.

"Now, the first thing I want you to do," Mary told her son, "is take Rhoda to Amos's room to sweep his floor."

"Not Amos," John Mark said. "He doesn't like anyone."

"You will do what I say," she said, and walked away.

"He'll probably throw something at her," John Mark called after his mother.

He turned back to Rhoda. "Follow me. You must be des-per-ate to have a job. Okay, here's your broom."

As Rhoda walked behind John Mark, she looked up at the fancy ceiling with all the colored tiles. She looked at the big columns holding up the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the house. She looked at the golden lamps on the wall.

"Watch out," someone in the household said, but too late.

"Oops," Rhoda said when she ran into one of the big columns while walking backward. "Sorry," she said to the column. "Excuse me."

"Well, this is Amos's room," John

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said. "Have fun. And duck."

Rhoda walked in and looked around. There was an old white-haired man sitting in one corner.

"What do you want, little girl?" the old man said. "Get out of my room."

"Get out of my room with the big old broom," Rhoda said, wagging her head from side to side.

"What did you say, little girl?"

"I said get out of my room with the big old broom. Tee-hee."

"Who are you?"

## THINK & DO

1. Draw a picture of your mother in her kitchen with a broom, or of your father in your garage or on your porch with a broom.

If you can write, say, THANK YOU FOR WORKING SO HARD. If you cannot write, draw a heart on your picture.

2. Give them the picture.

.

## 5 ~ Friends

"My name is Rhoda," she said. She walked over to a corner away from the old man but where he could see her. "What's your name?"

"Why do you want to know?" the old man said. "Well, it's Amos. Don't go around telling everyone."

"Amos the Famous," Rhoda said. "Tee-hee."

**"Who are you?" he repeated.**

**"I am Rhoda, your very best friend."**

**"I don't have any friends."**

**"Tee-hee. You are so funny. Funny like a bunny."**

**"Ha, ha." The old man laughed. "You're not afraid of me. Everyone is afraid of me. I'm even afraid of me."**

**"Eek!" Rhoda screamed. "Is that afraid enough?"**

**"When you're done sweeping my room, would you bring me something to eat? I've scared everyone off,**

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even the cook."

Four days later, Rhoda went with Mary to the market to carry her basket for her.

"Thank you for what you have done with my father," Mary said. "He has been very sad since my Mother died. Did you know he told me you remind him of his wife, my mother?"

"Me a wife?" Rhoda responded. "Tee-hee."

"Tonight is going to be very special, so I want you to join us."

"Who is us, Mistress?"

**"Christians. Christians in our part of Jeru-salem meet in my home."**

**"What are Christians?"**

**"We call ourselves after Jesus Christ, the Son of God."**

**Rhoda stopped in the middle of the street.**

**"The son of who?"**

**"You will learn more about Jesus tonight. Oh, and one of Jesus' apostles is going to preach to us."**

**"What is an apostle, Mistress?" Rhoda asked.**



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**"He is one of 12 special men that Jesus chose to spread the word about who he is and how he can help them get to heaven."**

**"I like heaven," Rhoda said. "My papa is in heaven."**

**"But you must not tell anyone they meet in my home. Especially do not tell them the Apostle Peter will be there. These are dan-ger-ous times."**

**"Why?"**

**"Did you hear about King Herod killing a man a few weeks ago?"**

**Without waiting for an answer,**

Mary continued. "King Herod killed the Apostle James. Things are very dangerous for all Christians, and especially for the rest of the apostles."

Rhoda put both hands tight over her mouth. "I will tell nothing."

That night, the Christians came to Mary's house. Then Peter came. He had a long robe on with a hood that hid his face. When he knocked on the gate, the gatekeeper answered it and let him in right away.

The rest of the night was spent whispering their songs about Jesus and listening to Peter tell about things Jesus said, and all the miracles he did

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**to prove who he was.**

## THINK & DO

1. Do you know anyone who is grouchy? Usually people are grouchy because they are very very sad. Sometimes they will only smile at a child.

Draw a picture of the person with the sun shining down on them and a heart. Give them your picture.

## 6 ~ Danger

Five months have passed. Rhoda has become a Christian. She told her mother about it, and her mother became a Christian too.

"Did you hear the news?" Rhoda heard John Mark ask his mother.

"You are not smiling, Son. How bad is it?" Mary asked him.

"Bad. It's Peter."

**"Oh, no. Has the king killed Peter now? Please tell me he hasn't."**

**"He hasn't," John Mark replied. "But he intends to. He has arrest-ed Peter. They say he is in the deepest part of the prison. He is in a locked cell in chains and has 2 guards, one on each side of him."**

**Mary looked up at the ceiling, then back at her son. She fought back tears.**

**"They have another 6 guards right outside his cell," John Mark added. "They have 4 more guards inside the door that leads to the street. They have 4 more guards outside that door."**

Herod is mad."

Mary grabbed her cloak. "I must go to Peter. I can help."

"No, Mother, you cannot help," John Mark said. "It is too late for him. He is doomed by the king. His trial is tomorrow, and they will kill him then. It is too late."

"I have money," Mary said. "I will contact the mine we inherited when your father died. I will have them send all the money they have."

"King Herod already has money, Mother. He lives in a palace. Remember? Besides, even tomorrow will be too late"

**"Rhoda!" Mary called to the closest servant to her. "Bring to me my money box. You know where it is. Bring it, then go with me."**

**Rhoda obeyed. Soon they were in the carriage carried by 4 strong men at each corner and headed toward the fortress.**

**When they arrived, Mary hurried over to the captain of the guard in charge of the prison. "How much do you want?" she asked.**

**"Are you one of those Christians?" the captain asked.**

**"Yes, I am. Now, tell me how**



much money you want. I own a mine and will give you all I have right now, then have my mine foreman bring you all you want."

"Why?

"You know why. To free Peter. He has done nothing to you."

"He is preaching everywhere that Jesus is the King of the Jews, not Herod. Herod is going to put Peter to death just like he put your Apostle James to death. And just like the High priest had your Son of God put to death."

"He is not my Son of God," Mary said. "He is the world's Son of God."

**"Whatever you say, but you are not going to buy Peter's way out of prison. If he doesn't die, I have to die in his place."**

**"Who is your captain?" Mary asked. "I will go higher than you and get him released."**

**"I answer directly to King Herod himself. There is no one in the Kingdom of Isra-el higher than him."**

**Mary looked at Rhoda. "Child, help me think of something. You are a smart girl."**

**"I'm not smart, Mistress. I'm just scared. Is this what it is like to**

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**be a Christian? Everyone hates you?"**

**Mary turned to walk back to the carriage. "No, not everyone hates us. Our Father in heaven doesn't."**

**Who is our Father in heaven?" Rhoda asked. "Oh, yes. Now I remember. He is God. God loves us. And he even knows my name."**

## THINK & DO

1. Sometimes at school there is a boy or girl who does not like anyone. That boy or girl is a bully. Bullies do not like themselves and they do not like anyone else.

Bullies will laugh when they say and do bad things to other people. Just because someone laughs, that does not mean it is right.

Try to stay away from bullies. But if you cannot, walk around with a pal so you can stand up for each other. Also, do not let the bully make you mad. That is what he wants

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**to do. Try very hard to smile, then walk away.**

## 7 ~ Praying

**"Rhoda, I have something very important for you to do." Mary said while the four strong men were carrying the carriage down the street away from the prison.**

**"Yes, Mistress," Rhoda said.**

**"Do you re-mem-ber where the 4 Christians that we call elders live? I have taken you to their houses before. They do not live very far**

from my house."

"Yes, I think I do."

"As soon as we get back to my house, I want you to go to each of their houses and tell them to spread the word among the other Christians. We are going to pray for Peter all night."

"Yes, Mistress."

"Now what are you going to tell them?"

*Come! All Christians have to pray  
When sun is down and sky is gray.  
Pray our Peter will be freed.  
To God in heaven we will plead.*

***Tell the others—  
All sisters and brothers.***

**"Rhoda, you amaze me. If that is what it takes for you to re-mem-ber things, then keep doing it."**

**They arrived at Mary's house. Rhoda did not go inside. She left right then to go to the 4 houses of the 4 leaders.**

**"You did what?" John Mark said when his mother told him she had Rhoda spread the word about the all-night prayer vigil. "She is just a child."**

**"That is the point. She will be safer than any of us would be. If**



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anyone is spying on Christians, they will not suspect a child."

"But she has a simple mind," John Mark said.

"She has a simple and pure mind. I wish my mind were as simple and pure as hers. Besides, she is smarter than either of us in some ways."

A little at a time, the Christians began to arrive. Some did not wait for the sun to go down. Not all the Christians came at the same time. They did not want the neighbors to get nose-y.

"Where is the gatekeeper?" Mary asked, suddenly realizing he was not

at his place.

"He got sick."

"Who is here that can take his place?" Mary asked. She looked around. "Rhoda, you be the gatekeeper. Be careful who you let in."

"Yes, Mistress."

When the sun was all the way down, the prayers began.

"Please, Lord God. Don't let Peter die too."

"Lord God, it cannot be too late. Please do something. We need Peter."

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**We need to know the things he tells us about Jesus."**

**"Lord God, they said he would be dead in a few hours. Isn't there something you can do?"**

**"Lord God, soften the hearts of the prison guards so they decide to set him free."**

**"Lord God, protect the prison guards against King Herod's anger if they do set Peter free."**

**"Lord God, we pray with tears. Do not let Peter die."**

**The eyes of the Christians were red and swelled from crying and**

**begging God to help. Their hearts were so very sad. They were desperate.**

## THINK & DO

1. Have you ever prayed for something that seemed impossible? Not for toys and ball games and passing tests, but for things that will help others.

Have you ever prayed that a hungry family will be given food? Have you ever prayed for a neighbor to go to church with you? Have you ever prayed for a relative to become a saved Christian?

Do that right now. Choose someone to pray for. Then bow your head and pray. You can pray aloud or in your mind.

## 8 ~ The Gate

The moon was now high in the sky. It was the middle of the night. Rhoda, proud that she had been made the gatekeeper, tried not to fall asleep. She sat by the gate, leaning her head back.

Sometimes she cried for Peter. She loved Peter. Every time he came to her mistress's house to talk to the Christians on Sunday, she loved his stories about Jesus.

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She also loved Peter's miracles. He could heal someone of measles and the measles be gone right then. He could also make arms and legs grow back. He could make deaf people hear, and oh so many things.

But he never per-formed a miracle unless he was trying to convince someone Jesus Christ gave him the power and was the Son of God.

She prayed for Peter sometimes. She prayed to not fall asleep sometimes. She cried sometimes.

"Huh?" she mumbled. "What was that?"

Rhoda stood. She heard the noise again. Could it be? Could it be? Yes, it was a knock at the gate.

Then she got scared. What if it was a soldier come to take everyone to jail?

The knock came again. Her heart beat faster. She put her hands on her head and ran her fingers through her hair.

"What should I do?" she mumbled to herself.

The knock was louder and faster.

Well, her mistress had put her in charge of the gate. No one got in or



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left unless she opened the gate for them. It was her job. She had to do something.

"Uh, who is it?" she mumbled, hoping whoever was on the other side of the gate did not hear her.

The knocking continued. Harder! Faster!

"Uh, who is it?" she asked again.

Still the knocking.

"It's Peter. Let me in."

"Huh? No. That cannot be," she thought to herself.

**"Hurry, let me in," the voice said out on the street. "It's Peter. It's me."**

**Rhoda jumped up and down and grinned so big she thought her face was going to break in two.**

**She rushed to the other Christians.**

**"It's Peter!" she screamed, still jumping up and down.**

**"Hush, Child," Mary said. "We are praying."**

**"No. It's Peter!"**

**"Yes, that is who we are praying**

for. Now kneel and pray with us."

"No. Peter is here!"

"You are hoping so much for his being freed, you just think he is here."

"No! I heard his voice. I know it is Peter," Rhoda said jumping up and down still, trying to get them to believe her.

"Oh, no," Mary said, knowing Rhoda would never lie. "He has been killed."

"Our prayers have been unanswered," another Christian said.

**"His ghost has come to say good-bye to us."**

## THINK & DO

1. Did someone ever tell you news that was so good you couldn't believe it? Maybe a father or mother has been in the army and came home alive to surprise you. Maybe you got a bicycle your parents said cost too much. Maybe it was getting 100% on a really hard test in school.

What did you think when you did not believe the news?

How did you feel when you finally believed it?

## 9 ~ Waiting

Peter did not know what to do. It was the middle of the night.

He could not just go walking around the city. Herod's guards were everywhere. The fire patrol was everywhere.

Had the prison guards woke up and discovered he was gone? If so, everyone at the fort was out looking for him.

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The moon was overhead, but was not a full moon. Peter was glad of that. He knocked again. No one seemed to be at the gate now.

He looked around and noticed one side of the gate was in shadows. He sat down, pulled his robe tight around him, pulled his hood down over his face, raised his knees, clasped them, and prayed.

Sometimes he leaned over and knocked again. He could hear talking on the other side, but no one seemed to be close enough to hear him. He dared not yell. That would attract the neighbors and the soldiers patrolling the streets.

**"I wonder what my wife and children are going through right now," he thought to himself. "Do they think I am dead?"**

**He was quiet now, hoping to someone who would open the gate for him.**

**"Is my family in there with the others? Who are the others? Who is in Mary's house? Have Herod's soldiers come and are holding Mary and John Mark prisoner until I come?"**

**He reached around and knocked on the gate again. Still nothing.**

**"Maybe no one is there except**



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the servants," he thought to himself. "Maybe Mary took her family and they have escaped up in the hills so they won't get arrested too. That would be wise."

Peter heard footsteps. They were coming up the street. Marching footsteps. He turned sideways and put his head down on his knees to hide his face. He hugged his knees hard and prayed hard.

"How much danger is the church in?" he thought. Then he asked God the same question. "Protect your church," he prayed.

"My family. I need to get out of Jeru-salem and take my family with

me. I need to protect them better."

The footsteps on the street came and went.

He reached around and knocked on the gate again. Still nothing.

"Jesus told us apostles to go to the whole world to tell them about him. I haven't done it. None of the others have either. We have not obeyed Jesus. Forgive us, Jesus."

"It has been 15 years or more since Jesus returned to heaven. We need to leave and preach in other kingdoms."

As des-per-ate as Peter was, he

## Book 8: Rhoda

had to smile. "I have been in prison with so many guards I could not count them all. But this little girl—what is her name? Oh, yes, Rhoda. Sweet girl. About the age of my oldest. I know that was her voice I heard a while ago on the other side of the gate. Now, after walking past some of the biggest guards I have ever seen, I cannot get past one little girl."

Peter reached around and knocked again. This time the voices were coming closer.

He jumped up.

"Peter is that you?" he heard on the other side of the gate.

**"Yes, yes. Open the gate," Peter said in a loud whisper.**

**The gate squeaked and opened just far enough Peter's face could be seen.**

**"Peter! It is you! Come in, Peter. Come in."**

**The gate was opened wider and Peter slipped in. The gate slammed shut and he looked over at the gatekeeper.**

**"There is not a house in all of Jeru-salem safer than the one you guard," he told Rhoda.**

## Book 8: Rhoda

**"Yeah, I'm good," she said with a wide grin.**

## THINK AND DO

1. Do you know anyone who is sick and waiting for a doctor to heal him or her? That sick person is kind of waiting at a gate for the doctor in a way.

Draw a picture of the person in bed. Draw a picture of the sun shining down on them.

If you can write, write these words: GET WELL SOON.

Give it or mail it to the sick person.

## 10 ~ Escape

**"Oh, Peter," Mary said with tears in her eyes.**

**Soon all the Christians who had gathered to pray for him were crowded around Peter.**

**Laughter. Crying.**

**Peter held up his hands as high as he could.**

**"Come, everyone. I will tell you all**

what happened. You will not believe it. Well, I guess you will. I am here, aren't I?"

Ner-vous laughter.

John Mark showed Peter to a chair. Everyone else sat on the floor so he could be seen by everyone.

"First of all, I must ask your pardon for the way I smell. Prisons with no toilet places can be stinky."

His friends laughed ner-vous-ly.

"But how did you escape?"

"Well, I knew that, no matter what happened to me—whether I lived



## Book 8: Rhoda

or died—Jesus would be with me. His heart would be with my heart as long as I was here. Of course, if I died, I would be in his home. So, I left it to God to decide what happened to me. So, I didn't worry. I went to sleep."

"You did what?" one of the Christians said.

Peter continued. "Suddenly I felt someone punched me in the side. I opened my eyes and there was light all through my cell."

"What was it from?" Rhoda asked.

"It was one of God's angels. He

told me to get up. How could I? I was chained. But that was not true for long. As soon as he said it, my chains fell off."

"Wow!" Rhoda said, sitting closer to Peter than anyone else because she didn't mind bad smells.

They took my clothes and sandals off me before they locked me in the cell. The angel had them with him and told me to put them on. Of course, I obeyed."

"Then what happened?" someone asked.

"Shhh. Let him tell his story."

## Book 8: Rhoda

"Then, the angel told me to put on my cloak," Peter continued. "It was then that I realized my guards were standing where they had always been, but their eyes were closed like they had fallen asleep standing up."

"Wow!" Rhoda said.

Peter looked down at her and smiled.

"The next thing I knew, the gate into my cell had unlocked itself. The angel led me all the way through the prison past all the guards—and there were a lot of them."

"Then what?" Rhoda asked.

**"Then the last door—the one leading out to the street—opened by itself. I walked through it right past all those guards."**

**Rhoda kept looking up at Peter. She took his dirty, smelly hand and kissed it. Peter felt her hand, but did not stop his story.**

**"All that time I thought I was dreaming or seeing a vision. But, when I got out into the cold air and the angel dis-ap-peared, I knew it had really happened."**

**"Praise God. He is our helper at all times," Rhoda said.**

**"Now what?" Mary asked.**

## Book 8: Rhoda

"I must leave Jeru-salem. I need someone to go get my family, I need to keep them protected. At daybreak when they open the gates out of Jeru-salem, my family will be the first to go out through them."

"Can I go with you?" Rhoda asked. "I am a good babysitter. I can do other things too."

Peter felt her tears on his hand. "Your place is here, dear Rhoda. You need to spread the love of Jesus as only you can."

Rhoda tried to smile.

"And, by the way," he added,

**"you need to write some songs about Jesus. You have a gift. Use it."**

**And, so it was that Rhoda, the little girl who needed a job because her father had died and her mother had no money, wrote songs about Jesus and sang about his love where ever she went for the rest of her long Christian life.**

## THINK & DO

**1. Most people are afraid to die. But death just means we go from this earth to some other place.**

**Draw a picture of heaven. This time, put it up in your room.**

## Thank You

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## About the Author

Katheryn Maddox Haddad grew up in the north and now lives in Arizona where she doesn't have to shovel sunshine. She basks in 100-degree weather with palm trees, cacti, and a computer with most of the letters worn off.



With a bachelor's degree in English, Bible and social science from Harding University and part of a master's degree in Bible from the Harding Graduate School of Theology, she also has a master's degree in management and human relations from Abilene Christian University.

Her newspaper column appeared for several years in newspapers in Texas and North Carolina, *Little Known Facts about the Bible*, and she has written for numerous Christian publications.

She spends half her day writing, and the other half teaching English over the internet worldwide using the Bible as text book. Students she has converted to Christianity are in hiding in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Uzbekistan, and Palestine. "They are my heroes," she declares.

## *A Child's Bible Kids*

**Each morning on her Facebook page, she sends out an inspirational scripture thought and prayer.**

**She is a member of Christian Writers of the West, American Christian Fiction Writers, and Historical Novel Society.**

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