

New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC 27404
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ISBN: 978-1-948130-70-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data on file

Printed in Canada

26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19

1 2 3 4 5

GOD MADE ME UNIQUE

Helping Children See Value in Every Person

Joni and Friends

Foreword by
Joni Eareckson Tada

Illustrated by
Trish Mahoney

Written by
Chonda Ralston



“LORD, you are our Father.
We are the clay. You are the potter.
Your hands made all of us.”

Isaiah 64:8

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

Thank you for taking the time to read *God Made Me Unique* to your child. This book was written to help you teach your children that God creates each unique individual and that disability is sometimes part of his plan, whether as a result of a condition from birth, or an injury or illness. We want children to understand that every person is made in the image of God and has tremendous value, regardless of their appearance or abilities.

I'm Joni Eareckson Tada, and when I was seventeen years old I broke my neck in a diving accident that left me a quadriplegic. I struggled initially, trying to comprehend how such a tragedy could be part of God's plan for me. Thanks to the love of our heavenly Father and the support of family and friends, I was able to grasp a different perspective on my disabilities and a renewed sense of purpose for my life. In 1979, I started Joni and Friends to advocate for those with disabilities and to help the church better understand how to come alongside families affected by disability.

We want to help eliminate fear and misconceptions about those who have special needs and emphasize the fact that every person deserves to be treated with kindness and respect. In this story, the children are encouraged to ask questions and gain an understanding about their new friend with a disability. We believe an open dialogue can help children replace harsh words and cold stares with honest questions and empathy. If you have this book in your hands, then you've already taken a step in the right direction and I applaud you . . . for caring about those affected by disability and for being willing to teach your child a better way to interact with others. In the back of the book you'll find additional information and resources to equip you.

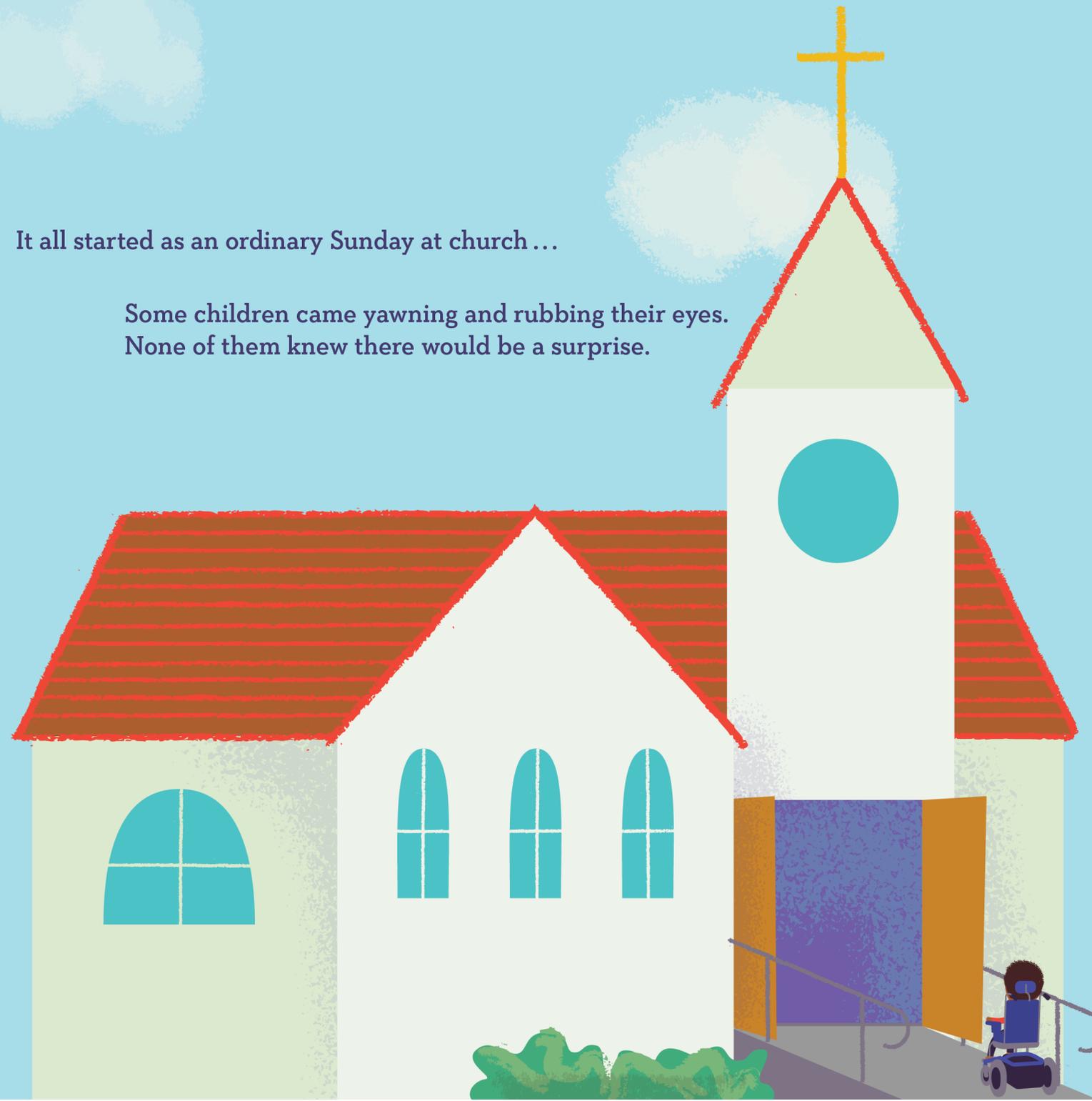
Cheering for you,

The logo for Joni features a stylized, purple, cursive signature of the name "Joni" with a long, sweeping underline that curves back under the "i". Below the signature, the word "Joni" is written in a simple, teal, sans-serif font.

Joni

It all started as an ordinary Sunday at church ...

Some children came yawning and rubbing their eyes.
None of them knew there would be a surprise.



Garrett was cranky. Jenna had the wiggles.
Ms. Campbell clapped to silence their giggles.

"I have an announcement, you'll all want to hear.
Please come join our circle; let's all gather near."

