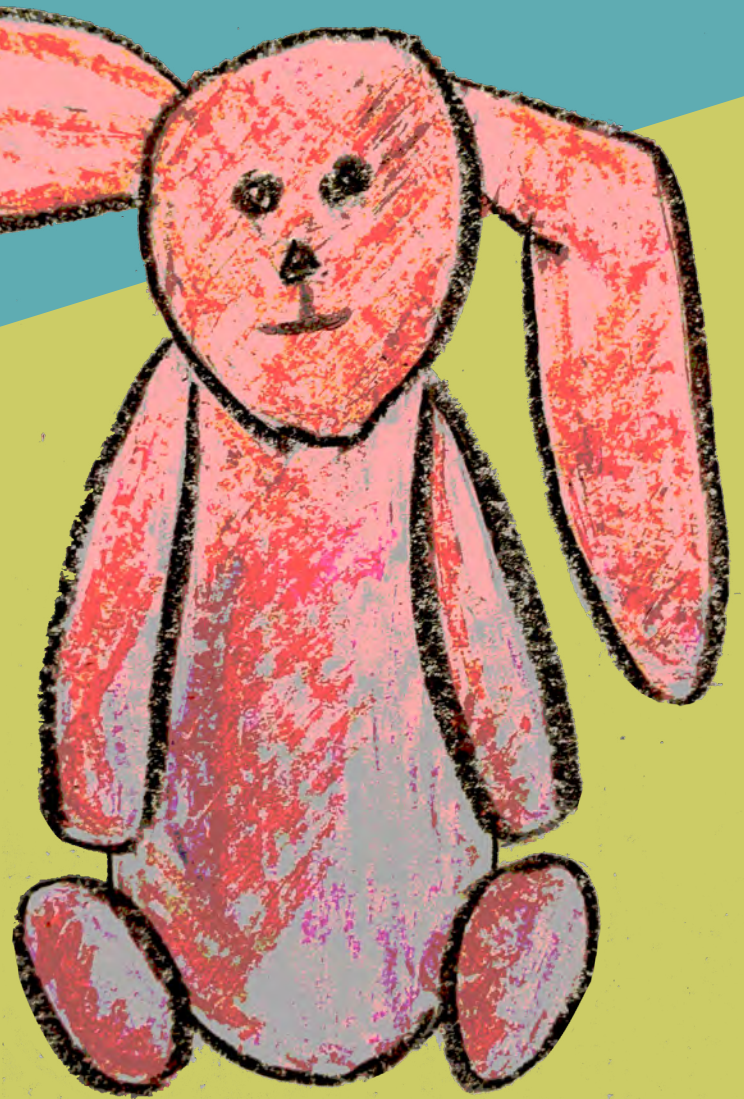


# *Alisa* AND THE CORONAVIRUS

By Gena Thomas

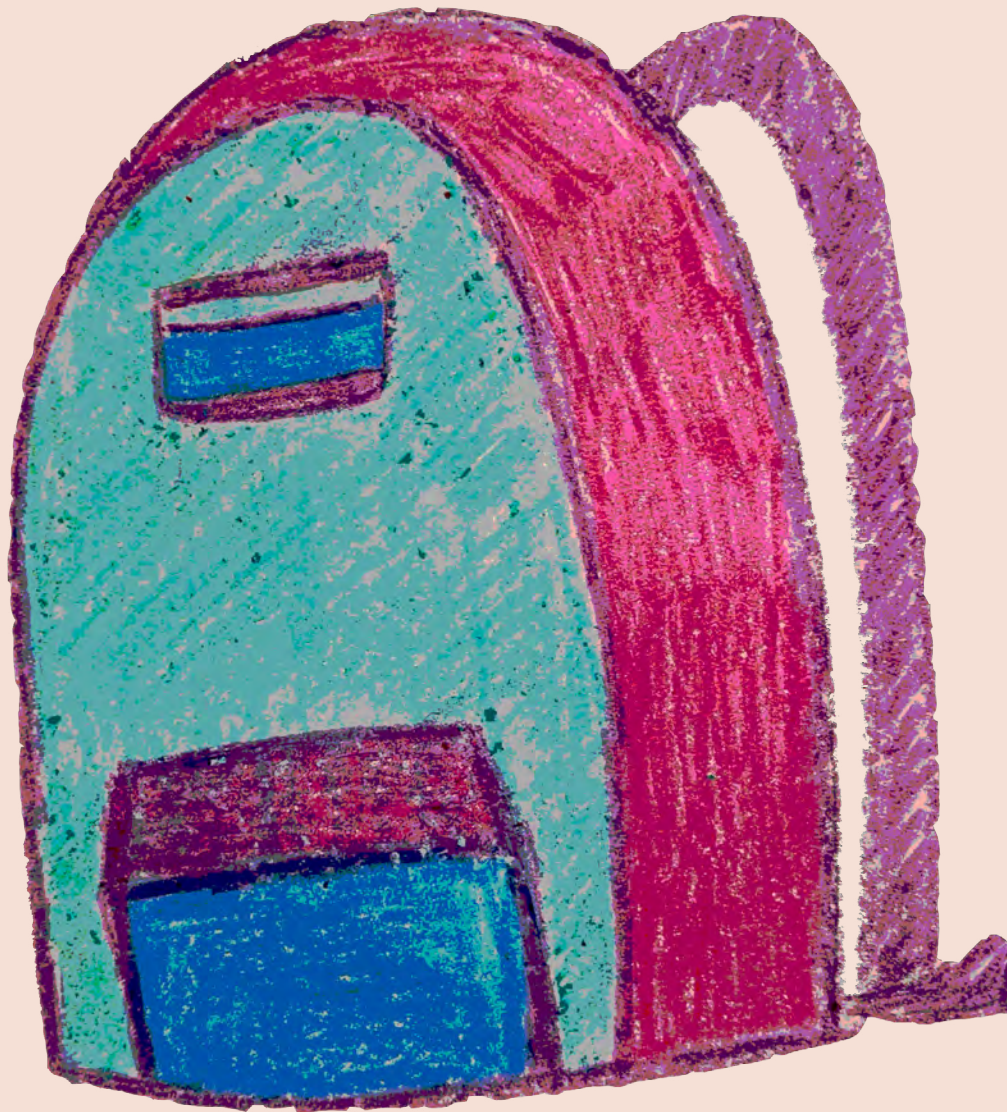


# *Alisa* **AND THE** **CORONAVIRUS**

**By Gena Thomas**

*To Juniper, who wrote this with me*





Thursday was like every other day for four-year-old Alisa. She woke up, ate breakfast, and got ready for school.

"Ahh, we're running late, again. Let's go!" Momma called out to Alisa and her brother, Blaise.

And off they drove to school.

"Papa will pick you up from school today."

Alisa hugged her Momma.

"Have a good day. I love you."

"Love you too, Momma."

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. *What is your normal morning routine like?*
2. *Draw a picture of your backpack.*





That afternoon, Papa picked up Alisa and Blaise from their schools. They went for a short hike at a trail not far from their home in Tennessee with their dog, Scooby. Then they came home.

When Momma came home, she and Papa were talking for a long time while Alisa and Blaise played.

"Alisa! Blaise! Come to the living room. We need to talk to you," Momma said. "You won't be going to school tomorrow."

"Yay!" said Blaise, who was in third grade, with a huge smile on his face. But Momma and Papa weren't smiling.

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. *What do you normally do after school?*
2. *Draw a picture of a normal activity you do.*



"Is tomorrow a no-school-day day?" asked Alisa.

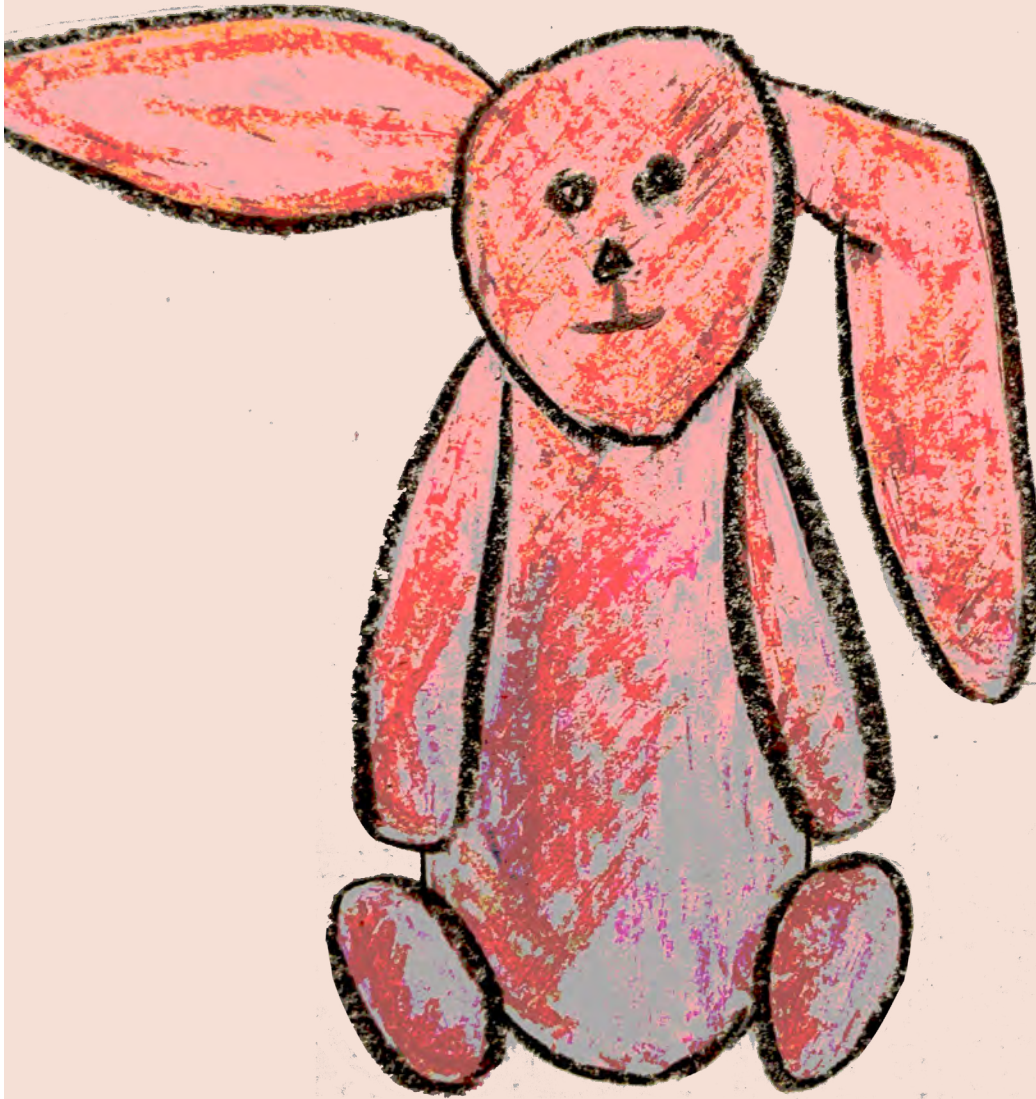
"Well, tomorrow is Friday and usually Friday is a school day, little cutie," Papa explained. "But tomorrow you won't be going. There is a virus going around called the coronavirus, and it's very contagious. So we are going to be staying home a lot so we don't get sick and we don't get others sick."

Alisa didn't know what a **garona-byrus** was, but she liked the idea of staying home tomorrow, not getting sick, and watching a movie.

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. *What did you first feel when school was closed because of coronavirus?*
2. *Draw a picture of your school.*





On Friday, Alisa woke up later than normal.

"Good morning sleepyhead," Momma greeted her.

"Hi Momma," Alisa replied, and then held her arms up to signal her need for morning snuggle hugs.

"When are Granbe and G-pop coming?" Alisa asked excitedly. She knew her grandparents were supposed to come to her house soon.

"Oh honey, they won't be able to visit this weekend because of the coronavirus," Momma responded.

Alisa cried, "But I want to see them!"

"I know you do, sweetheart. But it's not safe. The virus is so contagious, and it's not good for them to travel right now."

Alisa buried her head in her momma's shoulder, seeking comfort by snaking her forefinger around and around her ash brown hair. She cuddled with her stuffed bunny.

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. What ways do you find comfort? Twirling your hair? Snuggling with your favorite stuffed animal?
2. Draw a picture of your favorite snuggle friend.



Alisa's momma sat down with her on their yellow couch.

"Do you understand what the coronavirus is?"

Alisa shook her head no.

"Remember how we have to wash our hands to keep them clean from germs?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember what germs are?"

"Yes, they are like invisible bugs."

"Exactly. Well the coronavirus is an invisible germ. I think he looks like a gray tennis ball with red clovers sticking out all over it," Momma said.

"I think he's like a worm that has a blue and gold suit on."

"Well, this invisible worm with a blue and gold suit can make people very sick. That's why we cannot go to school or visit grandparents or friends."

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. What do you imagine the coronavirus looks like?
2. Draw a picture of what you think the virus looks like.



"My heart feels sad because I want to see people," Alisa said.

"I know, honey. This is really hard, isn't it?"

Alisa shook her head yes.

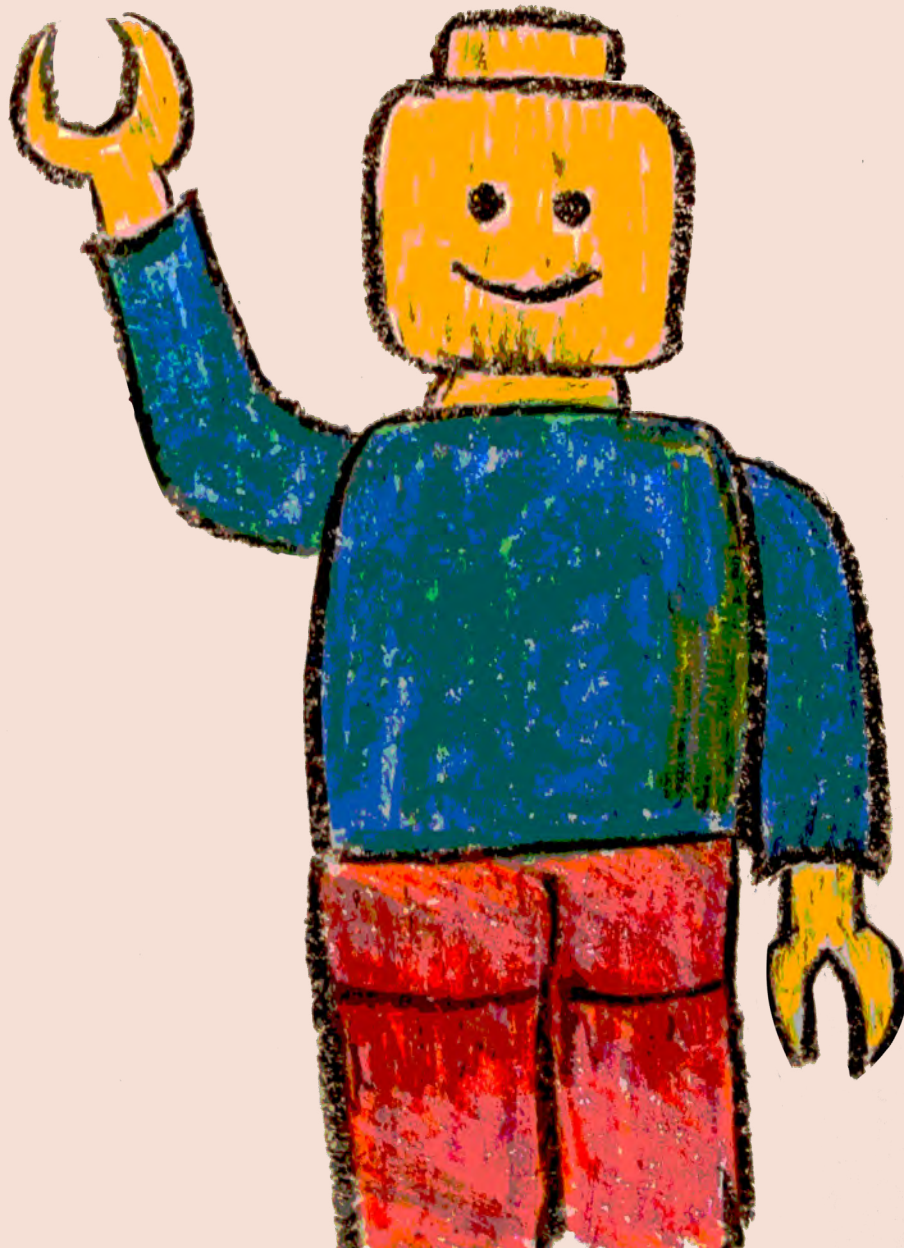
Wiping tears from Alisa's eyes, Momma said, "You know what? It's difficult for me and Papa and Blaise, too. We all get sad in different ways. I also want you to know that none of this is your fault. Do you understand that it's not your fault?"

Alisa shook her head yes.

### **REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE**

- 1. In what ways has the coronavirus made your heart feel sad?*
- 2. Draw a picture of your heart, however it feels right now.*





On Saturday, Alisa was not having a good day.

"Alisa, why are you getting so mad at Blaise? You can't just take the Legos he's playing with. You need to be kind," Momma scolded.

Later that day, one of Blaise's friends from the neighborhood came over to blow bubbles. Blaise was so happy, but Momma and Papa were concerned. "Stay apart from each other," Papa said. "It's weird, but we have to be safe."

Seeing Blaise play with a friend was too much for Alisa. "I want a friend to play with!" she shouted and flopped to the ground. Her whole body shook from the tears and anger.

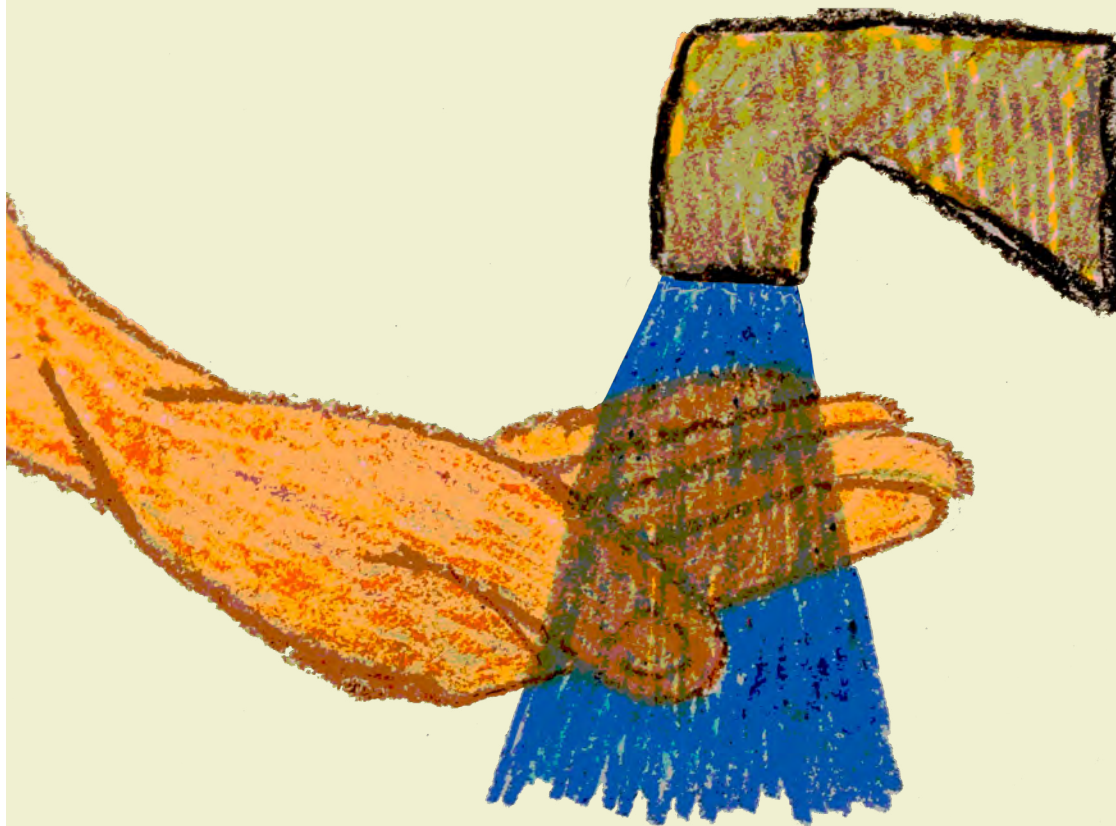
"I just want to see Nonna and Peepa and Granbe and G-pop!" Alisa said crying, missing all of her grandparents.

"I know you do, sweet girl. And they want to see you, too. Should we video call them?" Momma asked.

"Yes!"

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. Who do you really wish you could see in person right now?
2. Draw a toy that you like to play with.



"I just want to fight corona," Alisa said sadly.

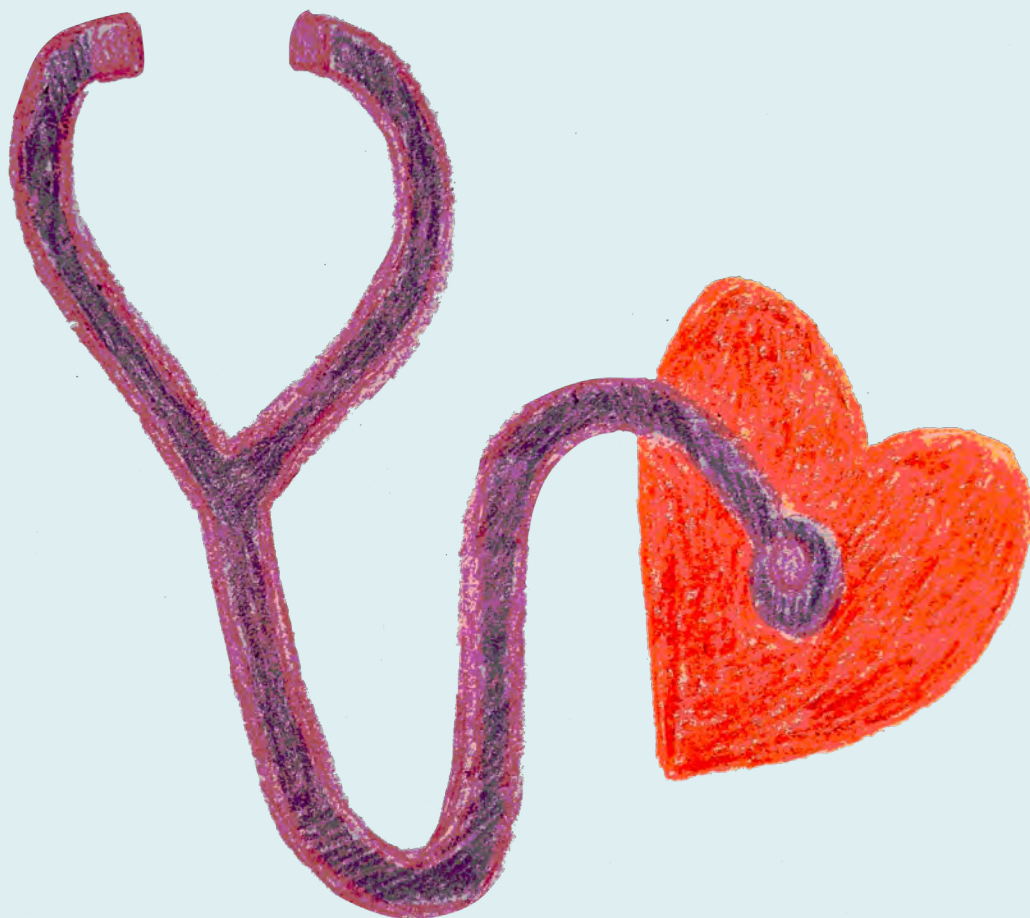
"You know what?" her momma asked, "You are! You are a great warrior. You are fighting the coronavirus right now. Every time you wash your hands, you are fighting it!"

"Can my friends fight it, too?" she asked.

"Yes, honey, your friends are fighting it! They are great warriors, too. This is a tricky fight, though. The best way to fight it is for you to be at your house and for your friends to be at their houses. Because when we are near each other, it's easier for coronavirus to make us sick."

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. *Did you know that you are fighting the coronavirus by washing your hands and staying at home? What other ways are you fighting it?*
2. *Draw a picture of you washing your hands.*



On Sunday, Alisa went on a long hike with her family. She smiled at all the flowers on the trail. "Spring is coming!" she said, pressing her hands to her cheeks in excitement. "When spring comes will corona be gone?" Alisa asked earnestly.

"No, honey. Spring starts in just a few days. Coronavirus will take a while before it goes away. We don't know exactly how long it will be," Papa said.

"We also don't know how long I will be out of work," Papa said. "I won't be going to work right now. The restaurant has to close because of coronavirus. A lot of people won't have jobs anymore."

"What about Momma? Will she still have a job?" Alisa asked.

"What about Aunt Jen, she's a doctor. Will she have to go to the hospital a lot?" asked Blaise.

"Well, Momma will work her job from home. And Aunt Jen will probably have to work more. Doctors and nurses will have a lot of work right now to try to help people who are infected," Papa said.

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. How has the coronavirus affected jobs in your family? Besides doctors, nurses, and grocery store workers, who else works more right now in your community?
2. Draw a picture representing a type of job.





Alisa went to a patch of flowers, picked a purple one, and put it in her pocket while Papa and Blaise stopped to skip rocks.

"Papa, I heard you talk about how people are being mean to others because the coronavirus was in China first," Blaise said.

"Asian Americans are being yelled at and attacked in the United States because they look like they are from Asia. Can you imagine being yelled at or spat at by a stranger?"

"No, Papa," Blaise said solemnly.

"Me neither, buddy. Every human being is made in God's image, and racism is evil," Papa said. "Do you remember what racism is, buddy?"

"Kind of, but can you tell me again?"

"It's when a person believes he is better than another based on how he looks, the color of his skin, or where he is from, then uses his power against others. Oftentimes when people are scared, they blame others. They think it makes them feel stronger or less scared. But it hurts others. It's good to name what we are scared of because of the virus—like getting sick or not being able to protect our friends—but it's not good to blame others who haven't done anything to us."

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. In what ways can we honor the image of God in our neighbors? How should we respond to hateful speech and actions? What fears do you have because of the virus?
2. Draw a picture of a flower, river, or tree.



On Monday, Alisa looked at the big map in her dining room.

"The coronavirus is happening all over the world," Momma said.

"The whole map has corona?" Alisa asked.

"Kids all over the world have to stay home from school and church and can't see their best friends, either."

"Even Julia?" Alisa asked about her friend from Honduras.

"Yes, honey. Even Julia. I talked to her mom today," Alisa's Momma said. "You know the coronavirus is really hard for us, but it's even harder for Julia. It's challenging for her mom to get food. Her mom can't work and can only go to the store on Wednesdays."

"Maybe we could read to Julia and send her a video," Alisa suggested.

"That's a great idea. We can pray for Julia's family to stay safe and have what they need. Let's also pray for us to learn how to love them in ways we hadn't thought of before, and become more Christ-like in our love."

## REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. *What country do you live in? Do you have friends in other countries? How has the coronavirus affected their lives? What are ways you pray for them?*
2. *Draw a map of the world.*



On Tuesday, Alisa drew a map herself then showed it to her Momma.

"This is where we live," she said, pointing to one spot on the page. "And this is where my best friend Erica lives. She lives far away, but not too far away. We can't see her. We can't walk to her house either, because of corona."

"No, we can't see her or walk to her house. But maybe you could video her a message. How does that sound?"

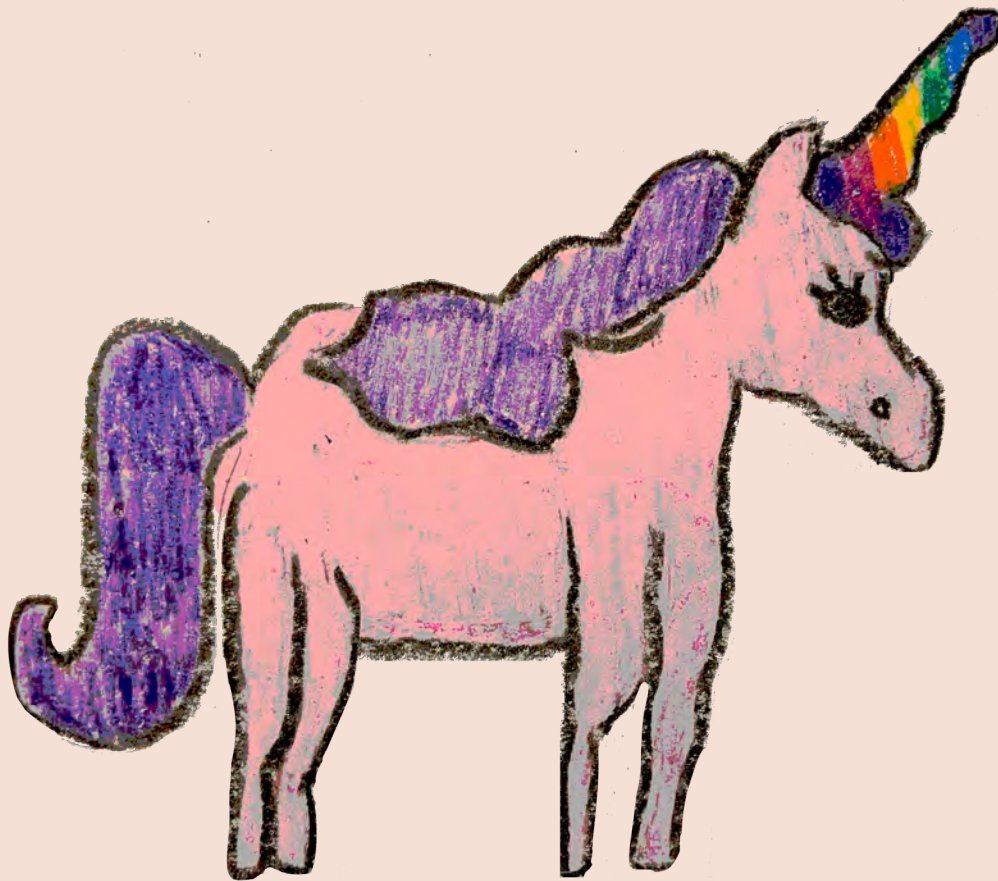
"Good," Alisa said.

Her Momma got her cell phone and Alisa made a short video: "Hi Erica. I miss you."

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. How far away do your closest friends live to you? Are you able to have video calls with them or send them a message?
2. Draw a map of your community and include houses of your friends.





On Wednesday, Alisa was missing her teacher and her classmates. "Your teacher misses you too, sweet girl," her Momma said. "She's going to video with you on Friday!"

"Yay!" Alisa said.

"Can I go play outside now?"

"I'm sorry, Alisa, but it's raining again today." Alisa frowned. "We'll have to play inside again today. How about a card game or a puzzle?"

"Let's do my unicorn puzzle!" Alisa said, smiling.

"Go get it. I need five more hours—I mean, minutes—to finish my work, and then we can play," Momma said.

## REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. Are you able to play outside? What is your favorite thing to play outside? Inside?
2. Draw your favorite animal.



On Thursday, Alisa got mad at her brother, and her dog, and she didn't want to eat her breakfast.

"You know what?" her Momma said, picking her up and holding her on her hip.

"What?" Alisa said grumpily.

"You are doing such a good job dealing with all of these changes from coronavirus. I'm so proud of you! A lot has changed, hasn't it?"

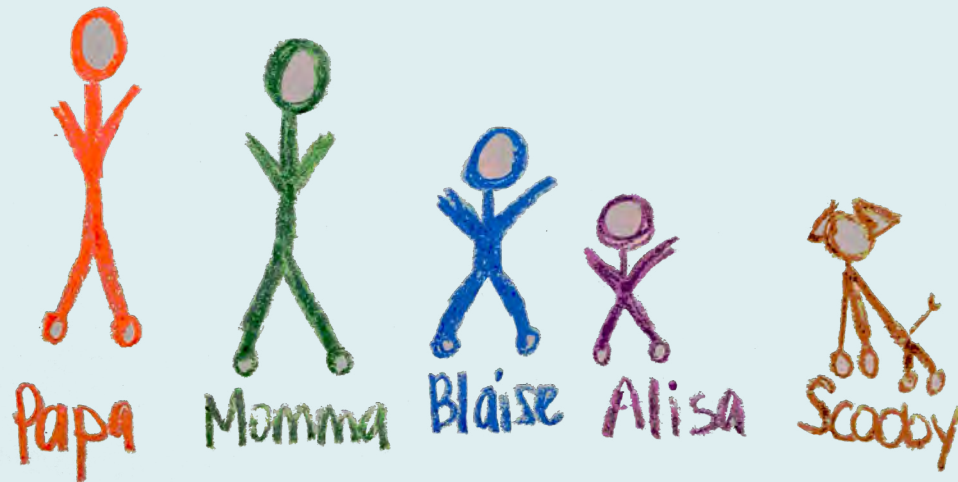
"Yes."

"Let's talk through what all has changed. Your dad isn't working right now because the restaurant he worked at had to close. But he does make you eggs and grits every morning now, huh? What's something else that has changed?"

Alisa paused. "We're all home all the time," Alisa said.

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. What do you normally eat for breakfast? What things have changed at your home because of coronavirus?
2. Draw a picture of food you regularly eat.



"Me and Blaise play together a lot now, but he doesn't let me play with him all the time," Alisa said grumpily.

"No, he doesn't. He needs his space and likes to play alone sometimes. Remember how sometimes we have to show each other love differently?"

Alisa nodded.

"When you fall down and get hurt, do you like to get a hug?"

"Yes."

"And remember what Blaise likes when he gets hurt?"

"To not be hugged."

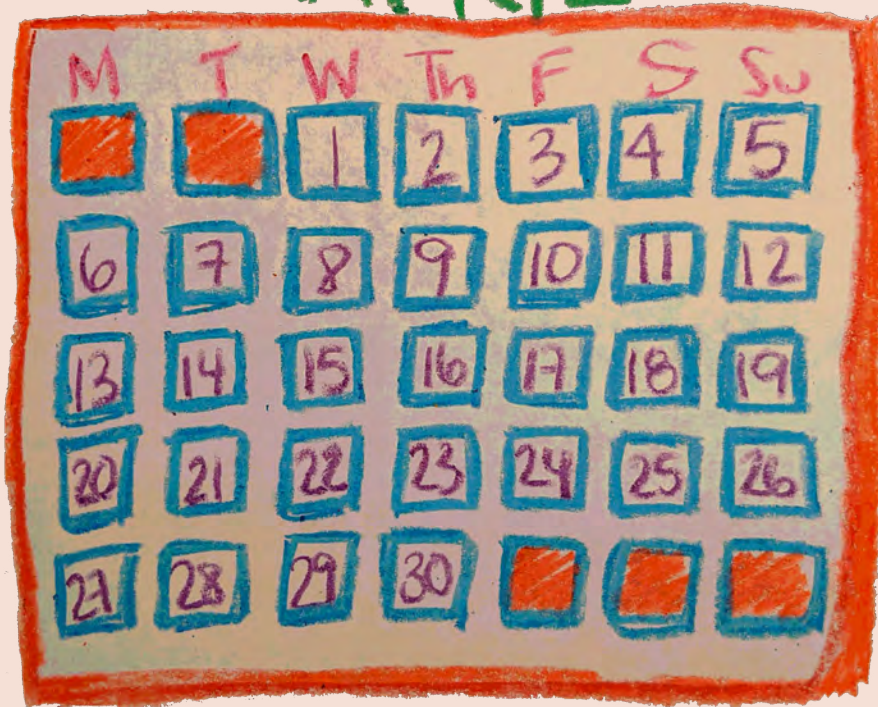
"That's right. You, me, Papa, and Blaise are all dealing with the changes from coronavirus differently. Sometimes we show love by giving a hug, and sometimes we show love by giving alone time. When one person wants a snuggle, someone else might want to play alone, and that's okay."

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. When you are struggling with the changes from coronavirus, do you want to be left alone or to be with people? What about the other people who live with you?
2. Draw a picture of everyone who lives in your house.



# APRIL



"When will the corona be over?" Alisa asked while getting ready for bed. "When can we go see Nonna?"

"Honey, I wish I could tell you, but I don't know. As soon as we can visit Nonna we will, okay?"

"Okay," Alisa said sadly.

"I'm so very proud of you, Alisa. I know that things are very different right now. You, Blaise, and me all have to do our work at home. We don't get to go to the store or to the bowling place or to watch a movie on the big screen, and we can't go eat at restaurants. And you know what? All of this is hard for me, too. Sometimes I get really mad at the coronavirus. Can we make a deal?"

"Sure."

"How about whenever you or me are mad or sad about the coronavirus, we can ask each other for a hug. Deal?"

"Deal," Alisa said.

## REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. Is it really hard for you not to know when coronavirus will end? Why do you think it is so hard?
2. Draw a calendar of the month you are in right now.



"Momma, do hugs always work when we are mad?" asked Alisa.

"Well, when I'm extra mad, I like to do a breathing exercise. Let's try it together. We hold out a palm of our hand and trace its outline with our other hand. We'll start at the top of our thumb and breathe in. Then we'll go down our thumb and breathe out. Then up our forefinger and breathe in, down it and breathe out, until we breathe through all five fingers. Then we ask ourselves how we feel now. What do you think?"

"Maybe we should do that when we're extra mad."

"That's a great idea. And as we go through each day, we might discover more ways we can work through our emotions. You're such a warrior. You really are. Honey, I don't know when the coronavirus will end, or when you'll get to go back to school, but when it does we'll plan a visit to see your grandparents and cousins. What I do know is that we are going to get through this together: you, me, Papa, and Blaise."

"And Scooby," Alisa said.

"Yes, and Scooby," Momma said smiling. "Night night. Sweet dreams. I love you."

"Night night, sweet dreams, I love you, Momma."

### REFLECTION QUESTION & DRAWING CHALLENGE

1. When you get really mad or sad, what things do you do with your parents or caregivers to help you get through it?
2. Draw a picture of one way you deal with your anger.

### Special thanks to:

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### A Note to Parents

Hello! I wrote this book based on conversations I had with my own children. I imagine you are having similar conversations, and I hope this is a way to spur more understanding around what's going on. Please have your children submit their drawing challenges to me through my website: [www.genathomas.com](http://www.genathomas.com) or on Twitter or Instagram with the hashtag #AlisaCorona. I will choose a piece of art to feature as often as I can on my blog.

Please include:

- the child's first name or nickname
- the child's age
- region the child is from, whether state or country
- the hashtag #AlisaCorona
- and tag me @genaLthomas

### About the Author

Gena Thomas is a writer, a faith wrestler, a wife, and a mom. She and her husband, Andrew, have been married over a decade and have two children, an 8-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl. Gena works as an instructional designer at a nonprofit that equips local churches in the area of holistic development. She has written for several Christian publications, and published her first book, *A Smoldering Wick: Igniting Missions Work with Sustainable Practices*, in 2016. Her second book, *Separated by the Border: A Birth Mother, a Foster Mother, and a Migrant Child's 3,000-Mile Journey*, unpacks the story of reuniting her Honduran foster daughter with her family after separation at the US border and was published in 2019 with InterVarsity Press. Visit her website: [www.genathomas.com](http://www.genathomas.com) for more.

### About the Humanitarian Disaster Institute

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Our website and social media accounts provide ongoing updates and resources for preparing your church for COVID-19. You can also find more information about Spiritual First Aid, including additional tools and related research.

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