

THE BIGGEST STORY CURRICULUM



January - March
Pentateuch

8:30/11:00 am : Green Check Marks

9:40 : Red Check Marks



PART 1

THE PENTATEUCH

GENESIS–DEUTERONOMY

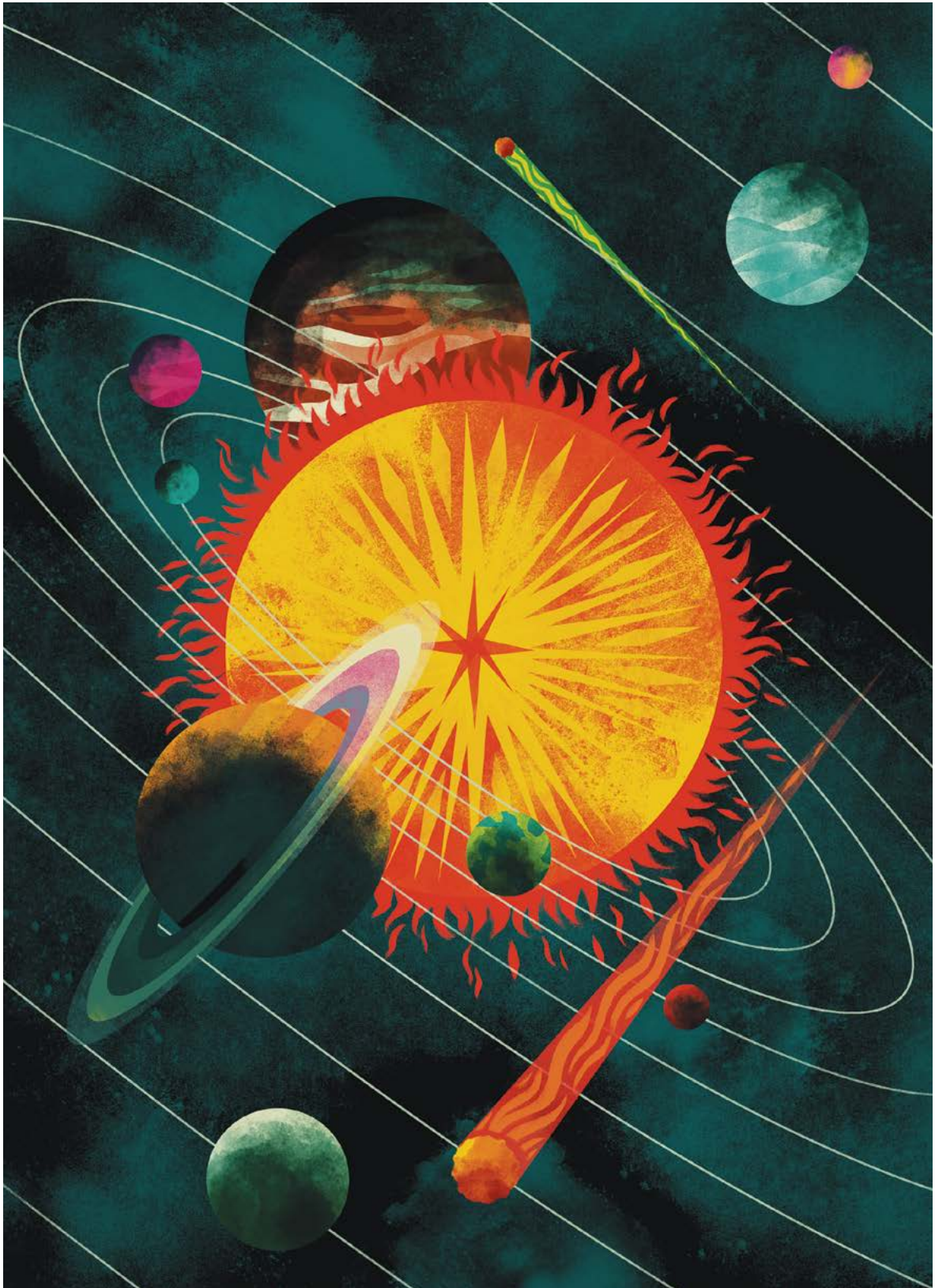
The Bible was originally written in two different languages. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew (okay, there's a tiny bit of Aramaic in there too), and the New Testament was written in Greek.

The books of the Hebrew Bible are separated into three categories: Torah (Teaching), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). Some people take the first letter of these three Hebrew words and call the Hebrew Bible the Tanakh.

The books in the Tanakh are the same books in what Christians call the Old Testament, but the order is different. Moreover, the three categories (Teaching, Prophets, and Writings) don't neatly line up with the way most Christians think of the books and divisions of the Old Testament. To avoid confusion, then, our sections will stick with the more familiar categories: Pentateuch, History, Poetry, and Prophets.

The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses and are sometimes called the Torah, which, as we've seen, means "teaching" or "law." The other name for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy is the Pentateuch (the prefix *penta* means "five"). If we are going to make sense of the storyline of the Bible, we must take time to understand how the story begins. Knowledge of the Pentateuch is essential for being mature, biblically literate Christians. In the first five books of the Bible we discover not only how the universe came into being, how we came into being, and how sin entered the world, but we also learn about God's plan to set his people free and set them on a path of obedience and blessing.

Many of the Bible's most famous stories can be found in the Pentateuch. In this first part we will work through twenty different Bible stories. Our aim is to understand and enjoy these amazing stories, but also to understand how each story fits in with the Biggest Story.



STORY 1

And So It Begins

GENESIS 1–2

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 1–2.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



The Bible is a big book made of sixty-six smaller books. Genesis is the first book, one of the oldest books, and it is important for understanding everything that follows. Like most of the Old Testament, it was originally written in Hebrew. [Hold up a picture of the Hebrew alphabet.] Can you imagine trying to read the Bible in Hebrew? We should be so thankful people have translated the Bible into English. We can thank God that we have the Bible in our own native tongue. The Old Testament has four different parts. The first part is called the Pentateuch. Does that sound like a strange word? *Penta* means “five,” and *teuch* means “book.” So, the Pentateuch is just the first five books of the Old Testament. God used Moses to write them, and Moses is the main human character. However, God is the main character in all five books.

Genesis begins with God: “In the beginning, God” (Gen. 1:1a). That’s the first line of the Bible! Before “God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1b), God was. He always was. But what did he do before he created everyone and everything? Was he lonely? No. Bored? Of course not. Scared? Certainly not. Why? God is one God in three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity have always been marked by love, and it is out of this love that he created every person, place, and thing.

TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth

A very good
God makes
a very good
world, with
humans as his
very good image
bearers.

Out of nothing God creates everything. Amazing! He created everything in the heavens and on the earth in six days. He didn’t need six days or even six seconds to create everything. He could have done it with one word or in one second. So why did he do it that way? He did it to give us an example of how to live our lives: Six days of work. One day of rest. Now, God doesn’t get tired, so he doesn’t need rest. But we need rest because our bodies get tired, and we also need to spend a day worshiping our Creator God. Oh how God cares for us and knows what we need most!

Now, let’s get back to the six days and go through them one by one. On day one, God created light and he separated the light from the darkness. The light he called day and the darkness night. On day two, he separated the sky from the seas, the clouds above from the oceans below. On day three, he created the land with plants yielding seed and trees bearing fruit. Can you see the apple trees



Story

1

Genesis

1-2

and orange trees, smell the roses, and feel the cactuses? Ouch! (Maybe don't touch the cactuses.) On days four, five, and six, he filled what he made with more amazing creations: the sun, moon, and stars for the sky; fish for the sea and birds for the sky; and animals and insects on the earth. The North Star was created. The White Tiger. The Bald Eagle. The Black Widow. The Hammerhead Shark. (Watch out for his sharp teeth too!)

God is good. His creation is good.

On the sixth day God's good creation got even better. God (Father, Son, and Spirit) said, "Let us make man in our image." God created people: Adam and Eve. A man and a woman. A husband and a wife. And he put these beautiful people in a beautiful place called the garden of Eden. Paradise. Their job, as people made in God's image, was to show what God was like (sort of like a mirror shows you what you look like) and to grow a family that would go everywhere and also show what God was like ("be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth," Gen. 1:28). What a perfect beginning to the beginning.

God is very good. And so, people are very good. Just like a mirror, we show how very good God is. So tremendously terrific!

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

The story of creation is just the first story of the Biggest Story. In Genesis we will learn that, because of sin, people aren't very good mirrors. We don't reflect God very well. But "the Word" (John 1:1) came as "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). He perfectly showed what God is like, and he made a way for our broken mirrors to be repaired so that we could again do the job God created us to do.

But the Word isn't just our Savior. He, with the Father and the Spirit, created everything. This is why, when John begins his Gospel, he uses words like the ones in Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Paul also says of the Son of God that "all things were created, in heaven and on earth, . . . through him and for him" (Col. 1:16). The sun, moon, and stars? Yes! The sea and sky? Yes! The land and plants? Yes! The fish, birds, animals, and humans? Yes! Everything!

3

Engage

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

Memory Verse
In the beginning,
God created the
heavens and
the earth.

GENESIS 1:1

1. **QUESTION:** What's something cool you've created recently? What did you use to create it? What did God use to create the world?

TAKEAWAY: God created the world out of nothing simply by his powerful word.

2. **QUESTION:** Can you imagine what the world would be like if God had made it in black and white without color? What would it be like if God made all our food taste like dry crackers? What does creation tell us about God? Was God happy with what he created? How do we know that from the Bible?

TAKEAWAY: God is an amazing Creator, and he made all things beautiful and good.

3. **QUESTION:** What did God do on the seventh day after he created the world? What day does your family set aside for rest and worship? What are some ways that day should be different than the others? What are some steps you can take to make sure you are setting aside time to rest and worship Jesus?

TAKEAWAY: God gives us a day for worship and rest, and we shouldn't neglect it.

4. **QUESTION:** God made us in his image. Our job as image bearers is to show how good God is. What are some ways we can do this?

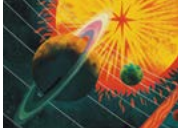
TAKEAWAY: Our job as image bearers is to bring God glory by showing to the world around us how good God is.

5. **QUESTION:** How do we know that Jesus, along with the Father and Spirit, created the world? In the New Testament, who does Paul say the whole world was created through and for?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus, along with the Father and Spirit, is the Creator of the world.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}



Story

1

Genesis

1–2

Option 1: “God Said”

Supply List: none

✓ Have the children stand up. The leader gives an instruction like, “God said, ‘Let there be light, so jump up and down,’” or “God said, ‘Let there be birds, so fly like a bird.’” Alternate by sometimes giving a command without starting with “God said.” Say something like, “Let there be water! So, pretend to swim.” If any child does this action, they have to sit down because you didn’t say, “God said.”

Option 2: Dough Creations

Supply List: modeling dough

✓ *Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Give each child a lump of modeling dough to make something that God created. Then take away the modeling dough and ask them to make something. Make the point that only God can make something from nothing.

Option 1: Create-a-Human

Supply List: whiteboard, dry-erase marker

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Teacher writes a series of dashes on a whiteboard. The dashes correspond with how many letters are in a word or phrase. For example, for the word *platypus* the teacher writes eight dashes on the board, and each round the kids guess a letter. If a child guesses a wrong letter, the teacher draws a human body part (head, body, two arms, two legs). The students lose if they create the entire human by guessing wrong letters, or win by guessing the right letters and solving the puzzle. You can decide how many wrong guesses equals a fully created human (suggestion: six).

Option 2: Charades

Supply List: stopwatch/timer

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Teacher selects a child to act out something that God created (student can choose). The child will have thirty seconds to act it out. The rest of the class tries to guess what it is before the time is up. Whoever guesses correctly has the option either to be the next person to act or to choose another student to go next.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Make a Mirror

Supply List: construction paper, strips of brown construction paper, aluminum foil, glue sticks, permanent marker

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out rectangular pieces of aluminum foil and strips of brown construction paper, cut so they fit around the aluminum foil (one set per child).

Give each child one sheet of construction paper. Place brown strips, aluminum foil, glue sticks, and permanent marker on tables. Have children glue down a sheet of aluminum foil in the middle of their piece of construction paper and add a frame around it by gluing down the strips of brown paper. Have teacher or child write “God saw” above it and “and it was very good” below it. Remind children that God made us to reflect him as his image bearers.

Option 2: Creation Wheel

Supply List: white paper (two pieces per child), crayons/markers, brass fasteners

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out two eight-inch-diameter circles per child. Divide the first circle into four equal sections, and label them Sky, Land, Water, and Your Choice! In the second circle, cut out a section slightly less than one-fourth the size of the circle and write “God saw that it was good” on the remaining portion. (Keep the center of the circle uncut so the brass fastener can secure the two circles together at the center).





Story

1

Genesis

1-2

Provide children with the circle divided into four sections. Have children draw something that belongs in each of the four sections. Provide children with the second circle with a section cut out of it. Fasten the second circle on top of the first with a brass fastener.

Option 1: Creation Mural

Supply List: large sheet of paper (like butcher paper or poster board), watercolor paints/markers/colored pencils

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Children work together using watercolor paints, markers, or colored pencils to make a mural of some of the things God created.

Option 2: Tissue Paper "It Is Good"

Supply List: "It Is Good" white paper, small squares of colored tissue paper, paper plates, liquid glue, pen/pencil

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of white paper with "It Is Good" written in big bubble letters on it. Create a sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate, a pen or pencil, and an "It Is Good" paper. On each table, distribute tissue paper squares and a paper plate with a large amount of liquid glue in the center. Children will wrap a single square of tissue paper around the end of a pencil/pen, dip it in glue and stick it on the bubble letter. They continue until the bubble letters are completely filled in.

Children will glue tissue paper on the bubble letters "It is Good"



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 2

A Very Bad Day

GENESIS 3

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 3.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



Last lesson we explored how our amazing God created everything out of nothing. He created the sun, moon, and stars. The land and waters. The animals, birds, insects, and fish. It was good day after good day. Then, on the sixth day, God made man and woman. That was a very good day!

Next, our very good God placed his very good people in a very perfect place: the garden of Eden. This is the special place that Adam and Eve would work, play, and raise their family. It was the most beautiful place you can ever imagine. There was a clear blue river that flowed throughout the garden and watered all the trees. The trees grew. And each tree was amazing to look at and had delicious fruit. Maybe they ate coconuts, apples, and oranges. Yum! There was a special tree in the garden called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord

God gave Adam one command: “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:16–17). This tree was off-limits. Do you think Adam will keep this command? Let’s find out.

TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Sin, suffering,
and death came
into the world
because Adam
disobeyed God.

Remember all the trees in the garden? Remember the off-limits tree? Remember God’s command to Adam? “You can eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Remember the warning? “For if you eat of that tree you shall surely die” (see Gen. 2:16–17) This special tree was a testing tree. God put it in the garden to see if Adam and Eve would obey and trust him to tell them right from wrong.

But did Adam and Eve listen to God? No. They listened to Satan. One day Satan, in the form of a snake, slithered into the garden. Adam and Eve were not afraid of snakes because all of God’s creatures were created good. Adam named a snake “snake,” just like he named a dog “dog,” a beaver “beaver,” and a Raspberry crazy ant, well, “Raspberry crazy ant.” That’s a real bug!

The snake slithered around Eve. He wanted to trick and deceive her. He asked, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” She replied, “We may eat of the fruit of all the trees except the tree in the middle. Because if you even touch that tree you will die” (see Gen. 3:2–3). The snake hissed, then laughed. “Ha!” He said, “You won’t die. God just wants to keep good things from you!”

But is that true? Did God lie? She looked at the tree. She was tempted. Tricked. Adam was too. In fact, he was there with her. He should have said, “Stop, Eve!



Story

2

Genesis 3

Trust God.” But he said nothing. He wanted knowledge like only God had. He wanted to be more than God’s image bearer. He wanted to be God. He had believed Satan’s lie. The fruit looked so beautiful and so good. Too good not to touch, taste, and eat. Eve grabbed the fruit from the off-limits tree. She bit it. She gave Adam a bite too. They had disobeyed God’s one command. Right away, Adam knew it. Eve knew it. God knew it.

God sent them out of the garden. And he cursed his perfect world. The ground would be hard. Work would be hard. Marriage would be hard. Having babies would be hard. And death would soon come to everyone. It was a very bad day.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

It was a very bad day. God cursed the snake, the man, and the woman. He promised that hardship and death would come to every human. (And it has!) But he also promised a new start. A fresh start. Adam and Eve would die, but not right away. Eve would have children. More than that (much more than that!), one of her offspring—a child that would come from her children’s children’s children’s children—would deal with the snake. Let’s call him the Snake Crusher. We know him as Jesus.

Jesus fulfilled the mysterious promise God made:

I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel. (Gen. 3:15)

Satan would hurt Eve’s offspring. He “bruised” Jesus. Jesus died. And yet, the Bible tells us that when Jesus died, he destroyed Satan. He crushed the snake! And God kept his amazing promise to Adam and Eve. Yes, Jesus’s worst day was our best day.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** After God gave Adam a command not to eat from one special tree, what did the snake say to Eve to try to get her to disobey God? How did Adam and Eve respond? How do you think they should have responded?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: Sin is doubting God and choosing to disobey him.

2. **QUESTION:** When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, who were they choosing to believe? What happened to them because they listened to the snake? What are some ways choosing to sin has damaged you and your relationship with God?

TAKEAWAY: We all choose to sin for different reasons, but it always damages us and our relationship with God.

3. **QUESTION:** What happened to the whole world as a result of Adam's sin?

TAKEAWAY: Sin, suffering, and death came into the world through Adam's disobedience.

4. **QUESTION:** What promise did God make to Adam and Eve after they disobeyed? How did God keep it?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus crushed the snake by dying on the cross. God kept his promise!

Memory Verse

I will put enmity
between you and
the woman, and
between your
offspring and her
offspring; he shall
bruise your head,
and you shall
bruise his heel.

GENESIS 3:15

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Obedience Tag

Supply List: two sheets of white paper, tape, black marker

Before Class: Gather supplies. Write Obey on both sheets of paper and tape on two walls facing each other.

Have the class line up on one side of the classroom. Choose one “snake” for every five to ten kids in class and ask them to come to the middle of the room. Tell the class the goal is to “obey” by running to the opposite wall without getting tagged by a snake. Tell the snakes that the goal is to tag as many kids as possible. If a snake tags someone, that child is out. Go until there is either only one student left (obedience wins!) or the snakes are left (snakes win!). Remind students that Satan will often try to stop us from obeying, but it is always good to obey.



Story

2

Genesis 3

Option 2: Domino Reaction

Supply List: ten dominoes for every two students

Before Class: Gather supplies.



Provide ten dominoes to every two children. Show them how to make a “train” of dominoes and then ask them to make their own train using the ten dominoes. After knocking down the dominoes, talk about how one sin often leads to more sins and impacts many people.

Option 1: Obedience Tag

Supply List: two sheets of white paper, tape, black marker

Before Class: Gather supplies. Write Obey on both sheets of paper and tape on two walls facing each other.

Have the class line up on one side of the classroom. Choose one “snake” for every five to ten kids in your class and ask them to come to the middle of the room. Tell the class the goal is to “obey” by running to the opposite wall without getting tagged by a snake. Tell the snakes that the goal is to tag as many kids as possible. If a snake tags someone, that child is out. Go until there is either only one student left (obedience wins!) or the snakes are left (snakes win!). Remind students that Satan will often try to stop us from obeying, but it is always good to obey.

Option 2: Two Truths and a Lie

Supply List: none



Have children sit in a circle. Give them a minute to think of two true things about themselves and one lie. Go around the circle allowing each child to share his or her three statements. (Example: “I have a pet turtle. I sing in the shower. I went to Iceland for my birthday.”) Other children raise their hands and guess which statement the child shared is a lie. Remind students that God wants us to know truth and not be tricked by the lies of Satan.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Sin vs. Obedience Signs

Supply List: paper plates, popsicle sticks, decorating items (markers/crayons, stickers, mini pom-poms, sequins, ribbon, etc.), tape, stapler

Before Class: Gather supplies. Teacher labels one paper plate with the word Obey and one paper plate with the word Sin (make one set for each child).



Give each student their set of two labeled plates. Ask students to decorate the Obey plate as beautifully as possible and to decorate the Sin plate as ugly as possible. When students are done, tape the popsicle stick to the back of one plate. Then staple the two plates together so that the decorations are facing outwards. These signs can remind children how wonderful obedience is and how horrible sin is.

I will give you stickers for the words "obey" and "sin"

Option 2: Watercolor Crayon Obey Artwork

Supply List: watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, white crayons, cardstock paper

Before Class: Gather supplies. Prepare cardstock paper by writing OBEY in bubble letters on each sheet (one per child).



Use white crayon to color in bubble letters that say OBEY. Encourage children to press hard with the white crayon and fill in the letters completely. Next, have children use watercolors to paint the entire picture with different colors of their choosing. The wax of the crayon will keep the word OBEY white. Remind children that obedience stands out. Note: You may want to do this craft at the beginning of class so the paint has time to dry.

I will have cardstock with "obey" for them to watercolor



Option 1: Sin vs. Obedience Signs

Supply List: paper plates, popsicle sticks, decorating items (markers/crayons, stickers, mini pom-poms, sequins, ribbon, etc.), tape, stapler

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Use white crayon to color in bubble letters that say OBEY. Encourage children to press hard with the white crayon and fill in the letters completely. Next, have children use watercolors to paint the entire picture with different colors of their choosing. The wax of the crayon will keep the word OBEY white. Remind children that obedience stands out. Note: You may want to do this craft at the beginning of class so the paint has time to dry.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 3

From Bad to Worse

GENESIS 3–4

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 3–4 (and 5).
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Life outside of Eden was not good. Sin was now in the world—people were disobeying God. Genesis 4 shows that sin was everywhere and in everyone. Because of sin, death came into the world too. Genesis 5 tells us about that. Adam dies. Seth, his son, dies. Six more people die. One generation after the other. Adam and Eve have made quite a mess of the world! Sin and death. A cursed planet.

And there was no turning back. Even if Adam and Eve wanted to return to the garden of Eden, they couldn't. They couldn't get to the beautiful trees and the tasty fruit, including the live-forever tree, because there was a mighty angel with a flaming sword guarding the entrance. So they lived outside of Eden. Life was hard. Adam had to work the ground, hour after hour, day after day. The earth

was filled with thorns and thistles. Farming wasn't easy. He sweat a lot in the hot sun. Having children and raising children wasn't easy either. Giving birth was painful! (Ask your mom.) What was also painful was that their children had bad hearts like their mom and dad. Hearts full of evil thoughts, mouths full of hateful words, and hands full of evil actions.

TELL THE STORY

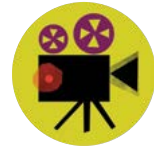
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
*Sin was everywhere
and in everyone.*

After Adam and Eve sinned, God sent them out of Eden. But he still loved and cared for them. Remember he promised to send the Snake Crusher to crush, well, the snake! To rescue them from Satan. That Snake Crusher would come from one of Adam and Eve's descendants (one of their children's children's children's children). Well, Genesis 4 begins with a birth announcement: Eve is pregnant! And one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine months later, she gave birth to a boy. Do you see God's promise beginning to take place? Adam and Eve had seen amazing creatures—hummingbirds, cheetahs, penguins, and kangaroos. But nothing was so amazing as this first baby.

Then God gave them another baby! The first they named Cain; the second Abel. Cain liked to make things grow, so he became a farmer. Abel loved animals, so he became a shepherd. Perhaps Adam and Eve taught their boys how to grow crops and protect flocks, as well as about God, their sin, the curse, and the promise. And they taught them to bring God a gift—an offering—from their work.

One day Cain brought an offering from the ground; Abel brought his firstborn sheep. God accepted Abel's sacrifice but not Cain's, because Abel trusted God and his promises while Cain did not (see Heb. 11:4). This made Cain angry.



Story

3

Genesis

3–4

Red-in-the-face angry. God said, “Why are you angry? Do what is right, and I will accept your gift. Don’t let sin grab hold of your heart.”

Cain didn’t listen. He let sin grab hold of his heart even more. One day, when he and his brother were working in the field, Cain killed Abel. He murdered his little brother. How terrible. Wicked! Sad. God saw this terrible, wicked, sad thing and punished him. “Now, when you are farming,” God said, “it will be really, really hard. And,” God said, “you shall be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth” (see Gen. 4:12). Which meant he would be without a home and without his mother and father. How very sad. He wandered away, farther east of Eden.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Wouldn’t you like to live in the garden of Eden? The refreshing river. The amazing animals. The delicious food. Getting to live with God. How amazing! I’m sure Adam and Eve missed it. They wished they had not disobeyed God’s word so they could still live with him. They wished they didn’t have to live with sin and death. They saw their son Cain kill their son Abel. How awful!

The days that followed their very bad day (remember last week!) were also very bad. What hope did they have? What hope do we, as their children, have? Could they just fight the mighty angel and return to Eden? No. Could they fly to heaven to be with God? Of course not! All they could do was trust God’s promise. Remember the Snake Crusher? God would not leave his people in this curse forever. He so loved us that he sent Jesus. And Jesus so loved us that he paid for our sins by dying on the cross. Now, if we believe in him, we can walk with God and talk with God. A return to Eden! Better than Eden. What good news!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. QUESTION: In today’s lesson, what signs are there that life outside the garden isn’t very good?

TAKEAWAY: Sin and death are now in the world—everywhere and in everyone.

3

Engage

Memory Verse

Just as sin came
into the world
through one man
[Adam], and death
through sin, and
so death spread to
all men because
all sinned.

ROMANS 5:12

2. **QUESTION:** Why is it wrong to make an offering to God without faith, like Cain did? How did Cain's disobedience ruin his life? How did it impact the lives of those around him?

TAKEAWAY: If you don't say no to sin, it can ruin relationships and our lives.

3. **QUESTION:** How do we know that sin is still around now? How do we see it inside of us? How do we see it outside of us? What are some of the bad things that happen when we sin?

TAKEAWAY: Choosing to disobey God hurts us, others, and our relationship with our good God.

4. **QUESTION:** What promise did God make to Adam and Eve that is still true for us today? Who will crush sin and Satan under his foot, and rescue us from the curse?

TAKEAWAY: God promised that Eve's offspring would crush Satan and rescue us from the curse.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Contagion

Supply List: none



Have children sit quietly with their heads down and eyes closed. Choose one child to be "Contagion." Have Contagion go around as quietly as possible. When Contagion taps someone on the shoulder, that child gets up and puts their hands on Contagion's shoulders, forming a chain. They continue to move around as quietly as possible. Contagion continues to tap people until everyone is in the chain. Tell children that sin is like Contagion. It spreads everywhere and to everyone until we are all caught up in it.



Story

3

Genesis

3-4

Option 2: Sheep and Grain

Supply List: large bowl, mini marshmallows, corn kernels, two empty bowls, two spoons

Before Class: Gather supplies. In the large bowl mix mini marshmallows and corn kernels.

Divide children into two teams and have teams line up single file. Give each team an empty bowl and spoon. On the opposite side of the room, place the large bowl of mini marshmallows (representing sheep—Abel’s offering) and corn kernels (representing crops—Cain’s offering). On “Go,” the first child on each team must run across the room to the large bowl and scoop only marshmallows out with the spoon. When the child has a spoonful of marshmallows, he or she must return to the team and place all marshmallows left on the spoon into the team’s bowl (any marshmallows that drop must be left on the ground). They then give the spoon to the next child, who repeats the process. Play continues for five minutes. The team with the most mini marshmallows in their bowl after five minutes wins. If any corn kernels end up in a team’s bowl, they must subtract the number of corn kernels from their total score. Remind children that God accepted Abel’s sacrifice but not Cain’s, because Abel trusted God and his promises while Cain did not.

Option 1: Blob Tag

Supply List: none

Have children spread out in the room. Choose one child to be the “Blob.” Start a game of tag. The Blob is “It.” When the Blob tags someone, the tagged child links arms with the Blob. Continue play until everyone is a part of the Blob. Tell children that sin is like the Blob. It spreads everywhere and to everyone so that we are all caught up in it.

Option 2: Sin Is Crouching at Your Door

Supply List: none

Divide children into teams and have teams line up single file. Have the first child from each team crouch down and walk in this position as quickly as she can from the starting line to the other side of the room and back. When the first person returns to the starting line, have her tag the next person, who repeats the process. The first team to have all participants finish the race wins. Remind children that God warned Cain that sin was crouching at his door.



CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Coffee Filter Art

Supply List: coffee filters, hole punch, string, washable markers, spray bottle

Before Class: Gather supplies. Punch a hole at the top of each coffee filter (one per child). Cut string into one-foot lengths (one per child).



Place supplies on tables. Have children use washable markers to color a coffee filter with a design of their choice, leaving some white space in the design. Have them take the water bottle, lightly spray the coffee filter with water, and watch the colors spread. Have children put the string through the hole in the filter for hanging. Remind children that sin spreads. Cain's anger spread into bigger sin in his heart. That sin spread to impact other people and his relationship with God.

Option 2: Heart Jars

Supply List: jars or bottles, vegetable (or other) oil, water, funnels (if using small mouth jars/bottles), glitter, food coloring, sequins, small pom-poms

Before Class: Gather supplies. Fill jars or bottles halfway with equal parts oil and water.



Place glitter, food coloring, sequins, and small pom-poms on tables. Distribute one jar to each child. Have children add provided supplies to their jars. Have them put on the lid and shake their jar to mix up the items, then hold them still and watch the items settle into separate layers. While the layers are settling, remind children that Cain let anger shake him up until he exploded. We don't want to be like Cain; we need to let our hearts settle down when we are angry.

We will do this as a class. The teacher will demonstrate and the class will assist in placing items into the jar



Story

3

Genesis

3-4

Option 1: Coffee Filter Art

Supply List: coffee filters, hole punch, string, washable markers, spray bottle

Before Class: Gather supplies. Punch a hole at the top of each coffee filter (one per child).

Cut string into one-foot lengths (one per child).

Place supplies on tables. Have children use washable markers to color a coffee filter with a design of their choice, leaving some white space in the design. Have them take the water bottle, lightly spray the coffee filter with water, and watch the colors spread. Have children put the string through the hole in the filter for hanging. Remind children that sin spreads. Cain's anger spread into bigger sin in his heart. That sin spread to impact other people and his relationship with God.

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Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 4

Rain, Rain, Go Away

GENESIS 6–9

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read the focus passage (Gen. 6:5–7:19; 8:13–9:17) or the whole passage (Genesis 6–9).
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1
Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2
Teach

Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Very Good. Remember those words? God said them at creation. But ever since Adam and Eve ate from the off-limits tree, we might say that the words *bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad*, and *very bad* best describe what has happened. It was bad that Eve got tricked by the serpent. Bad that Adam disobeyed God. Bad that Cain killed his brother. Bad that Cain had to live away from family. And what happens next is very bad.

Adam and Eve continued to have children—Seth and many others. Cain too had lots of kids. Now there were people all over the earth. The only problem was that most people did not love God and each other. This “grieved God to his heart” (see Gen. 6:6). The Bible tells us that “The LORD saw that the wickedness

of man was great in the earth, and that . . . his heart was only evil continually. . . . So the LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land . . . for I am sorry that I have made them'" (Gen. 6:5–7). Wow! It does not look good. How will God keep his promise to crush the snake?

TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
focus passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
God sent
a flood to
judge all the
wickedness
on earth.

God loved the world he made. It was so good. But he didn't love what man had become. Most people had bad thoughts, spoke mean words, and were very naughty—all the time. God saw this. He didn't like it, and he did something about it. God decided to send a flood to destroy everything he had made. Everything except one family and one pair of every living creature. But why only one family? Because only one man, Noah, listened to God and did things God's way.

God told Noah he was going to destroy the earth with a flood. He also said that Noah and his family would be rescued. How would God protect them? God had a plan. He told Noah to build an ark. A really big boat. It would be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. It wasn't as big as the Titanic, but it sure was big! Noah believed everything God told him, so he obeyed. It took Noah over one hundred years to build such a huge boat. What patience! What hard work! What obedience!

At last, the boat was finished. Noah and his family, along with at least two of every kind of animal, were safe in the ark. God sealed the door. Two peacocks peeked out the window. Two giraffes stretched their necks. Two aardvarks did whatever aardvarks do. Then, God kept his promise. It started to rain. The



Story

4

Genesis

6–9

Bible says, “On that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights” (Gen. 7:11–12). Can you imagine that much rain? Everything and everyone outside the boat was destroyed.

Months later, when the people and animals came out of the ark to live on the land, God made a covenant—a special promise—with Noah that he will never again destroy the world with water. Then God gave a sign to remember his promise: a rainbow. The world had a new beginning.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Have you ever heard a Christian say, “I’m saved”? What does someone mean when they say that? Some people think of being saved from a sickness or breaking a really bad habit. God can and does save people from these things. But when the Bible talks about salvation, it teaches that God saves us from sin and Satan—and also from God’s coming judgment, when God will punish and destroy all that is not good.

The New Testament teaches us about Jesus, who was raised from the dead and whom God sent to save us from the punishment to come. Today is not so different than Noah’s day. Some people ignore God. Other people hate God. And lots of people hate one another. God does not like this, and he has promised to judge all sin. He will not destroy people with a flood. Remember the rainbow? But he will punish and destroy all that is not good with fire (2 Peter 3:7: “the heavens and the earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly”). But here is the good news. If we come to Jesus, we will be saved from the coming judgment. Just like Noah was saved! And we too will have a new beginning.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What are some words to describe the people when Noah was alive? How did God feel about how people in that day were living?

3

Engage

Memory Verse
Rain fell upon the
earth forty days
and forty nights.
GENESIS 7:12

TAKEAWAY: God loved the world he made, but he didn't love what people had become due to sin.

2. **QUESTION:** How does it make you feel to know that God can see everything you do and think? Happy? Scared? A bit of both? What did God do when he saw the wickedness of people?

TAKEAWAY: God sees sin and punishes people for acting sinfully.

3. **QUESTION:** Did God's flood destroy everyone? Why did God save Noah and his family? What does this tell us about God?

TAKEAWAY: God punishes, but he also saves.

4. **QUESTION:** What would have happened if Noah hadn't obeyed God when he asked him to build the ark? How do you think we should respond to God's word?

TAKEAWAY: Like Noah, we should obey God's word.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Follow the Leader

Supply List: none



One leader moves around the room doing various actions (hopping, skipping, crawling, stomping, etc.) as the children follow along behind the leader and copy the action the leader does. The teacher goes first, and then chooses children to take turns being the leader. Remind children that Noah walked with God. He obeyed God even though no one else around him did. We need to follow God too.



Story

4

Genesis

6-9

Option 2: Animal Picture Guessing Game or Charades

Supply List: stopwatch/timer, whiteboard and dry-erase marker (if doing picture guessing game)

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Select a child to act out or draw an animal (student chooses the animal they act out or draw). The child will have thirty seconds to act out or draw it. The rest of the class tries to guess what the animal is before the time is up. Whoever guesses correctly has the option either to be the next person to act out or draw or to choose another student to go next.

Option 1: Noah's Animals Memory Game

Supply List: none

Have children sit in a circle. One person starts by saying, "Noah went on the ark and took a pair of [names an animal]." The person next to them then says, "Noah went on the ark and took a pair of [names animal that first person named, and then a new pair of animals]." The third person names the animals that the first and second person named and adds their own pair of animals to the list. Continue around the circle until all children have had an opportunity to participate. At the end, have the whole class say the whole list together!

Option 2: Animal Picture Guessing Game

Supply List: stopwatch/timer, whiteboard, dry-erase marker

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Select a child to draw an animal (student chooses the animal they draw). The child will have thirty seconds to draw it. The rest of the class tries to guess what the animal is before the time is up. Whoever guesses correctly has the option either to be the next person to draw or to choose another student to go next.



CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: God Keeps His Promises

Supply List: white paper (one per child); red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple construction paper; scissors; tape/glue sticks; crayons or other writing utensil

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut narrow strips of paper using red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple construction paper. Make a sample craft.



Provide children with a sheet of white paper and a narrow strip of each of the rainbow colors. Have children cut out a cloud (about the size of their hand) using the white paper. Then have children arrange the colored strips of paper side by side. Attach the cloud to the top of the strips of paper using glue sticks or tape. Write “God keeps his promises” on the cloud (teacher may need to help the younger children).

Option 2: Build an Ark

Supply List: ~~modeling dough~~ playdough

Before Class: Gather supplies.



~~modeling dough~~
playdough
Have children use ~~modeling dough~~ to build an ark. Have them make animals if they have extra time.



Option 1: Rainbow Plates

Supply List: construction paper in the colors of the rainbow, glue, paper plates, writing utensil

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child one paper plate. On the bottom half, have children write “God keeps his promises.” On the top half, children will create a rainbow using torn-up pieces of paper. Provide children with glue and red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple construction paper. Have children tear the paper into small pieces. Use those pieces to form a rainbow. Start by gluing the red pieces on the outer edge of the top half of the paper plate and continue forming the rainbow from there.

Option 2: Simple Origami Animals

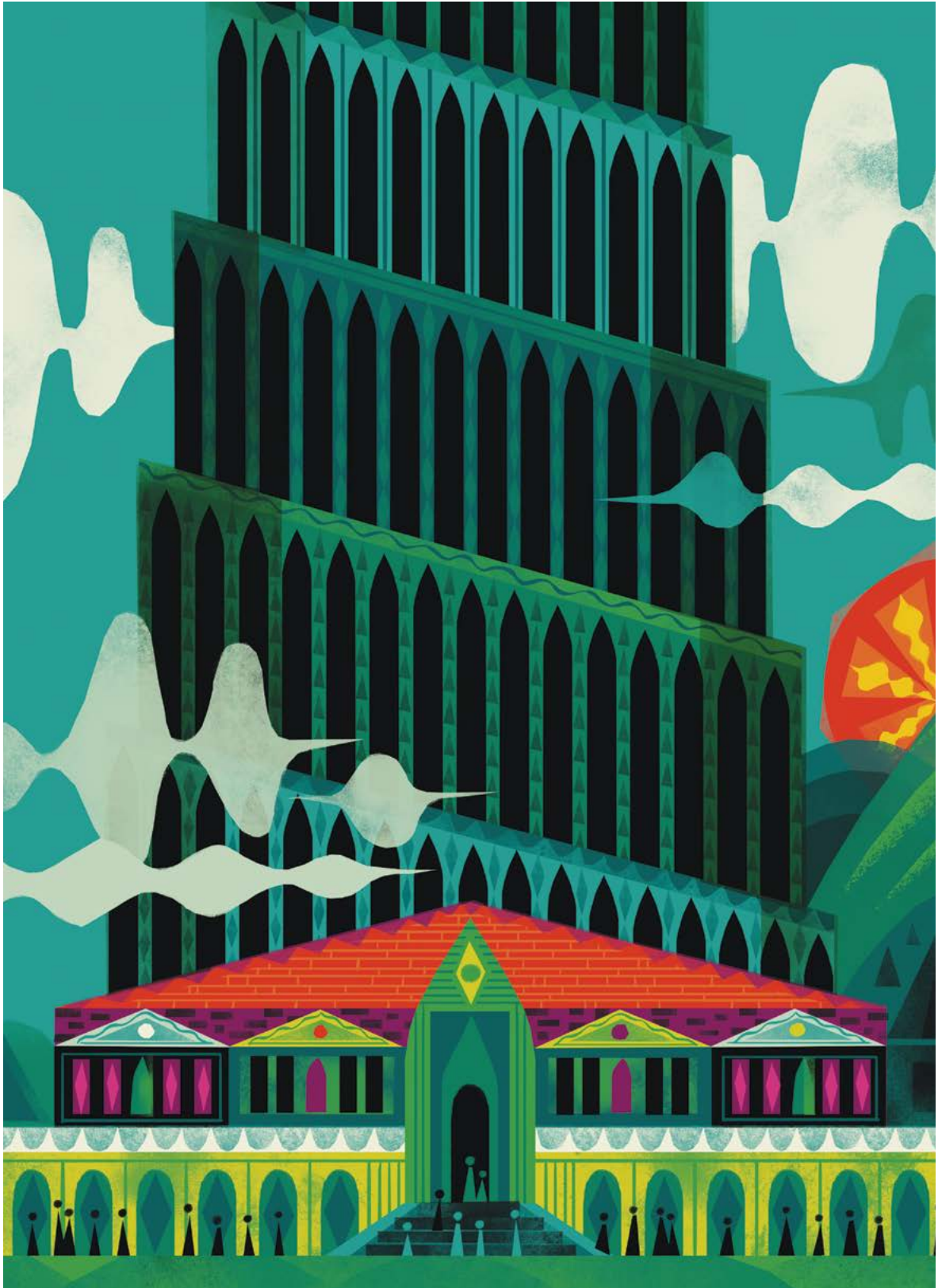
Supply List: origami paper (or copy paper cut into 6-inch squares)

Before Class: Gather supplies. If not using origami paper, cut paper into 6-inch squares. Identify and practice a few simple origami animals.

Distribute 6-inch-square paper to students. Teach students how to make a few simple origami animals.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 5

A Table and a Tower

GENESIS 10–11

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 10–11.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

What country are you from? The United States of America? England? India? South Africa? Do you know anyone from other countries? Maybe someone from Iceland? Cuba? Kenya? Mars? (Wait, that's not a country, it's a planet.) Anyway, you likely have not met a Martian from Mars, but maybe you have met a Canadian from Canada. And do you know what language Canadians speak? Some speak French, but most speak English. Oui? Yes!

Why are there so many nations? And why are there so many languages? Over six thousand today! And why do so many Chinese people speak Mandarin, so many Russians speak Russian, and so many Saudi Arabians speak Arabic? Do you know? The Bible shares a story about how God created the nations, gave people different languages, and scattered them around the world. It might sound

like a fun story. But it's actually another sad story. Or, it starts fun and ends sad. It starts with God's image bearers' keeping God's command to be fruitful and multiply (start lots of families!). But it ends with God's image bearers' wanting to make themselves as great as God, instead of showing how great God is.

TELL THE STORY

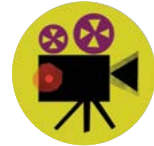
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth

People wanted to
be great, but only
God is great.

[The teacher should begin the lesson with a Bible in hand. Flip through the Bible and show a few title pages.]

The Bible is a big book made up of many books—like Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Each of those books has lots of little stories that are all telling the Biggest Story. We also learn the Biggest Story from the songs, laws, letters, and lists we find in the Bible. The lists are called genealogies (family trees). Have you ever seen your family tree? It has lots and lots of names. Like your mom, your cousin, and your grandpa.

Well, Genesis 10 records a list of seventy names. *[Open to Genesis 10 and show the names.]* Do you see them? This list is sometimes called the Table of Nations. The word *table* is just another name for *list*. This table starts with the sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. How would you like to be called Ham? “Hey, Ham, can you make me a ham sandwich?” Ham (the person, not the sandwich) had lots of children. So did his brothers. From them came all the nations—tribes that spread across the earth after the flood.

All of these different nations, who all spoke the same language, came up with a brilliant idea. (Or they thought it was.) “Let’s stay in one place and build a great city and a tall tower!” There is nothing wrong with building something great



and tall. Noah built something really big. The problem is that God told them to fill the earth—not stay in one place. Plus, they wanted to show off. “Look how amazing we are! We can create like God!” Well, God hates pride and disobedience. Do you know what pride is? These people showed us. They thought and acted like they were number one and God and everyone else was number two. But God destroyed their prideful plan by confusing their language. The place where it happened was called Babel, which means “confusion.” And God scattered them from that place so they filled the earth.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Imagine building the Tower of Babel. One day you say, “Hey, Joe, can you get me more bricks?” And he does. But the next day, after God confused the language, Joe can’t understand a word you say and you can’t understand a word he says. How can you possibly finish building a tower? You can’t, and they didn’t. The people back then were so frustrated that each tribe (the ones who spoke the same language) decided to spread over the earth and find a new place to live. Even this was part of God’s good plan for his people to fill the earth.

When Jesus came, he didn’t just save his own tribe (the Jews), but people from every language and tribe and nation (the Gentiles). That is what happened. First, people from Jerusalem believed in him. Then, people from the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Then, people from the Americas and Asia. From the North Pole to the South! And it’s still happening today. Someday, in heaven, God will be praised by people from every nation in languages that all God’s people will understand. And, then and there, we will finally work together to show just how amazing God is.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. QUESTION: Why did the people want to build the tower? What are some ways we can put ourselves first like the people at Babel? Is it better to make ourselves look good or to show how great God is? What are some ways we can show how great God is?

TAKEAWAY: People wanted to be great, but only God is great.

3

Engage

Memory Verse

Its name was
called Babel,
because there the
LORD confused
the language of
all the earth. And
from there the
LORD dispersed
them over the face
of all the earth.

GENESIS 11:9

2. QUESTION: Why was God angry with the people for building the tower? What was the consequence for their sin?

TAKEAWAY: God hates and judges pride and disobedience.

3. QUESTION: After God scattered the people and confused their language, what good plan did he have for these nations?

TAKEAWAY: As part of God's good plan, through Jesus, God will save people from every nation and language.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Toothpick Tower

Supply List: paper plates, mini marshmallows, toothpicks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Set one paper plate out for each child and place twenty to thirty marshmallows and twenty to thirty toothpicks on the plate for them.

Children build a tall tower using mini marshmallows and toothpicks. Praise their work, but also remind them how small even our best efforts are compared to what God can do.

Option 2: Cup Stacking Relay

Supply List: sturdy plastic cups (ten cups needed per team), table/flat surface

Before Class: Have cups ready to distribute and a table set up on the far side of a larger space. Multiple tables may be needed depending on the number of teams and the size of the table.

Divide the class into teams of five to ten children, and distribute ten cups per team. Some children will have two cups and run twice (they can only place one cup at a time). The goal of the relay is to build a pyramid-shaped tower





using their cups (4 on bottom, 3 next level, 2 next level, and 1 on top). When you say “Go,” the first child should run to a table on the opposite side of the room and place the cup upside down as the first cup on the pyramid base, then run back to their team and tag the next person in line. The second child runs and adds their cup to the pyramid. If the tower falls, the child at the table can rebuild the tower before returning to the team. Repeat until the team has finished their pyramid.

Option 1: Toothpick Tower

Supply List: paper plates, mini marshmallows, toothpicks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Set one paper plate out for each child and place twenty to thirty marshmallows and twenty to thirty toothpicks on the plate for them.

✓ ~~Children build a tall tower using mini marshmallows and toothpicks.~~ Praise their work, but also remind them how small even our best efforts are compared to what God can do.

Have the class work together to make as tall of a tower they can with blocks in one minute

Option 2: Cup Stacking Relay

Supply List: sturdy plastic cups (fifteen cups needed per team), table/flat surface

Before Class: Have cups ready to distribute and a table set up on the far side of a larger space. Multiple tables may be needed depending on the number of teams and the size of the table.

Divide the class into teams of five to ten children, and distribute fifteen cups per team. Some children will have two cups and run twice (they can only place one cup at a time). The goal of the relay is to build a pyramid-shaped tower using their cups (5 on bottom, 4 next level, 3 next level, 2 next level, and 1 on top). When you say “Go,” the first child should run to a table on the opposite side of the room, place the cup upside down as the first cup on the pyramid base, then run back to their team and tag the next person in line. The second child runs and adds their cup to the pyramid. If the tower falls, the child at the table can rebuild the tower before returning to the team. Repeat until the team has finished their pyramid.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: “God Is #1” Hand

Supply List: construction paper (two pieces per child), crayons/markers, stapler/staples

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

✓ Ask the children if they have ever been to a sporting event where the fans held up a big foam hand that declared that their team was number one. Give each child two pieces of construction paper. Have children draw a large hand that is making the “#1” gesture on each piece of paper (hands should be the same size). Have children write (or have the teacher write) “God Is #1” in the middle of one hand. Decorate both hands using the crayons/markers. Staple the two construction paper hands together so that their hand can be inserted into the bottom.

I will cut out the hands ahead of time and make a sticker with the words “God is #1:”

Option 2: Pipe Cleaner Towers

Supply List: eight to ten pipe cleaners per child

Before Class: Gather supplies.

✓ Give each child eight to ten pipe cleaners. Ask them to create the tallest building they can using the pipe cleaners. Provide helpful tips if they are having a hard time getting started. Praise their work, but also remind them how small even our best efforts are compared to what God can do.



Option 1: “God Is #1” Hand

Supply List: construction paper (two pieces per child), crayons/markers, stapler/staples

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Ask the children if they have ever been to a sporting event where the fans held up a big foam hand that declared that their team was number one. Give each child two pieces of construction paper. Have children draw a large hand that is making the “#1” gesture on each piece of paper (hands should be the same size). Have children write (or have the teacher write) “God Is #1” in the middle of one hand. Decorate both hands using the crayons/markers. Staple the two construction paper hands together so that their hand can be inserted into the bottom.

Option 2: Pipe Cleaner and Aluminum Foil Towers

Supply List: eight to ten pipe cleaners, two sheets of aluminum foil per child

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Give each child eight to ten pipe cleaners and two sheets of aluminum foil. Ask them to create the tallest building they can using the materials. Provide helpful tips if they are having a hard time getting started. Praise their work, but also remind them how small even our best efforts are compared to what God can do.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 6

The Father of Nations

GENESIS 11–13

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 11–13.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

The flood showed us God's holy judgment. Remember the forty days and forty nights of rain? But God is also gracious. He saved Noah and gave people a new start. The Tower of Babel was also a holy judgment. Remember how God confused the languages and scattered people around the world? But God still had a plan for the nations.

Do you remember the first time we saw God's judgment, back in the garden with the snake? But God also had a rescue plan: the Snake Crusher, who would come from Eve! Soon enough, Seth was born. Later Noah. Then Noah's son, Shem. And from Shem's family came Abraham. Abraham was from a place called Ur. That funny town's name sounds like *fur*, just as God's *plan* sounds like *Abraham*. *Abraham* would be God's *man* to carry out God's *plan*. The plan was awesome. God would give him a promised land. He would also give him

lots of children. And through one of those children God's promise to save and bless people from every nation would come true. Sure enough, Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons, and one of them, Judah, would be the great-great-great-great- (you get the idea) grandfather of the Snake Crusher. He would crush Satan and save God's people from among all the nations.

TELL THE STORY

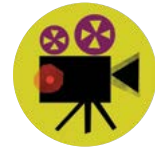
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
God promises to
bless the nations
through Abraham.

The story of Abraham starts in Ur. Remember Ur, the place that rhymes with *fur*? Ur was a long way from Eden. Yet God set his love on this person and his family. He came to Abraham and spoke to him: “Abraham, I want you to move from Ur to a land far away.” God promised that he would make “a great nation” out of his children. This all must have surprised Abraham, because he was seventy-five years old. His wife Sarah was also old. And they had no children. Do you know anyone who has a baby when they are older than your grandparents? No!

This is hard to believe, but Abraham *did* believe that God would give him both land and a baby. He believed that God would make his name great so that he would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. In faith Abraham left Ur and journeyed with his wife and his nephew, Lot. When they arrived in the land of Canaan (which would later be called the promised land), the Lord appeared to him and said, “To your offspring I will give this land” (Gen. 12:7). Abraham was so amazed by God and his words that he stopped right there and worshiped.

Once Abraham arrived in the land, he realized that he and Lot had so many possessions that they needed separate land to fit everyone and everything. So



Story

6

Genesis

11–13

Lot made a home in a beautiful place that was “well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD” (13:10), and Abraham found a *spot* west of Lot. (Hey, that rhymes too!) Once they settled, God spoke again (see 13:14–17): “Lift up your eyes.” Abraham looked north, south, east, and west. “All the land that you see,” God said, “I will give you. And you will have as many children and grandchildren and great-great-great grandchildren as there is dust on the earth.” A few days later, God said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars. So shall your offspring be.” Abraham looked up. He might have started counting “one, two, three . . .” and never stopped. How would God do it? But Abraham believed God’s word and obeyed.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

God made some amazing promises to Abraham: “I will give you the promised land. I will give you a son. I will make you a great nation. I will bless all the families of the earth through your family” (see Gen. 12:1–3). Abraham believed, and then he obeyed.

Of course, at that time he had no idea how God would keep these promises. But the rest of the Bible tells us how. First, God gave Abraham a son, Isaac. Then Isaac had a son who had lots of sons. Soon, Abraham’s children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren were a great nation called the people of Israel. God led Israel to the promised land and gave it to them, just as he said he would. But there’s even more to the story. God kept adding people to the family. Here’s how. When Jesus came, he made a way so that all the families of the earth could be part of God’s family, even people who weren’t Israelites. They became known as Christians. And Jesus promised he was going to prepare a place for them—a new and better promised land. Abraham was God’s *man* to carry out God’s *plan* to bless all nations through him. And that was just what God did!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** Do you remember some of the ways God has judged people when they sinned? What were they? What are some ways God has kept his promise to save the nations?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: Even though the nations rebelled against God, God still moved forward with his gracious plan to save them.

Memory Verse

I will make
of you a great
nation, and I
will bless you
and make your
name great, so
that you will be
a blessing.

GENESIS 12:2

2. **QUESTION:** What did God ask Abraham to do? Do you think that was easy for Abraham? How does the way that Abraham responded to God show us how we should respond to God?

TAKEAWAY: Like Abraham, we should obey God's call to follow him.

3. **QUESTION:** What promise did God make to Abraham? Do you think it was easy for Abraham to believe his promise? What are some reasons we might have a hard time believing that God will keep his promises? How does Abraham's example help us trust God when it is hard?

TAKEAWAY: Like Abraham, we should believe that God keeps his promises.

4. **QUESTION:** How is the promised Snake Crusher connected to Abraham and Abraham's family? How is he connected to the promise God made to Abraham?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus came from Abraham's offspring to bless the nations.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Follow the Leader

Supply List: none



For the first round, have the teacher be the leader and have the children line up behind the leader. The leader will walk around the room doing various motions and ways of walking. The children should imitate the leader as they walk behind the leader. After a short time, choose a new leader. Continue as time permits. Remind children that just as they followed the leader, Abraham followed God even though he didn't know where he was sending him.



Option 2: Block Stacking Olympics

Supply List: six wood blocks (one per name from the genealogy), marker, timer (optional: paper and tape)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Write the following names from Jesus's genealogy on the blocks (one name on each block: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and Jesus/Snake Crusher). If you don't want to write on the block, write the name on paper and tape it to the block.

One at a time, give each child the set of wood blocks with the names and lay them on the table in front of them. The goal of the game is to stack the blocks in the correct order as fast as possible while being timed. Begin with a training time that allows them to practice. Place the blocks name side down before they begin and mix them around. Then have the time trials. Time each child to see how fast they can stack them in order without the blocks falling. Flip and mix them up before the next child stacks them. Then have the finals. The top two or three children compete against one another to see who stacks them in the shortest amount of time. Have the whole class recite the correct order together when you check their work.

Option 1: I'm Going on a Trip and I'm Taking a "____"

Supply List: none

Sit children in a circle. Go around the circle and name things that they would bring if they were going on a trip. The first person will name something that begins with an *a*. The second person will repeat what the first person said and add their own idea that begins with a *b*. The rest of the class can help them if they forget an object! Continue around the circle until they name different things all the way up to the letter *z*. Remind the children that Abraham went on a very long trip when God called him to go!

Option 2: Pack the Suitcase Relay

Supply List: two suitcases/travel bags, various items to pack like clothing, hats, toothpaste, combs (enough items for every child in the class to pack one)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Place the two suitcases on one side of the room. Place all the travel items on the opposite side of the room.

Divide the children into two teams and have them form two lines. Have each team stand behind their suitcase. The first person in line carries the suitcase to the opposite side of the room, picks up a travel item, puts it in the suitcase, and carries the suitcase back to their team. The child passes the suitcase to the next person in line, who completes the same task. Continue until the last person on the team has packed the final travel item in the suitcase and returned to their team.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Genesis 12:2 Bookmark

Supply List: light-colored cardstock, copy paper, glue sticks/tape, markers, crayons, stickers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut light-colored cardstock into four strips per page to form 8½" x 2¾" bookmarks. Cut enough for each child to have one. Print Genesis 12:2 on paper so that it will fit on the bookmark and cut out the verses to form small verse cards.

Give each child a bookmark and Bible verse card. Have children attach (using tape or glue) the Bible verse to the bookmark and decorate the bookmark. Tell children this bookmark can help us to remember that God always keeps his promises.

Option 2: Paper Compass

Supply List: copy paper, scissors, brass fasteners, markers/crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a large circle on a piece of paper, write "God is our guide" in the center and make copies for every child in your class. Print and cut out small arrows that will fit the compass children will make in class. Create a sample craft.

Distribute paper and arrows to children. Have children cut out the circle and write the letters N, S, E, and W on the correct points of the compass. Have them place the base of the arrow in the center of the circle and push a brass fastener down through both the paper and arrow to form the needle on a compass. Check

with all children to make sure their arrow can move in circles. Decorate compass if time remains.



Story

6

Genesis

11–13

Option 1: Rescue Ladder

Supply List: popsicle sticks (seven per child), liquid glue, markers, sealable plastic bags, paper plates

Before Class: Gather supplies. Create piles of seven popsicle sticks per child, and break three of the sticks in half (each child will receive four full-size and six half-size sticks). Place them in a sealable plastic bag (one per child). Write (in a place that's visible to all the children) the names for the ladder: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and Jesus/Snake Crusher. Create a sample craft.

Say, "Firemen sometimes use a rescue ladder. Let's build God's rescue ladder for us!" Give each child their bag of sticks and have them glue together two sets of full-size sticks to form two longer sticks, forming the sides of the ladder. Have them write the names on the half-size sticks (one per stick). These half-sticks will form the rungs. Have them glue the rungs on the ladder, beginning with Abraham on the bottom and ending with Jesus/Snake Crusher on top. Have children assemble their ladders on a paper plate so that they can safely take their craft home before it is fully dry.

Option 2: Genesis 12:2 Bookmark

Supply List: light-colored cardstock, markers, crayons (optional: stickers and poster board)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut light-colored cardstock into four strips per page to form 8½" x 2¾" bookmarks. Cut enough for each child to have one. Write Genesis 12:2 in big letters on a poster (or project on a screen) so that the children can see it from where they will be seated.

Give each child a bookmark and markers/crayons/stickers. Have children write the Bible verse on the bookmark and decorate the bookmark. Tell children this bookmark can help us to remember that God always keeps his promises.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 7

Let's Make a Deal

GENESIS 15; 17

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 15; 17.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



Have you ever moved from one house to another? A move can be rough, can't it? Well, remember Abraham moved not just from one house to another (or tent, as the case may be) but also from one country to another. Why? Because God asked him to. And because God promised that if he did so, he would bless him. He would give him the promised land. He would give him as many children and grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren as the stars in the sky. And through his family he would bless all the families of the earth. Remember Genesis 12:1–3? "The LORD said to Abram, 'Go . . . to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you . . . and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" What amazing promises! A new people in a new place that would bless all peoples. In this lesson, the story of

Abraham continues. How will God keep his promises? Will Abraham continue to trust God? Let's find out!

TELL THE STORY

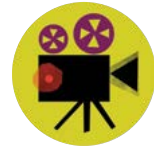
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
God can always
be trusted.

In last week's lesson, God called Abraham to leave his home for the promised land when Abraham was seventy-five years old. And God promised him, if he did so, he would have both the land and a son. In today's lesson, Abraham is in the land, but his family lived in only a small part of it. And he had his wife, but he still had no son. Abraham was now much older, and he began to wonder, "Will God really keep his promise to do the impossible? How?"

God knew the doubts Abraham was having. So, one dark night, God brought Abraham outside and said, "Look up, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. I will give you as many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren as there are stars in the sky" (see Gen. 15:5). Abraham believed God. He took him at his word. Listen to this amazing verse: Abraham "believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (15:6).

God was not done. He reminded Abraham of his promise to give him the land. Abraham replied, "Lord, how am I to know that you will give me the land?" (see 15:8). Then God did something strange. He had Abraham cut a bunch of animals in half. (Why? More on that in a minute!) After Abraham cut the animals, God had him fall into a deep sleep and he showed Abraham the future: after four hundred years of slavery, Abraham's offspring would inherit the land. God could be trusted to keep his word. To show how sure his promise was, God made a covenant with Abraham. To understand this better, we have to go back to those



Story

7

Genesis

15; 17

animals Abraham cut in half. In those days, this was part of a process of making a deal—or cutting a covenant. Whoever walked through the animals was promising to keep his end of the bargain, or else be torn apart like the cut-up goats and cows. Can you guess what God did? God walked through the cut-up animals! In other words, God was making a very serious promise. He would keep his word. What amazing grace!

After such an amazingly gracious promise, God asked Abraham to show that he believed. He asked him to show it through a special sign called circumcision. This special sign would remind all his family after him that they were chosen and loved. Do you know what Abraham did? He trusted God and obeyed.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Genesis 12:1–3 is very important because this passage includes God’s big promises about his rescue plan. Genesis 15:6 is another very important verse because it tells us how we benefit from that rescue plan. Do you remember what it said? “[Abraham] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” What! Sinners like Abraham could be counted righteous? People under the curse that Adam and the snake unleashed could be made right with God? (This is what *righteous* means.) How could this be? The Bible is telling us that it is on the basis of belief. When Abraham believed God’s promise, he was counted as righteous. He wasn’t counted righteous because he was such a good person. He wasn’t counted righteous because he was so religious. He was counted righteous because he believed God. To put it differently, he was saved by faith.

But wait, there’s something more. We are sinners, too. We need to be made right with God, too. And like Abraham, the only way we can be perfectly holy in God’s sight is to believe his promises, to receive his gift of salvation by faith. Is that something you want to do?

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What were the amazing promises God made to Abraham (review Genesis 12:1–3, if needed)? How does God respond when Abraham has doubts about these big promises?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: God helps Abraham overcome his doubt by reminding him that he will always keep his amazing promises.

2. **QUESTION:** With God's help, what did Abraham believe about God's promises? How would you describe faith?

TAKEAWAY: Having faith in God means we believe that what he says is true, even when it is hard to believe.

Memory Verse
He [Abraham]
believed the
LORD, and he
counted it to him
as righteousness.

GENESIS 15:6

3. **QUESTION:** What are some good deeds you did this week? Were all those deeds enough to make you perfect ("righteous") in the sight of a perfect and holy God? Why not?

TAKEAWAY: No one is perfect; everyone is sinful.

4. **QUESTION:** If everyone is sinful, and no one is holy and perfect, how could you or me be righteous in God's sight? (If the children need help answering, you could ask, "Why was Abraham considered righteous in God's sight?").

TAKEAWAY: Like Abraham, through faith in God (believing what he says is true), we are given God's righteousness.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Sand and Star Search

Supply List: sand table or sand bin (a bin filled partway with sand), small plastic stars

Before Class: Gather supplies. Hide plastic stars in a sand table or bin.

Have the children find and count all the stars. Remind them that God promised Abraham's offspring would be more than he could count. Ask them if they could count all the grains of sand!



Story

7

Genesis

15; 17

Option 2: Bible Verse Relay

Supply List: white or yellow paper, two posters with “Number the stars, if you are able to number them. . . . So shall your offspring be” (Gen. 15:5) written out.

Before Class: Cut out thirty paper stars, write one of the fifteen words from Genesis 15:5 on each star (make two sets of these). Place both sets of stars at the far end of the room in two separate piles. Place the two verse posters on the other side of the room, opposite the two piles.

Divide the children into two teams. Have each team stand by their poster. At the word *Go* the first team members from each team hop down to their star pile, pick up one star, hop back to the starting line, and lay it on their poster. They tag the next person to hop down and retrieve another star. Continue until all the stars are collected. Then, the teams work together to match the words on the stars to the words on the poster. Read the verse aloud.

Option 1: Believe or Not Believe

Supply List: various objects to stand on—some that will hold a person and some that will not (examples: step stool, chair, ladder, empty cereal box, empty milk jug with the cap off, balloon)

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Call a child up to the front and place one of the objects next to him. Ask the class to vote “believe” or “not believe” on whether the object will hold him. Holding the child’s hand, have him stand on the object. This teaches a key concept: we believe God’s promises because they are trustworthy. They can hold us. It also teaches another key concept: belief is shown when we take the step of entrusting ourselves to that object. If we believe God, we entrust ourselves to him.

Option 2: Star Search

Supply List: two colors of construction paper, two tape dispensers, two verse posters

Before Class: Cut out twenty stars of one color and twenty stars of a different color, for a total of forty stars. Before children arrive, hide all the stars around the room. Decide ahead of time if the children or an adult will tape the stars to the poster.

For the game, divide the children into two teams. Assign one of the star colors to each team. Give each team a piece of poster paper that reads, “Number the stars, if you are able to number them. . . . So shall your offspring be” (Gen. 15:5). Attach each team’s poster at the children’s height to the wall. Give each team a tape dispenser or have an adult assigned to each team to distribute tape. Tell children that when you say “Go!” they will need to find all twenty stars of their color and tape them to their poster. The goal is to be the first team to find and attach all twenty stars.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Faith Fans

Supply List: wide popsicle sticks (one per child), pieces of cardstock cut into symmetrical ovals (two per child), glue, markers/crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. With each pair of cardstock ovals write “Believed God” on one and “Counted as Righteous” on the other.

Give each child a popsicle stick and a pair of ovals. Have them decorate their ovals on the word side using markers and crayons. Have them glue the two cardstock pieces to each other, back to back, with the words facing out and the stick coming out the bottom. They’ve created a Faith Fan.

Option 2: Faith Sign

Supply List: white copy paper (one per child), star stickers, markers/crayons

Before Class: Write FAITH in large bubble letters on copy paper. Underneath FAITH write “Trusting God’s promise to save.” Make copies of the faith paper so there are enough for the whole class.

Distribute faith copies to children and have them color in the letters. Then have children decorate the rest of the page with star stickers.





Option 1: Paper Stars

Supply List: cardstock (one per child), scissors, liquid glue/glue sticks, glitter/salt/rice

Before Class: Gather supplies. Trace a large star shape on each piece of cardstock.

Distribute cardstock to each student and have them cut out the star. They will fill in the star with glue, and then sprinkle glitter, rice, or salt on top of the glue to make it sparkle. Note: This craft is best done at the beginning of class to give time for the glue to dry.

Option 2: Star Garland

Supply List: copy paper, hole punch, string (enough for a three-foot piece for each child), markers/crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. On the paper, print or draw five stars per child (star size about three inches). Cut the string into three-foot sections.



Distribute paper with stars and string to the children. Have them cut out the five stars and punch a hole in the top of each star. Have children string their stars onto the string one at time. After positioning each star, children should tie a knot to hold the star in place and prevent it from sliding. Encourage children to space their stars out by at least a few inches. When they have strung all the stars, have them write the letters *F, A, I, T, H* on the stars (one letter per star).



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 8

The Judge Judges Justly

GENESIS 18–19

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 18–19.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



God has made a lot of promises to Abraham. Has Abraham always trusted God? No. Sometimes he doubted. That's not good. But God didn't give up on Abraham. Each time Abraham doubted and disobeyed, God came to him and reminded him of their covenant. He would give him the promised land and the promised son. Shortly after God made the covenant, the Lord promised to Abraham, "This time next year, Sarah shall have a son" (see Gen. 18:10). Sarah was in the nearby tent. When she heard what God said, she laughed because she couldn't believe that she would have a child when she was so old. She doubted God's promise. God knew that Sarah was doubting him and asked why she laughed. Sarah grew afraid and lied, "I did not laugh" (18:15). Not only did she not believe God, she also lied. But God still kept his promise to give Sarah a son.

Sarah wasn't the only person in the land to sin. There was a whole city full of sinners. The city was called Sodom, and today's lesson focuses on what happened to that sinful city. It wasn't pretty! We will see that while God promises good things for his people, he also promises to punish his enemies, just like we saw when God sent the flood in Noah's day.

TELL THE STORY

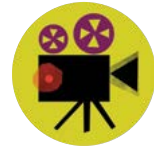
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
God is the
Judge who
judges justly.

The city of Sodom was a bad city filled with people who did really bad things. The city of Gomorrah was also a bad city filled with people who did really bad things. They were selfish, proud, rude, mean, angry, and violent.

People in those cities cried out to God to do something about all of this evil. God listened because he cares when people are being treated badly! And he always hates evil. God is a good God. And as a good God, he cannot let people who do bad things keep doing bad things. God decided to destroy the cities as a punishment.

Before God punished the people, he told Abraham about his plan. Abraham asked God, "You wouldn't sweep away the good people with the bad, would you? You are the Judge who will judge justly. For the sake of fifty righteous people, would you change your plan?" Amazingly, God agreed. So Abraham tried again: "What about for the sake of forty-five?" It worked again! God is so merciful, he agreed even when Abraham went all the way down to ten. But even then, it wasn't enough (see Gen. 18:23–33). The only person that found favor in God's sight was Abraham's nephew, Lot. So God chose to destroy the cities but to save



Story

8

Genesis

18–19

Lot and his family, just like he had saved Noah and his family. Everyone else would be destroyed.

God sent two angels who told Lot's family, "Run for your lives. Don't look back! God is going to rain down fire and sulfur. The town will be burnt to the ground" (see 19:14, 17). Lot and his family ran! But Lot's wife disobeyed. She loved Sodom more than God, so she turned around and looked back. And do you know what happened? She turned into a pillar of salt! God destroyed the evil cities. He took his broom of justice and swept up all the sin. Abraham saw God keep his promise to destroy the cities. He was reminded that God always keeps his promises—even his promise to judge the wicked.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

God knows our sins. God shows us our sins. God hates our sins. God judges our sins. And (this is the most important part!) God offers to forgive all our sins in Jesus. You may not come from a city that is filled with people who do bad things all the time. You may live in a town where a lot more than ten people love God and love their neighbor. And people may not call you selfish, proud, rude, mean, angry, and violent. But that does not mean that you are perfect. In fact, there are many sins we all do every day. Just as we saw with Sodom and Gomorrah, God will judge all the earth justly. But God also gives us a way to escape—just like he did with Lot's family. God's word tells us the only way for us to escape is to believe in Jesus Christ. To believe that Jesus is the Snake Crusher, who crushed all our sin on the cross. He took on all of God's judgment for our sin when he died for us. What love! What sacrifice! What good news!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** What does a judge do? Do you think judges are perfect? Why or why not? What did Abraham say about God as a judge?

TAKEAWAY: God is just, and he will make good judgments.

2. **QUESTION:** Why does God destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? Why isn't Lot destroyed by the fire? What happened to Lot's wife? Why?

3

Engage

Memory Verse

It is God
who executes
judgment,
putting down
one and lifting
up another.

PSALM 75:7

TAKEAWAY: God blesses those who obey and punishes those who disobey.

3. **QUESTION:** Is there anyone who obeys God all the time? Explain. What did we just learn about how God responds when we disobey? What is the only way to escape God's judgment of sin?

TAKEAWAY: In Jesus, God offers the forgiveness of sins.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: "What Time Is It, Mr. Fox?"

Supply List: none



Start by picking one child to be Mr. or Mrs. Fox and positioning him or her at one side of the space. Line the other children up on the opposite side along a starting line (like a wall). The children ask, "What time is it, Mr. Fox?" In reply, Mr. Fox calls out a random hour of the day ("It's five o'clock!"). Players then would take five steps of any size toward the fox. Players must move toward the fox according to the hour he or she instructed, even if it causes them to be super close. If a child succeeds in passing Mr. Fox, the players win that round and everyone returns to the starting line. But the fox can say, "Lunch time!" This requires the children to run back to the starting line while Mr. Fox tries to catch them. If Mr. Fox does tag someone, that person becomes the next fox. If the fox doesn't tag anyone, he or she remains the fox until someone new is tagged. Like Mr. Fox, sin is dangerous. Stay away from sin!

Option 2: "Stay Away from Fire!" Tag

Supply List: two to three balloons (preferably red or orange; alternatively draw a flame on any color balloon)



Before Class: Gather and inflate balloons (preferably red or orange; alternatively draw a flame on any color balloon).



Gather the children in a specified area. Make two children “It.” They are the only ones allowed to touch the balloons. They try to hit the balloons into the other children. If someone is hit with a balloon, they are “burned up” and must sit down in that spot. Play continues until only two people remain (that are not “It”). Those two will now be “It.”

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Supply List: none

Start by picking one child to be Mr. or Mrs. Fox and positioning him or her at one side of the space. Line the other children up on the opposite side along a starting line (like a wall). The children ask, “What time is it, Mr. Fox?” In reply, Mr. Fox calls out a random hour of the day (“It’s five o’clock!”). Players then would take five steps of any size toward the fox. Players must move toward the fox according to the hour he or she instructed, even if it causes them to be super close. If a child succeeds in passing Mr. Fox, the players win that round and everyone returns to the starting line. But the fox can say, “Lunch time!” This requires the children to run back to the starting line while Mr. Fox tries to catch them. If Mr. Fox does tag someone, that person becomes the next fox. If the fox doesn’t tag anyone, he or she remains the fox until someone new is tagged. Like Mr. Fox, sin is dangerous. Stay away from sin!

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CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: “God Judges Justly” Gavel

Supply List: two different colors of construction paper for each child, brass fasteners (one per child), tape/glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut one color of construction paper into rectangles that can be glued together to form a gavel (one long, narrow rectangle and one short, wide rectangle). Cut one set per child. Make a sample craft.

Distribute one piece of construction paper and the two rectangles to each child. Have children glue or tape the two rectangles together to form a gavel. Mount the base of the gavel to the other construction paper using the brass fastener. At the top of the paper write “God Judges,” and on the gavel write “Justly.”

Option 2: Pillar of Salt

Supply List: black construction paper, white crayon/chalk, glue sticks, sealable plastic bag/paper cup of about one tablespoon of salt (one per child)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Divide salt into small containers (one per child).

~~Give each child a piece of black paper. Have children do a simple drawing of Lot's wife. Using the glue stick, cover the drawing with glue. While glue is still wet, sprinkle salt generously over the glue. To minimize mess, help the children sprinkle the excess salt into a trash can (or a bin on the table). Optional: Write the words “God Judges Justly” or the Memory Verse on the paper.~~

We will do watercolor with the phrase “God Judges Justly”



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Before Class: Gather supplies. Divide salt into small containers (one per child).

Give each child a piece of black paper. Have children do a simple drawing of Lot’s wife. Using the glue stick, cover the drawing with glue. While glue is still wet, sprinkle salt generously over the glue. To minimize mess, help the children sprinkle the excess salt into a trash can (or a bin on the table). Optional: Write the words “God Judges Justly” or the Memory Verse on the paper.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 9

It's a Boy!

GENESIS 21–22

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Genesis 21–22.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

We have learned a lot about God from the book of Genesis, haven't we? He is the powerful Creator, just Judge, merciful Savior, and promise keeper. Let's review some of the stories. True stories. God created everything—persons, places, and things. Solar systems and stars too! God put Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden on earth. They loved God and they loved each other. How lovely! When Adam disobeyed, God banished Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. How unlovely. Remember that terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day? But God still loved his people. He promised that the Snake Crusher would come from their offspring. His plan would take time. But God's timing is always perfect. Part of that *plan* involved God calling Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would be a blessing to all the families of the world. That blessing would come through

the birth of a son. Abraham waited and waited and waited for his son. Would the promised son ever come? That's where today's lesson comes in. Abraham did have a son, Isaac. And that son had a near-death experience. Will God keep his promise? Will he provide? Will he bless the world through Abraham's son's son and so on? Let's find out!

TELL THE STORY

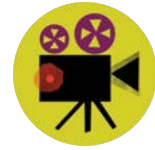
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
God provided
a son and a
sacrifice for
Abraham, the
man of faith.

Do you remember when you were born? Of course not! I bet your parents remember though. Do you know how old Abraham was when his baby boy was born? One hundred! Let's count to one hundred. No, let's not! That's old, isn't it? Sarah, his wife, was old too. She was ninety.

Remember when Sarah laughed when God promised she'd have a baby? She thought she and her husband were too old to have a baby. But is anything impossible for God? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. When God makes a promise, he keeps it. The "father of a multitude of nations" (Gen. 17:5) finally had a son! But his timing is not always ours. The name Isaac means "he laughs." The perfect name. His name reminded his parents that God had kept an impossible promise. There was no longer laughter of disbelief, only laughter of surprise and joy.

Many years after Isaac was born, God asked Abraham to do something shocking: "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love . . . and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains [in the land of Moriah]" (Gen. 22:2). What a crazy command! Why would God ask him to sacrifice his only son? He gave this command to test if Abraham would still believe that God would keep his promises to him. Abraham passed the test. He figured that if God's plan was



Story
9

Genesis
21–22

to kill the promised child, then God must have another plan. Perhaps he would raise him from the dead! No matter what, Abraham believed God always keeps his promises. So Abraham took his beloved son to the mountain. Isaac carried wood for the sacrifice. Abraham tied up his son and prepared to sacrifice him. But guess what happened? Just when Abraham lifted his knife, God shouted, “Don’t do it! I see that you love me and trust me” (see 22:12).

God provided a different sacrifice—a ram. Abraham sacrificed the animal. God was so pleased. He told Abraham, “Because you have obeyed my voice, I will surely bless you. Your offspring will be as the stars of heaven and through your family all the families of the earth will be blessed” (see 22:16–18).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

The story of Abraham’s (almost) sacrifice of his son, Isaac, is an amazing story. An even more amazing story is the story of God the Father’s (actual) sacrifice of his son, Jesus. Isaac’s story took place on a small mountain; Jesus’s story took place on a hill. Abraham’s beloved son would carry wood for the sacrifice; God’s beloved Son would carry a wooden cross. Isaac’s life was spared because God provided a ram (a male lamb) to be sacrificed in his place. But for Jesus, there would be no ram. Jesus was the sacrifice. Jesus was the Lamb. He carried the wooden cross on his back; he was nailed to the cross. He died. Just as God provided a ram so that Isaac wouldn’t die, God provided Jesus so that we don’t have to die. The promised child of Eve—the Snake Crusher—was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world and rescued us from death! Our Savior would die for a people who didn’t seem to love God or trust him at all. Through Jesus’s death on a cross, we can receive forgiveness for our sins. What good news. Do you believe this? How will you respond to Jesus? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we all believed like Abraham?

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What promise did God make to Abraham that made Sarah laugh? How do we see God keep this promise? What have we been learning about God and his promises?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: When God makes a promise, he keeps it: Abraham finally had a son.

2. **QUESTION:** What crazy command did God give to Abraham? Why did Abraham choose to obey God? How can we be like Abraham?

TAKEAWAY: Like Abraham, we should completely trust God, and obey him even when it's hard.

Memory Verse

Trust in the
LORD with all
your heart,
and do not lean
on your own
understanding.

PROVERBS 3:5

3. **QUESTION:** Did Abraham sacrifice his son? What happened to save Isaac's life? What does that teach us about our God?

TAKEAWAY: God provides—he provided for Abraham; he will provide for us.

4. **QUESTION:** What is the punishment for sin? God provided the ram to save Isaac's life. Who did God provide to save our life from death? What is the only way to escape God's punishment for sin?

TAKEAWAY: God the Father's sacrifice of his beloved Son, Jesus, provides forgiveness for all our sins.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Pass the Baby

Supply List: baby doll, music

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Children sit in a circle. The game is played like Hot Potato. When music plays, pass the baby around the circle; when the music stops, the person holding the baby stands up and says "God keeps his promises" and steps out of the circle. Then, another round begins. Continue until there is one person left. For added effect, pause for an extended time before music starts again and say, "Abraham waited and waited for God to keep his promise."





Story

9

Genesis

21–22

Option 2: Have Patience Red Light, Green Light

Supply List: none

Gather children in an open area or gym. Line all children up on one side of the room. Choose one child to be “It.” The person who is “It” stands at the opposite end of the room and calls out either “Red Light” or “Green Light.” If the person calls “Green Light” the players move forward. When the person calls “Red Light,” all the players must immediately freeze. If “It” sees someone move, then that person is sent back to the starting line. The winner is the one who crosses the line on the opposite side of the room first. It is important that he or she should take long pauses between calling out the next command. This can remind children that Abraham had to have much patience as he waited for God to keep his promise.

Option 1: Try Not to Laugh Tournament

Supply List: none

Pair up children and see which child can keep a straight face longer. They should make funny faces or say funny things to make the other person laugh. The one who laughs first is out. Then pair up the winner with a winner from a different pair until you get a grand champion. Note: Isaac’s name means “to laugh.”

Option 2: Have Patience Red Light, Green Light

Supply List: none

Gather children in an open area or gym. Line all children up on one side of the room. Choose one child to be “It.” The person who is “It” stands at the opposite end of the room and calls out either “Red Light” or “Green Light.” If the person calls “Green Light” the players move forward. When the person calls “Red Light,” all the players must immediately freeze. If “It” sees someone move, then that person is sent back to the starting line. The winner is the one who crosses the line on the opposite side of the room first. It is important that he or she should take long pauses between calling out the next command. This can remind children that Abraham had to have much patience as he waited for God to keep his promise.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Cross Craft

Supply List: white cardstock with verse (one per child), markers/crayons, washi/masking/painter's tape

Before Class: Gather supplies.



Write or print “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” at the top of each piece of cardstock. Distribute one piece of cardstock to each child. Provide tape to each group of children. Have the children tear off two strips of tape and place them on the cardstock to form a cross. With the tape in place, they can color all over the paper and tape. When finished, carefully remove the tape to reveal the cross.

Option 2: Ram Ornament

Supply List: glue sticks, string/pipe cleaner, cardboard/cardstock (for ram cutouts), cotton balls, black markers/crayons



Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out outline of a ram from cardboard/cardstock, punch hole in top, and attach a string or pipe cleaner for hanging. Make one completed ornament as a sample.

Give each child one precut ram. Show the sample. Have them color the face and feet with black marker. Have them use glue to attach cotton balls to the ram on both sides.



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Give each child one precut ram. Show the sample. Have them color the face and feet with black marker. Have them use glue to attach cotton balls to the ram on both sides.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 80

A Meal for the Ages

MATTHEW 26

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Matthew 26.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

One of the most important jobs God's people have is to remember. Last lesson, Jesus said that we should remember what Mary did when she anointed his body with expensive perfume. That special act symbolized his burial. In the Old Testament God's people were supposed to remember the Passover, when God rescued them out of Egypt. The angel of death passed over the firstborn sons and didn't kill them. They remembered by throwing a big feast! At a typical Jewish Passover meal they would have three main things: lamb, flatbread, and wine. They ate lamb because it was the lamb's blood on the doorway that kept them safe from the angel of death. They remembered how God saved them when they trusted him and cried out to him. They ate flatbread to remember that there wasn't time

for bread to rise because they had to leave Egypt so quickly. And they drank wine to remember how God had freed them and would bring them into his kingdom.

In our lesson today we'll learn how Jesus celebrated that Passover feast with his disciples—but with some important differences. Those differences will link the Passover with Mary's perfume. And they will leave us with a very important way for Christians to remember what Jesus has done for us.

TELL THE STORY

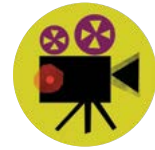
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Every time we
take the bread
and cup of the
Lord's Supper,
we celebrate
that Jesus died
for our sins.

Jesus and the twelve gathered to celebrate the Passover. As the sun was setting and the meal was about to be served, Jesus made an announcement: "One of you will betray me" (Matt. 26:21). The twelve couldn't believe their ears! How could one of Jesus's closest friends betray him? They were super sad and seriously surprised. They had no idea who would do such a terrible thing. One after the other they asked, "Is it me?" When it came to Judas and he said, "Is it me?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is you." Soon after, Jesus said, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). He then took some flatbread, blessed it, broke it, and handed pieces of the broken bread to each disciple. "Take and eat," he said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19). He didn't mean that his body somehow turned into thirteen pieces of bread. He meant that that bread symbolized what would happen to his body—it would be broken, in a way. He would suffer and die! And each and every time they celebrated this meal in the future it would be a reminder that he died for them.



Story

80

Matthew

26

After they ate the bread, Jesus took a cup and said, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:27–28). They all drank from the cup, and as they drank they may have had some questions. They certainly didn’t think they were actually drinking Jesus’s blood (he hadn’t even died yet). But they would soon understand—after Jesus died and rose again—that the red wine poured out of the cup was a symbol of Jesus’s blood being poured out on the cross. Instead of forgiveness coming from the blood of bulls and goats, it would come from Jesus’s blood. If we have faith in Jesus—who is the only sacrifice we need—all our sins have been forgiven. Nothing could be more important! No wonder Jesus commanded Christians to continue that meal “in remembrance” of him.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Right before Mary anointed Jesus with perfume, he announced to his disciples, “The Passover is coming, and when it comes the Son of Man [Jesus!] will be delivered up to be crucified” (see Matt. 26:1–2). And right before Jesus was handed over to be crucified, he celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples. Why? He wanted them, and all Christians throughout all time, to make an important connection. Jesus is the perfect Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed for our sins. Our sins are *passed over* only because he died in our place! And like those Israelites in Egypt who believed what God said and took the lamb’s blood and smeared it on their doorway, we believe that the blood of Jesus saves us now and that God will pass over us on judgment day. Jesus wants us to remember this gospel message. So he established the Lord’s Supper (or *Communion*). As we eat the bread and drink the cup together, we remind each other that Jesus’s body was sacrificed and his blood shed for us. We *commune* with each other, which means we are joined to each other and to Jesus. When we eat and drink, God strengthens and feeds our faith!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What were special things about the Passover meal that Jesus had with his disciples? What was going to happen the very next day?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: The Passover was the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples before he was crucified.

2. **QUESTION:** When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, what did they have to do so the angel of death would spare their firstborn sons from death? When they celebrated the Passover meal to remember how God spared them, what was the focus of their meal? When Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples, why don't you think he talked about the lamb? Whom was Jesus revealing as the Lamb that would be sacrificed to save people from sin?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is the Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins.

Memory Verse

This is my blood
of the covenant,
which is poured
out for many for
the forgiveness
of sins.

MATTHEW 26:28

3. **QUESTION:** What did Jesus say the bread in the meal was? What did that mean? And what did he say the cup was? What did he want them to remember? Did Jesus only want the disciples to remember his death? Who else did he want to remember his death and what it meant?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus wants all Christians to remember his sacrifice by eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord's Supper.

4. **QUESTION:** What does Jesus do when Christians eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord's Supper?

TAKEAWAY: When Christians eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord's Supper, Jesus strengthens them and feeds their faith.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Run for Your Supper

Supply List: none

Have children stand in a circle and hold hands. Choose one child to be "It." "It" walks clockwise around the circle, stops at random, separates the hands of two



children, and yells, “Run for your supper!” The two players whose hands were separated run around the circle in opposite directions while “It” takes one of their spots. The runners race to claim the second empty spot where they were previously standing. The child who arrives last is the new “It.” Play continues as time allows. Remind children that the Lord’s Supper was a special meal Jesus had with his disciples.

Option 2: Cups Up, Cups Down

Supply List: large plastic cups (at least two per child)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Place plastic cups around the room, with an equal number of cups facing up and down.

✓ Divide children into two teams: a “cup up” team and a “cup down” team. Have children line up randomly around the perimeter of the room. On “Go” each child runs to place the cups up or down depending on his or her team’s objective. After three minutes, tell players to freeze and count how many cups are facing each direction. The team with the most cups facing in their direction wins. Play additional rounds as time permits. Remind children that at the Last Supper, Jesus said the cup would be a way to remember Jesus’s blood shed for them—and us!

Option 1: Team Memory

Supply List: sixteen coins (four pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters), sixteen opaque plastic cups

Before Class: Gather supplies. Set sixteen coins on the floor (four of each type). Place coins in random order in a four-by-four grid. Cover each coin with a cup so it is not visible.

✓ Divide children into teams and have each team line up single file. Assign each team a coin type. On “Go” the first player from each team runs to a cup and looks under it without revealing the coin type to anyone else. If the coin matches his team’s type, he brings it back to his team. If not (or if the coin is gone), he puts the cup down, returns to his team empty-handed, and tags the next player to go. The first team to find all four of its coins wins. Remind children that the most important thing to remember is Jesus and his sacrifice on our behalf.

Option 2: Hurry Waiter!

Supply List: paper plate (one per team), ping-pong ball (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Divide children into equal teams, and have them line up single file with about 2 feet between each person on their team. The first person on each team is the first “waiter.” Give each waiter a plastic plate with a ping-pong ball on it. On “Go” have the waiter hold the plate with one hand while weaving in and out among his teammates. If the ball or plate falls, the player must start over from the beginning. When the child reaches the end of the line, he must hold the plate and ball with both hands while he runs back to the front. He then passes the plate and ball to the next person in line, saying, “Dinner is served!” before running back to the end of the line empty-handed. The new waiter repeats the process. Play continues until everyone on the team has had a turn to be the waiter. The first team to finish wins.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Supper Time!

Supply List: paper, scissors, crayons, glue sticks, construction paper, grocery ads

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a fork, knife, spoon, and plate. Make a sample craft.

Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children color the place setting, cut each item out, and glue all items to a piece of construction paper. Have children find pictures of food they like in the grocery ads, then cut them out and glue them to their plate. Remind children that the Last Supper was a supper to remember forever.

Option 2: Passover Lamb

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, cotton balls, glue sticks, crayons



Story

80

Matthew

26

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a lamb template. Make a sample craft.

✓ Set copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children take a lamb paper and cut out the lamb. They then glue cotton balls to the lamb's body, pulling the cotton balls to stretch them out, if desired. Have them color the face of the lamb with crayons. On the back of the lamb have children write, "Jesus is our Passover Lamb."

Option 1: Passover Lamb

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, cotton balls, glue sticks, crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a lamb template. Make a sample craft.

Set copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children take a lamb paper and cut out the lamb. They then glue cotton balls to the lamb's body, pulling the cotton balls to stretch them out, if desired. Have them color the face of the lamb with crayons. On the back of the lamb have children write, "Jesus is our Passover Lamb."

Option 2: The Last, Best Supper

Supply List: paper, scissors, construction paper, colored pencils, glue sticks, red and brown tissue paper

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a picture of a glass (goblet style) and a loaf of bread. Make a sample craft.

✓ Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out the glass and bread and then glue them to a piece of construction paper. Have them write the Big Truth underneath the glass and bread. Instruct children to tear the red tissue paper into small pieces and glue them "inside" the glass to make it look like wine. Then they can tear the brown tissue paper into small pieces and glue them to the loaf of bread. Remind children that the Last Supper was a supper to remember forever.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 81

Everyone Leaves Jesus

MARK 14

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 14.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

At least three times Jesus told the twelve that he would be betrayed, be arrested, suffer, and die. They heard him, but they didn't understand him. Even after the Passover meal, where Jesus used the bread and cup to point to his death, the twelve couldn't yet grasp why Jesus's blood would have to be poured out for the forgiveness of sins. They wouldn't really understand who Jesus was and what he was doing that Passover Week until after his resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The twelve didn't understand Jesus, but one of the twelve did something worse than misunderstand. He betrayed Jesus. Judas! Even though Judas was one of Jesus's closest friends and traveled with him for three years, he loved money more than he loved Jesus. And he was paid thirty pieces of silver from

the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus. How terrible! The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus so they could kill him. How totally terrible! Judas betrayed Jesus because Jesus wasn't the king he was looking for; the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus because he was claiming to be the Son of God. Today's lesson focuses on how Jesus's enemies went after him and how his friends turned against him.

TELL THE STORY

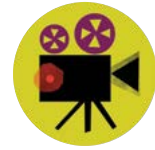
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus was
betrayed and
denied by his
friends and
handed over to
his enemies.

Have you ever had a friend stop wanting to be friends with you? It doesn't feel very good. The last hours of Jesus's life must have felt a bit like that. Actually, he must have felt much worse. Can you imagine a close friend handing you over to be killed? Can you imagine your other closest friends leaving you to die alone? It's hard to imagine, but that's what Jesus experienced.

After the Passover meal, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the garden of Gethsemane. It was very late—and still dark. Everyone was exhausted. Jesus was super sad because he knew many terrible things were ahead for him. He wanted to be with his closest friends on earth and to spend time praying to his Father in heaven. There, in the garden, Jesus prayed for his sufferings to be taken away: "Abba, Father," he prayed. "Remove this cup of pain and death from me. That is what I want. But I pray for what you want, not what I want" (see Mark 14:36). Jesus prayed that prayer three times, and three times he returned to find his friends asleep. Snore. Snore. Snore. They couldn't even stay awake when Jesus needed them the most. How sad for Jesus. Suddenly, in the distance, they saw torches. It looked like a small army was approaching. It was Judas, leading a



Story

81

Mark

14

mob with swords and clubs. “The hour has come,” said Jesus. “The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners” (14:41).

Judas greeted Jesus with a kiss. That kiss of betrayal was the sign to the mob that this was the man to arrest. At once Jesus was arrested and brought back to Jerusalem for a trial. A bunch of people lied as they testified against Jesus, and the Jewish leaders declared, “Guilty!” The saddest thing, though, was not that his enemies lied, but that his friend Peter lied. Peter, who was standing outside, was asked three times if he knew Jesus. And three times he said, “I do not know the man!” Just then, a rooster crowed. He denied Jesus, just as Jesus said he would. Peter cried and fled. The morning had come. Jesus would have to journey to the cross alone.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Peter’s last recorded words in the Gospel of Mark are his lies about not knowing Jesus. Imagine saying you didn’t know who Jesus was when he was your closest friend, when he personally called you to follow him, when you heard him teach great truths, and when you witnessed him cast out demons, cleanse a leper, restore sight to the blind, raise the dead, walk on water, and feed thousands of people with a few scraps of food! Peter cried after he denied Jesus. He cried because he was sad and sorry. He let fear get in the way of friendship (and faith!). Peter’s tears that early morning would be wiped away in two days. He would repent of his sin, return to Jesus after the resurrection, and be a great leader in the early church. He would preach the gospel and perform amazing miracles. And he would learn that Jesus came to die for sinners like him. Life has a way of exposing just how sinful we are. Even Peter wasn’t righteous or courageous enough to follow Jesus perfectly. He was a sinner; we are sinners. He needed a Savior; we need a Savior. Jesus was Peter’s Savior, and he is our Savior! Praise God for that good news.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** Why did the Pharisees want to kill Jesus? Why did Judas betray him?

3

Engage

Memory Verse
For our sake he
made him to be
sin who knew no
sin, so that in him
we might become
the righteousness
of God.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

TAKEAWAY: Most people didn't have eyes to see who Jesus really was.

2. **QUESTION:** After the Passover meal, where did Jesus go and with who? Why did he want his friends with him? What was he there to do? Was he looking forward to being crucified?

TAKEAWAY: Although Jesus knew he came to die, he needed help to face the suffering and death.

3. **QUESTION:** Did anyone stay with Jesus when he was betrayed by Judas and arrested? What did his closest friends do? How do you think he felt?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus was betrayed and denied by his closest friends.

4. **QUESTION:** How did Peter feel after he denied Jesus? How do you feel when you disobey God? Who did Jesus come to die for? What should we do when we sin?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus died to save sinners like Peter and you and me.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Hidden Kisses

Supply List: Hershey's Kisses (one per child)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Hide Hershey's Kisses around the room.

Have children search for a Hershey's Kiss (one per child). Remind children that Judas's kiss was not hidden. He betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

Option 2: Rooster Tag

Supply List: blindfold

Before Class: Gather supplies.



Choose one child to be the “Rooster,” and put a blindfold on him or her. Have the remaining children put their thumbs under their arms and strut around the room like a rooster repeatedly saying, “Cock-a-doodle-doo!” Have the Rooster use the children’s voices to find and tag someone. Whoever is tagged becomes the new Rooster. Remind children that Peter denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.

Option 1: Scatterball

Supply List: ball

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Have a leader hold a ball in the middle of the room. Have all children place a hand on the ball. (If the group is large, have another leader hold an additional ball.) When the leader shouts “Scatter,” all children must run away from the ball while the leader tosses the ball straight up in the air. When the ball drops to the floor, any child can grab it and yell “Freeze,” and everyone freezes. She is not allowed to run with the ball, but she can pivot on one foot to throw the ball at someone. If someone is hit by the ball, he is out and must sit where he was hit. Then everyone else repeats these steps with the new leader throwing. If someone catches the ball, the person who threw the ball is out and must sit, and the catcher is the new leader. The last child standing wins. Remind children that Jesus’s disciples scattered when he was arrested.

Option 2: Rooster Tag

Supply List: blindfold

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Choose one child to be the “Rooster” and put a blindfold on him or her. Have the remaining children put their thumbs under their arms and strut around the room like a rooster repeatedly saying, “Cock-a-doodle-doo!” Have the Rooster use the children’s voices to find and tag someone. Whoever is tagged becomes the new Rooster. Remind children that Peter denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.

CRAFTS


Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Praying at Sunset

Supply List: dark-colored paper, scissors, clothespins, sponges, washable paint in sunset colors, paper plates, white cardstock, white colored pencils, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of praying hands on dark-colored paper and cut out. Make sponge stampers by clipping small pieces of sponge with a clothespin (at least one per child). Place various sunset colors of washable paint on paper plates. Make a sample craft.

Give each child praying hands and a piece of white cardstock. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children write “Jesus prayed” on the hands with a white colored pencil. Have children paint the bottom 2 inches of the cardstock by dabbing the sponge in paint and pressing it to the paper. Next, have children use a different color to paint another 2-inch section directly above the first, being sure to overlap and blend the two colors. Have children continue painting in this way until the whole paper is painted with various sunset colors. When the paint is dry, children can glue the praying hands to the paper as a reminder that Jesus prayed the night before he was arrested and crucified.




Have children color the paper sunset colors with markers/crayons instead of paint and glue on the praying hands

Option 2: Passion of Christ Story Wheel

Supply List: paper plates (two per child), brass fasteners, colored pencils, scissors, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of the following scenes: Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss, Jesus being arrested, and Peter denying Jesus (each picture should be small enough to fit on one-fourth of a paper plate). Cut a one-fourth-sized wedge out of half the paper plates (without cutting to the very center). Make a sample craft.



Place supplies on tables. Have each child take a full-sized paper plate and draw two perpendicular lines through the center to divide it into four equal sections. Have children color and cut out the different scenes, then glue them in sequential order onto the sections of their plate. Finally, assist children in using



a brass fastener to attach a paper plate with the one-fourth section removed to the top of their full-sized plate. Encourage children to retell the story using the story wheel.

Option 1: Passion of Christ Story Wheel

Supply List: paper plates (two per child), brass fasteners, colored pencils, scissors, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut a one-fourth-sized wedge out of half the paper plates (without cutting to the very center). Make a sample craft.

Place supplies on tables. Have each child take a full-sized paper plate and draw two perpendicular lines through the center to divide it into four equal sections. Have children draw the following scenes in sequential order (one per section): Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss, Jesus being arrested, and Peter denying Jesus. Finally, have children use a brass fastener to attach a paper plate with the one-fourth section removed to the top of their full-sized plate. Encourage children to retell the story using the story wheel.

Option 2: Paper Plate Rooster

Supply List: paper plates, brown watercolor paint, paintbrushes, cups of water, googly eyes, red feathers, scissors, pencils, red and yellow construction paper, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Fill small cups with water. Make a sample craft.

Place supplies on tables. Have each child paint a paper plate brown. When it is dry, instruct them to fold it in half. Have children design and cut out red wattles and yellow beaks from the construction paper. Next, children can make rooster faces on one end of the paper plate by gluing on the wattle, beak, and googly eyes. Finally, have them glue a couple red feathers on the opposite end of the plate to form the rooster's "tail." Remind children that Peter denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 82

The Snake Crusher Is Crushed for Us

MARK 15

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 15.
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



All four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—describe how Jesus suffered and died. They don't all record the birth of Jesus (as important as that was!), and they don't all record the same teachings or miracles of Jesus. But all four spend a lot of time talking about the sufferings and death of Jesus. In fact, all four slow down the story once Jesus gets to Jerusalem for the Passover. In Mark's Gospel, for example, he summarizes thirty-three years of Jesus's life (including his three years of ministry) in the first ten chapters. But the last week of Jesus's life gets six whole chapters. Talk about slowing down—six chapters to cover seven days! Why does he do that? Why spend so much time telling us about the

Last Supper, Jesus's betrayal, Jesus's arrest and trial, Jesus's sufferings before the cross, and finally Jesus's terrible death on the cross? The reason is that the cross matters. The cross stands at the center of the Christian story. The cross is where the Snake Crusher was crushed for us.

TELL THE STORY

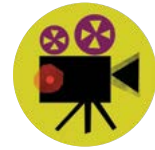
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
The Snake
Crusher was
crushed for us.

Good Friday is one of the most important days in the whole of history, a day Christians set aside to remember Jesus's death. But why is it called Good Friday and not Sad Friday? It certainly was a *sad* day. Jesus was sentenced to death, beaten, and nailed to a cross. So sad. But it was so *good* too—extremely, awesomely, amazingly good! It was good because through Jesus's sacrifice we are forgiven. It was good because the Snake Crusher finally crushed Satan by being crushed on the cross for us.

Here's the story of that sad but good day. After the rooster crowed, the wicked Jewish leaders delivered Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor in Jerusalem who would decide whether Jesus lived or died. Pilate questioned Jesus, and he was convinced that Jesus was innocent. So he tried to release him. He brought out two prisoners—Jesus and Barabbas. Barabbas was a rebel and murderer. "Since it is your Passover feast celebration, I'll set one prisoner free," Pilate said to the crowd. "Do you want this rebel or this so-called ruler—Jesus, King of the Jews?" Pilate thought that they would free Jesus. But no! They shouted for Barabbas. "What!" Pilate said. "What then shall I do with Jesus? He hasn't done anything wrong." Then, they shouted, "Crucify him" (Mark 15:13). What! Why? Wow! Pilate preferred to please the crowds than release innocent Jesus, and so he "delivered him to be crucified" (15:15).



Story

82

Mark

15

The Roman soldiers took off Jesus's clothes and whipped him. (How painful!) Then they mocked him by placing a purple cloak on his body and a crown of thorns on his head. (How cruel!) Then they pretended to worship Jesus by kneeling before him, spitting on him, and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews" (15:18). (How blasphemous!) After all that, Jesus carried his cross beam to Calvary, the place where they crucified criminals. Along the way, Jesus fell a few times. The cross was heavy, and Jesus's body was weak from the beatings. A man named Simon was asked to help him carry the cross. Then, when he arrived, the soldiers put the cross beams together, nailed Jesus to it, and lifted him up between two thieves. People taunted him ("Save yourself, and come down from the cross," 15:30) and mocked him ("Come down . . . that we may see and believe," 15:32), but Jesus had a different plan. Instead, he "uttered a loud cry and breathed his last" (15:37). Then, the earth shook, the sky turned black, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. God accepted Jesus's sacrifice! Indeed it was a Good Friday.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Who is the Snake Crusher? Why is Jesus called that? That name goes back to one of the earliest promises in the Bible, when God said to the serpent who deceived Eve in the garden of Eden, "Because you have done this, there will be a long and great struggle between you and Eve's offspring until the day when a child is born from her family who will crush your head once and for all" (see Gen. 3:14–15). Jesus is that child. Jesus is the Snake Crusher. He's the son of Mary and the Son of God. But what is surprising in our story is that the Snake Crusher is crushed. Although he had never sinned, he was punished by God for all the sins of the world. Why? So we wouldn't have to be punished. Jesus was crushed so we don't have to be crushed. He took the punishment for us. That's why it was a Good Friday.

And the Snake? He will still be crushed just as it was promised. But that's a story for another day.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What do we call the day Jesus died? Why do we call it good when it's the day he died?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: The day Jesus died can be called Good Friday.

2. **QUESTION:** According to the Bible, what is God's punishment for sin? Who has sinned? Jesus never sinned, so why did God punish him on the cross?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus became sin for us and took the punishment we deserved.

Memory Verse

He himself bore
our sins in his
body on the tree,
that we might die
to sin and live to
righteousness. By
his wounds you
have been healed.

1 PETER 2:24

3. **QUESTION:** Who was the Snake Crusher? Why was he crushed for us?

TAKEAWAY: The Snake Crusher was crushed as the punishment for our sin.

4. **QUESTION:** When Jesus died, what happened to the curtain in the temple? If the curtain kept people from the Holy Place where God met with the high priest, what do you think it means that the curtain was torn when Jesus died?

TAKEAWAY: When Jesus died, we were given access to God.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Silent Speed Ball

Supply List: none

Have children stand in a circle. Tell them they must be silent the entire game. Give one child a ball, and have her pass it to someone else in the circle. The child who catches the ball must then quickly pass it to another child in the circle (and so on). If a child makes a sound, fails to catch the ball, drops the ball after catching it, or throws the ball poorly (too short, over the head, etc.), he is out and must sit down. The last child standing wins. Tell children that when Jesus was arrested and put on trial, he was silent and did not defend himself.

Option 2: Sin Relay

Supply List: boxes, heavy books, chairs

Before Class: Fill boxes with books (one per team). Set up chairs on one side of the room (one per team).





Story

82

Mark

15

Divide children into teams, and have them line up across from a chair. Give each team a box of books. On “Go” the first child on each team must push the box across the room, around his team’s chair, and back to his team. The next person repeats the process. The first team to race all its players wins. Remind children that Jesus carried the heavy burden of our sin so that we could be free of it.

Option 1: Build a Bridge Challenge

Supply List: masking tape, craft sticks (forty per team), paper clips (ten per team), string, pennies

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Divide children into small teams. Give each team 3 feet of masking tape, forty craft sticks, ten paper clips, and 1 foot of string. Have each team use the supplies to build a bridge that can hold weight. After teams have built their bridges, test how much weight each one can hold by adding pennies to the bridge until it collapses. The team whose bridge holds the most pennies wins. Remind children that Jesus’s death on the cross made a way for us to be with God.

We will build a bridge with wooden blocks and magnetic tiles as a class

Option 2: Sin Relay

Supply List: boxes, heavy books, chairs

Before Class: Fill boxes with books (one per team). Set up chairs on one side of the room (one per team).

Divide children into teams, and have them line up across from a chair. Give each team a box of books. On “Go” the first child on each team must push the box across the room, around his team’s chair, and back to his team. The next person repeats the process. The first team to race all its players wins. Remind children that Jesus carried the heavy burden of our sin so that we could be free of it.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Stained Glass Cross

Supply List: clear contact paper, permanent marker, yarn, scissors, masking tape, colored tissue paper, hole punches

Before Class: Gather supplies. With permanent marker, draw a cross onto clear contact paper and cut it out. Cut tissue paper into small pieces for the stained glass. Cut yarn into 6-inch pieces for hanging. Make a sample craft.

Set colored tissue paper, yarn, and hole punches on tables. Use tape to hold the cross in place, so the child can peel off the backing and begin putting tissue paper on it until it is completely covered. Have children untape the cross from the table and punch a hole through the top for hanging in a window. Remind children that Jesus loves them so much that he died on the cross for their sins.

Option 2: Fingerprint Cross

Supply List: ~~washable paint~~ stamp pads, paper plates, markers, paper, baby wipes

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a large cross template (one per child). Place a small amount of different colored paints on paper plates (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Set markers on tables. Give each child a cross paper, and instruct children to write “Jesus died for me” above the cross. Give each child a plate with paint. The children should dip one finger in the paint, then make a fingerprint inside the cross. Have them continue to make fingerprints with different colors of paint until the entire cross is filled. Have children clean their fingers with baby wipes as needed. Remind children that Jesus loves them so much that he died on the cross for their sins.

We will use stamp pads instead of paint



Story

82

Mark

15

Option 1: Foil Cross Necklace

Supply List: aluminum foil, pipe cleaners, string

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut aluminum foil into random-sized pieces. Cut string into 18-inch pieces. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on tables. Have children take two pipe cleaners and form them into the shape of a cross with a loop at the top. Next, children should wrap and scrunch foil pieces tightly around both pipe cleaners until everything but the loop is covered. Have children thread a piece of string through the loop and tie the ends together, making a necklace. Encourage children to wear the necklace to remind them that Jesus loves them so much that he died on the cross for their sins.

Option 2: Faux Stained Glass Cross

Supply List: cardstock, black acrylic paint, white liquid glue, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, cups, water, pencil, ruler

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a large cross. Mix black acrylic paint with half empty bottles of liquid white glue. Shake vigorously until mixed together (one per table). Fill cups with water. Make a sample craft.

We will paint a cross with watercolor

✓ Place copies, "black glue," cups of water, and remaining supplies on tables. Have children take a cross paper and use a pencil and ruler to divide the cross into random sections. Instruct children to use watercolor paints to paint each section a different color. Children then can use the bottle of black glue to trace around the edges of the cross, as well as over the pencil lines that separate their sections. Remind children that Jesus loves them so much that he died on the cross for their sins.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 83

Jesus Lives

LUKE 24

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Luke 24.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

God's ways are not our ways. If we were to write the story of our salvation, would we have the glorious Son of God born of a young teenage girl and laid in a manger? Would we have him grow up in the small town of Nazareth? Would we have him ride into Jerusalem on a humble donkey? Would we have him suffer? Be mocked and mistreated? Carry a cross to Calvary? Be crucified between two criminals? No, we might write something like the Son of God flew down to earth riding in a golden chariot with six white horses pulling him, sixty million angels flying around him, and when everyone on earth saw him, they fell down before him. We might also write that he lived happily ever after with everyone in his holy (and huge!) palace in the holy city on the holy mountain. But God couldn't do that because he is just and must punish our sin. Fallen people aren't

fit to live happily ever after with him. Which is why God's Biggest Story is so different. It is upside down, different than we'd expected. Jesus's death was different than we'd expect—and so was his resurrection! His resurrection was unexpected but super important. So *listen up* as we talk about Jesus *rising up*!

TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth

Jesus rose from
the dead—just like
the Old Testament
said he would.

Jesus predicted that one of the twelve would betray him. That happened. He predicted that Peter would deny him. That happened. He predicted that twelve out of twelve would forsake him. That happened. He predicted that he would suffer and die. That happened. And he predicted that in three days he would rise from the dead. Did that happen? It sure did!

On Friday Jesus died. So dark and sad. On Saturday his body lay in the tomb. Totally dark, sad, and silent. On Sunday, however, as the sun rose in the sky, the Son of God rose from the grave. The first to witness this miracle of miracles were a few women. They didn't expect Jesus to be alive. We know this because they brought spices to the tomb. Dead bodies don't smell so good, so they wanted to make Jesus's body smell better. But when they arrived at the tomb, they found that the huge stone in front of the tomb was rolled away and Jesus's body was not there. Surprise of all surprises! Just then, another surprise. Two angels stood before them in dazzling white clothes and announced, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you . . . that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise" (Luke 24:5–7). Only then did they remember.



Story

83

Luke

24

After the women spoke with the angels, they ran back to tell the other disciples. The disciples thought they were crazy, but Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves. When they got there, they looked inside and saw Jesus's grave clothes but not his body. Jesus was indeed alive! They ran back and told the others, but at this time "they did not [yet] understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead" (John 20:9). It took a few appearances from Jesus (where they both saw him and touched him!) and his own teaching on the Old Testament for them to understand and believe the amazing news.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

One day after Jesus's death, two of his followers were walking away from Jerusalem when Jesus walked up to them and asked what they were talking about. They didn't recognize him. So they shared how their "chief priests and rulers delivered [Jesus] up ... and crucified him" (Luke 24:20). They said they "had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (24:21). They also shared how the women went to the tomb, found it empty, and saw angels "who said that he was alive" (24:23). But they didn't believe all this. That's why they were walking away. Jesus stopped them and said, "Why are you so dumb?" Well, he didn't say it exactly that way. He said it this way, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (24:25–26). Then, starting with Genesis and ending with Malachi, he taught them from the Old Testament about himself. "It was written," Jesus said "that I should rise from the dead and that the good news that sins are forgiven should be preached to all the nations" (see 24:46–47). Jesus rose from the dead, just like the Old Testament said. Those two followers understood and believed. And that is the good news we should believe too!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** What are some surprising things about how Jesus came to earth to save us? Why do you think God's ways are so different than our ways?

TAKEAWAY: God's ways are not our ways.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
“Death is swallowed
up in victory.”
“O death, where is
your victory?
O death, where is
your sting?”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:54–55

2. **QUESTION:** Did Jesus’s followers expect him to rise from the dead? How do you know they didn’t? Why should they have expected him to rise? How did Jesus explain to the two men why he had to die and rise?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus rose from the dead, just like the Old Testament had said.

3. **QUESTION:** When the women told the disciples that Jesus was alive, did they believe them? What convinced them?

TAKEAWAY: The disciples didn’t believe that Jesus was alive until they saw him with their own eyes.

4. **QUESTION:** Did Jesus only appear to a couple of people? Why did he appear to so many? Why was it important that so many people actually saw Jesus with their own eyes after he rose again?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus appeared to hundreds of disciples after his death so they could be his witnesses to all nations.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Alive Tag

Supply List: none

Have children line up along one wall. Identify a “safe zone.” Choose one child to be “It” and to stand in the middle of the room. On “Go” have “It” stand completely still (as if dead or asleep) while the other children walk quietly around him, whispering, “Are you alive?” Whenever “It” wants, he can yell out “I’m alive!” and tries to tag as many children as possible before they get to the safe zone. Anyone “It” tags becomes “It” also. Have all children who are “It” spread out in the room. The game continues as before, but now the original “It” yells “We’re alive” when it’s time to run and tag people. Play continues until one child remains. That person becomes “It” for the next round. Remind children that the disciples thought Jesus was still dead even though Jesus had risen from the dead!



Option 2: Empty Tomb Relay

Supply List: paper, plastic eggs, buckets

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out small squares of paper and draw a cross on each one. Place cross papers inside plastic eggs. Fill buckets with cross-filled eggs and one empty egg (one per team). Place buckets on one side of the room.

✓ Divide children into teams, and have them line up opposite a bucket. The first child on each team must jump down to her team's bucket and open an egg. If the egg has a cross in it, she must close the egg (with cross paper inside), return it to the bucket, and run back to tag the next person, who repeats the process. The first team to find and return the empty egg wins. Remind children that Jesus's tomb was empty because Jesus rose from the dead!

Option 1: In the Tomb, Out of the Tomb, Bridge

Supply List: masking tape

Before Class: Gather supplies. Use masking tape to make a line down the center of the room.

✓ Have children stand with one leg on each side of the line. Explain that the way they are standing will be called "bridge." Identify one side of the line as "in the tomb" and the other side as "out of the tomb." A leader calls out "in the tomb," "out of the tomb," or "bridge," and children jump with two feet to the side or position that is called. If a child jumps to the wrong side or position, he is out and must sit to the side. The leader continues calling out the phrases in random order, calling out more quickly the less people there are in the game. The last child standing wins. Remind children that Jesus's death and resurrection provided a way for us to be with God.

Option 2: Pop! Relay

Supply List: balloons

Before Class: Gather supplies. Inflate balloons (one per child and a few extra).

Divide children into teams, and give each child a balloon. The first person on each team must run with her balloon to the opposite side of the room, pop her balloon by stomping on it or sitting on it, and run back to tag the next person in line, who repeats the process. The first team to have all players complete the

race wins. Remind children that the empty balloons are like the empty tomb the women found when they went to take care of Jesus's body. Jesus is alive!

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

Option 1: Jesus Wins Trophy

Supply List: paper, tape, glue, scissors, a variety of supplies (toilet paper rolls, cardstock, cardboard, pom-poms, craft sticks, aluminum foil, etc.)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print papers that say “Jesus won over sin and death!” (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children use the provided supplies to design a trophy. After constructing a trophy, the children should cut out “Jesus won over sin and death” and attach it to their trophies. Remind children that Jesus won over sin and death!

Option 2: “He Is Risen” Handprint

Supply List: paper (white, green, brown, yellow), glue, scissors, crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a semicircle “hill” on green paper and a cross on brown paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Instruct children to trace both their hands on yellow construction paper, to cut the tracings out, and to glue them to the top of a piece of white paper (overlapping the palms to form the rays of a sun). Children will then cut out a green semicircle hill and glue it under the handprints. Finally, have them cut out a brown cross and glue it on top of the hill (it will also cover some of the “sun”). Instruct the children to write “He is risen!” on the hill.





Story

83

Luke

24

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Option 2: "He Is Risen" Banner

Supply List: string, 11" x 17" construction paper, markers, colored pencils, glue sticks, sequins, stickers, tape

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut string into 3-foot pieces (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Place string and remaining supplies on tables. Instruct children to write "He is risen!" in the middle of a large piece of construction paper. Next, they can decorate their banners using the provided supplies, leaving room at the top. When completed, help children fold the top of their banner over a piece of string, using tape to secure it. Have children tie the ends of the string together for hanging. Remind children that Jesus conquered sin and death when he rose from the dead!

We will make a large banner as a class

Put roll of paper on the table for the class to decorate together

After decorating, hang the banner on the board to remind the kids that He is Risen!



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.