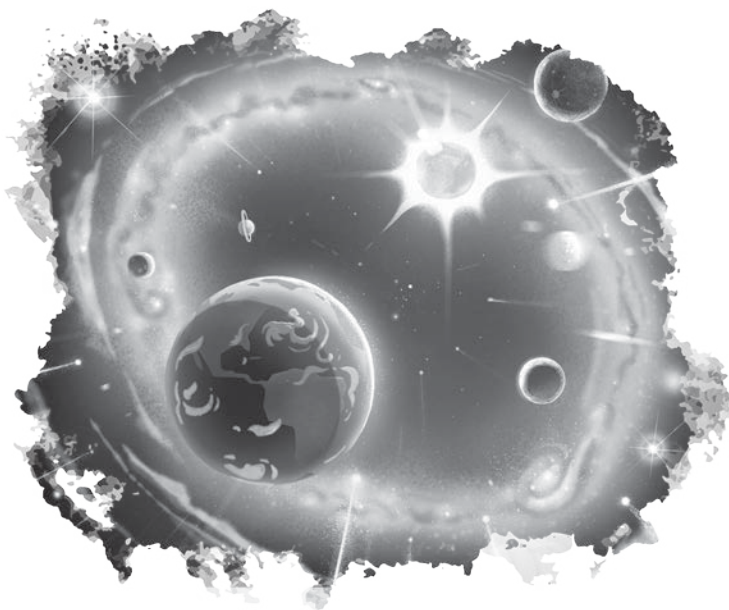


THE
GOSPEL
PROJECT[®]
FOR PRETEENS

IN THE
BEGINNING

VOLUME 1 • LEADER GUIDE





Unit 1, Session 1

God Created the World

Genesis 1

Story Point: God created everything, and everything He created was good.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 1, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

In the beginning, nothing existed except for God. **God created the heavens and the earth.** The earth had no shape, and darkness covered the earth. The Spirit of God was there, hovering over the waters.

God spoke: “Let there be light!” What God said happened. **God saw that the light was good**, and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and He called the darkness “night.” **Evening came, and then morning came. That was the first day.**

God spoke again: “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate them.” What God said happened. He made a space between the water that was on the earth and the water above the earth. **God called the expanse “sky.” Evening came, and then morning came. That was the second day.**

God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” What God said happened. God called the dry land “earth,” and He called the gathered water “seas.” God saw that it was good. Then God said, **“Let the earth make plants and trees with fruits and seeds.”** What God said happened.

Plants and trees grew, and **God saw that it was good. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the third day.**

Next, God placed lights in the sky. God created the sun to shine during the day and the moon and stars to shine at night. God gave us lights to shine on the earth, to separate day from night, and to help us track time in days and years. **God saw that it was good. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the fourth day.**

Next, God made creatures that move and swim in the water. He made birds to flap their wings and soar across the sky. God saw that it was good. God told the animals to multiply, and they filled the seas and the sky. Evening came, and then morning came. That was the fifth day.

Then God made more animals—livestock, creatures that crawl, and wildlife—to live on the earth. When God said it, it happened. **And God saw that all of it was good.**

Christ Connection: Jesus is Lord over all of creation. The Son has always existed. The Bible says everything was created by Him and for Him, and He holds everything together. All of creation exists to bring God glory.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to imagine a perfect world. Invite them to describe it.

OPTION 1: Instant recipes

Supplies: cookbook, paper, pencils, watch or timer

Form teams of two to four kids. Give each team a piece of paper and a pencil. Explain that you are going to name a dish from a cookbook and kids should list all the ingredients they think you need to make it.

Allow about one minute for kids to write and then call time. Invite each group to share its list. Then share the actual list from the cookbook. Play additional rounds as time allows. (Suggested dishes: buttermilk pancakes, lasagna, blueberry pie, pasta salad, caramel brownies, chicken casserole)

- When God created the world, how do you think He did it?
- Why do you think God created everything?

OPTION 2: Clay creations

Supplies: modeling clay or play dough, index cards, marker

Label index cards with the names of created things: sun, moon, star, palm tree, bird, fish, camel, and so forth. Prepare at least one index card per kid.

Mix up the cards and distribute them. Give each kid a lump of clay to shape the item on the card. Allow kids to work for several minutes. Then invite kids to take turns displaying their creations. Challenge the rest of the group to guess what the creation is.

- What would you need to create real stars, trees, or animals?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

First we need to start at the beginning. Today we are going to hear how God created the world. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read Genesis 1:1-25.

- What does this story teach us about God?

When God created everything, He made it out of nothing. Isn't that incredible? God didn't start with some materials and add glue or form something that already existed into something new. Nothing else existed. He spoke, and it happened. In this story, **we see God's authority**—His power to give orders, make decisions, and control things. As Creator and King, God has authority over everything.

- What was special about everything God created?

God saw that all of **it was good**. God created everything, and everything He created was good. Everything God created was exactly how God intended it to be. Everything God made brought Him glory.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

The Bible says in John 1 that the Word was with God in the beginning, and the Word was God. All things were created through Him. "The Word" is God the Son. When God spoke things into existence, the Son was there. Jesus is Lord over all creation. He is God the Son, and God the Son has always existed. The Bible says everything was created by Him and for Him, and He holds everything together.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

God created the whole universe including people, and everything He created was good. Billions of people live in the world, and God loves them all. But many people in the world today have not heard that God loves them. God's plan all along has been for people to worship Him by loving Jesus. We all have a part in sharing the gospel of Jesus with everyone, everywhere!

PRAY

God, You created everything and everything You created was good. We are thankful that You care for us. When we pray, You hear us. Draw our hearts to You. We want to give You glory because You are our Creator and King. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

God made everything, and He is in charge of everything. As we see and think about creation, we can remember that God rules over it all.

- How do we know God exists?
- How have you seen God's power and majesty in creation?

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Genesis 1. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 1:1. Explain that the Book of Genesis is the first book in the Bible. The Bible is made up of 66 books, and these books are divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Book of Genesis is the first book in the Old Testament.

Point out that the word *genesis* means “beginning.” Choose another volunteer to read aloud Genesis 1:1 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. When God spoke, things happened. What does this tell you about His power?

Help kids recognize God's authority over all of creation. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 47:2.)

2. What makes something good? Who decides what is good?

Help kids define good as anything that is acceptable to God. As Creator and King, God sets the standard for what is good. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Romans 12:2.)

3. What are some parts of creation you enjoy?
Who deserves worship—creation or the Creator? Why?

Guide boys and girls to recognize God as the only One who deserves our worship. No one is like Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Revelation 4:11.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Colossians 1:16-17. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Choose a kid to say the first word of the key passage. The kid to her left should say the next word, and so on around the circle until kids say the entire key passage. Repeat as time allows.

We heard in our Bible story today that God created everything, and everything He created was good. Jesus is Lord over all of creation. He is God the Son. The Bible says everything was created by Him and for Him, and He holds everything together. All of creation exists to bring God glory. Why? Well, who is God? God is our Creator and King.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for creation that we can enjoy and that points us to Him, our Creator and King.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Missions map

Supplies: large world map, construction paper strips, tape, pen or pencils

Hang a large world map where kids can reach it. Cut a strip of construction paper for each kid. Ask kids to write their name in small print on a strip and put a piece of tape on the back. Ask for a volunteer. Blindfold the volunteer or ask him to close his eyes. Spin the volunteer and point him toward the map. Instruct him to walk forward to stick his paper anywhere on the map.

Give each kid a turn. Then “explore” the places kids have marked. Read the name of the country nearest each strip. Remind kids that many people living in these countries have not yet heard the gospel. Share that we can be a part of God’s mission by praying for people living in these countries. Ask kids to reclaim their paper and write the name of the nearest country on their strip.

Challenge kids to take home their strip and place it somewhere they will see it often as a reminder to pray for the people in that country this week.



Unit 1, Session 2

God Created People

Genesis 1-2

Story Point: God created people in His own image, and He loves us.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 1-2, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

On the sixth day of creation, God made people. God said, “Let us make man in our image. They will rule over the whole earth and all the creatures on the earth.” God took dust from the ground and made a body. God breathed into the man, and the man became alive. God planted a garden in the land of Eden and put the man there. God told the man to work in the garden and take care of it.

God provided food from the trees for the man to eat, and God provided a river to water the garden. Then **God said, “You may eat from any of the trees in the garden, except for one.”** The garden had a tree in it called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **God warned the man, “If you eat from that tree, you will die.”**

Then God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” So God decided to make a helper for the man. God brought to the man the animals He had created, and the man gave names to all of the creatures. But none of the animals was a good helper for the man.

So God made the man fall fast asleep. He took one of the man’s ribs and created a

woman. When the man saw the woman, he was very happy. “This one, at last,” he said, “is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.”

The woman was a perfect helper for the man; she was his wife. The man’s name was Adam, and his wife’s name was Eve.

God gave Adam and Eve good things. He put them in charge of the animals and provided everything they needed. God looked at everything He had made, and it was very good. So on the seventh day of creation, God rested from His work.

Christ Connection: God created people in His own image and provides for everything He made. People are special because God made people to live forever in a relationship with Him. Through His Son, Jesus, we can have eternal life with God just as He planned.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to describe the best things they have ever made. What kinds of things have they cooked, sculpted, constructed, or drawn? What was your best creation?

OPTION 1: Can you do that?

Instruct boys and girls to stand in a circle. Join them and explain that each player will take a turn announcing something she can do. (“I can ... ; can you ... ?”)

Go first to give an example. Announce something such as, “I can say a poem; can you say a poem?” Anyone who can answer “yes,” to the question should sit in place. The next player standing should say something like, “I can do a handstand,” and then sit along with any players who can do a handstand too. Continue play until everyone is seated. Then kids may stand up and play again.

- How are people different than animals?
- Why do you think God made people?

OPTION 2: Draw partner portraits

Supplies: paper, colored pencils

Guide each kid to find a partner. Distribute paper and colored pencils to the kids and instruct partners to take turns drawing portraits of each other. Encourage each kid to study his partner’s features and draw him as accurately as possible. Then the partner will take a turn drawing.

Encourage kids to swap drawings so each kid has a picture of himself. Allow kids to add color or additional features. As kids work, point out how no two portraits are the same. Prompt kids to write their names on their finished portraits. Allow volunteers to display their portraits.

- What do all people have in common?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Last week we started at the beginning: “God Created the World.” Today we will pick up with the second part of that story, “God Created People.”

Read Genesis 1:26–2:25.

- What does this story teach us about ourselves?

On the sixth day, God created people. God is our Creator and King. Did you notice anything different about the way God created people compared to the way He created animals? When God created animals, He spoke and it happened. But when God created people, He formed the man out of dust from the ground. He made the woman from one of the man’s ribs. **God created people in His own image, and He loves us.**

- Why did God make people?

God had a special, loving relationship with people like a father loves his children. God made all people with a purpose: **to know and love Him.** He wants us to trust Him and obey Him.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

God created people in His own image and provides for everything He made. People are special because God made people to live forever in a relationship with Him. Through His Son, Jesus, we can have eternal life with God just as He planned.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Share that for hundreds of years, England has had a king or queen. Today, the queen of England lives in London at Buckingham Palace. Like the king or queen of England, many people from all over the world also call London home. God loves each person in that city and wants them to know Him. The Rigneys are a missionary family living in London and telling people there that God is our Creator and King.

PRAY

Lord God, You are our Creator and King. You made us in a special way—in Your own image—and You love us. Help us to know You and love You, just as You created us to do. Thank You for Your Word that helps us know what is true. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

God is our Creator because He created everything—including you! And He is our King because He is in charge of everything.

- How should we treat people who are different?
- How can you show God's love to someone who's different than you?

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Genesis 1. Remind kids that the word genesis means “beginning.” The Bible tells us about the beginning of people. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 1:26. Call for another volunteer to read verse 27.

Point out that God made people differently than everything else He created. God created people in His own image, and He loves us. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

Lead kids to recognize that being created in the image of God involves who we are and what we are called to do. God created us to be like Him in many ways: we can think, feel, create, and make decisions; we can be loving and truthful; and so on. Being made in God's image also means we are called to obey Him. We are called to be His representatives in the world. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Colossians 3:9-10.)

2. How does being created in God's image affect how we treat one another?

Prompt kids to acknowledge that because every person is made in God's image, every person is valuable. We should show respect and compassion to one another. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 139:13-14.)

3. God created us to know and love Him. How can we get to know God if we cannot see Him?

Guide kids to recognize that God reveals Himself to us through His Word, the Bible. He also reveals Himself through the world He has created. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 19:1.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: index cards, marker

Before the session, write the words of the key passage on separate index cards. Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Colossians 1:16-17 and read the key passage together two or three times. Then mix up the prepared index cards and challenge kids to arrange them in the correct order. If your group is large, prepare multiple sets and work in smaller groups. When kids finish, lead them to say the key passage together.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for His loving care for His creation. Pray that kids would know and love God, as He created them to be in a relationship with Him. Pray that God would help boys and girls treat all people with compassion and respect because God created people in His own image.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Shadow art

Supplies: flashlights, 1 per 3 kids; white paper; black paper; pencils; markers; scissors; tape; glue

Form groups of three kids. Give each group a flashlight and a pencil. Provide a piece of black paper and white paper for each kid. Dim the lights and explain the roles for each kid:

Kid 1: Tape a piece of paper to a wall. Sit sideways in a chair with one shoulder close to the wall.

Kid 2: Hold a flashlight toward kid 1 so the shadow of her head and neck is on the paper.

Kid 3: Use a pencil to trace the shadow on the paper.

Guide kids to switch roles until everyone has a tracing of her shadow. Provide scissors for kids to cut out their tracings. Kids should then trace the cutout onto black paper and cut that out. Finally, they can glue the black cutout onto another piece of white paper.

Lead kids to write their names and *Made in God's Image* beneath their shadow art. Remind kids that God created people in His own image, and He loves us.



Unit 1, Session 3

Sin Entered the World

Genesis 3

Story Point: Adam and Eve broke God's law, and their sin separated them from God.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 3, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

God gave the first two people, Adam and Eve, a beautiful garden to call home. He gave them everything they needed, and He gave them one command: "You may eat from any of the trees in the garden, except for one." God warned Adam, "If you eat from that tree, you will die."

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals. One day, the serpent went to Eve. "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden?'" he asked.

Eve answered, "We can eat the fruit from the trees in the garden, but God told us not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. He said if we eat it or touch it, we will die."

"No! You will not die," the serpent lied. The serpent told Eve that she and Adam would be like God, knowing good and evil.

Eve looked at the fruit. It did look delicious, and she wanted to be wise. So she **took some of the fruit and ate it. Eve also gave some of the fruit to Adam, who was with her, and he ate it. Then their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked.** Adam and Eve sewed together fig leaves and made clothes for themselves.

That evening, Adam and Eve heard God

walking in the garden. They hid among the trees. God called out to Adam, "Where are you?" Adam said, "I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." God asked Adam, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I told you not to eat from?" Adam blamed Eve. "She gave me some fruit, and I ate it," he said. Eve blamed the serpent. "He tricked me," she said.

God said that bad things would happen. Life would be hard and painful, all because of **sin**. The snake would crawl on its belly and be an enemy to people. But God promised that one of Eve's descendants would destroy the serpent.

Everything changed after Adam and Eve sinned. They were not close to God like before. Sin separated Adam and Eve from God. God made them clothes out of animal skins and then sent them out of the garden. God put angels and a sword of fire at the entrance of the garden to guard the way to the tree of life.

Christ Connection: Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, all people have been sinners. Our sin separates us from God, but God still loves us. God promised a Rescuer would come from Eve's family. God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue people from sin and bring them back to God.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to describe things that don't work like they should. What seems to be broken in the world?

OPTION 1: Excuse me, what are you doing?

Instruct kids to stand in a circle. Join them and pretend to do an action (washing your hair, drinking water, or so forth). The player to your left should say, "Excuse me, what are you doing?" Say something other than what you are really doing. If you are pretending to wash your hair, you might say, "I'm eating a sandwich." The second player should pretend to eat a sandwich.

The next person will ask him, "Excuse me, what are you doing?" He will say something different than what he is doing. Keep going around the circle as time allows.

- What was tricky about that game?
- Have you ever been tricked, or made to believe something untrue?

OPTION 2: Beanbag toss

Supplies: beanbags, masking tape or painter's tape

Use masking tape or painter's tape to outline a target (three concentric circles) on the floor at one side of the room. Line up two teams of kids at the other side of the room.

Instruct players to take turns tossing a beanbag toward the target. Award a point for each beanbag that lands in the center circle. For an added challenge, require each player to toss the beanbag with her nondominant hand.

- How often did your team miss the mark?

Explain that the word *sin* comes from a Greek word that means "to miss the mark." When we sin, we miss the mark of God's standard for us.



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

In the beginning, God created everything, and everything He created was good. On the sixth day, God created people in His own image, and He loves us. Adam and Eve had a close relationship with God. Today's story is called "Sin Entered the World."

Read Genesis 3.

- What does this story teach us about God?

God is our Creator and King. Before sin entered the world, everything was perfect. God had a perfect relationship with Adam and Eve. He commanded them to trust Him and obey Him. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God when they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve broke God's law, and their sin separated them from God.

- How does sin affect the world?

God created us to know and love Him. When we ignore God and His plan for our lives, **life doesn't work**. There is suffering, violence, poverty, pain, and death.

When life doesn't work, we might try to figure it out on our own. Some people think they will find their purpose and happiness in money or success or in doing good works. None of these things can make us truly happy. We need God, but **our sin separates us from Him**. That is the bad news. But all along, God had a plan to bring us back to Him.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, all people have been sinners. Our sin separates us from God, but God still loves us. God promised a Rescuer would come from Eve's family. God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue people from sin and bring them back to God.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

The Rigneys are a missionary family living in London, England. They moved to London so they can share the gospel with the people there. Many people there have not heard the good news that Jesus forgives sins. The Rigneys tell people the good news: God promised a Rescuer would come from Eve's family. God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue people from sin and bring them back to God. Everyone who believes in Him has forgiveness and life with God forever.

PRAY

Lord God, we confess that we have not obeyed You perfectly. Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue people from sin. Give us boldness to share this good news with the world! Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

The Bible tells us God made everything, and He is in charge of everything. God is all-present, or everywhere at the same time. He is all-knowing; nothing surprises Him or happens without His knowledge. And God is all-powerful. He can do anything according to His character.

- How can you know if something is a sin?
- How can Christians help one another say no to sin?

Distribute Bibles. Instruct boys and girls to find the table of contents in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read the names of the first five books of the Bible: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Explain that these five books are called the books of the law because they contain laws and instructions God gave to His people, the Israelites, long ago.

Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Genesis 3. Choose two volunteers: the first will read aloud Genesis 3:1. The second will read Genesis 3:2-3. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What are some rules your parents have for you? Why do you think they give you rules?

Help kids recognize that rules are for their own good. Our parents—and our heavenly Father—love us well by giving us healthy boundaries and rules. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ephesians 6:4.)

2. Why do you think people sin against God?

Lead kids to understand that at its heart, sin comes from a distrust of God. We sin because we believe the lie that we know better than God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Romans 3:23.)

3. How does sin affect our relationship with God? How does it affect our relationships with one another?

God created people to live under His loving authority, but sin made us His enemies. Instead of living for God, we live for ourselves. Guide boys and girls to acknowledge that sin separates us from God. It breaks our relationships with one another. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Romans 6:23.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: sticky notes, marker

Write words or phrases of the key passage on separate sticky notes. Post them to a focal wall and lead the group to read the key passage together. Invite a kid to remove one sticky note. Challenge the kids to read the passage again, supplying the missing words. Continue reading and removing one sticky note at a time until kids recite the entire key passage from memory.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for loving us by sending Jesus to be our Rescuer. Pray that kids would trust in Him.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Missions exploration

Supplies: world map (optional)

Remind kids about the missionary family living in London, England. The Rigneys moved to London so they can share the gospel with the many different people living there.

Challenge kids to guess how many languages are spoken in London. More than 300 languages can be heard in the city, and God loves every person speaking them! Remind kids to pray for the Rigneys as they share the gospel in London, England.

As time allows, introduce some of the languages spoken in London. Invite kids to practice speaking in other languages:

Good morning! / Spanish: “Buenos días” (booEHN-os DEE-as)

Hello! / Arabic: “Marhaban” (MAR-ha-bahn)

Thanks! / Polish: “Dzięki” (JEN-key)

Good day! / German: “Guten Tag” (GOO-tehn tahg)



Unit 1, Session 4

Noah and the Ark

Genesis 6–9

Story Point: God punished sin but chose to rescue Noah and his family.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 6–9, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

Adam and Eve had many children and grandchildren. One day, God looked at all the people on earth and saw that they were choosing to sin. Every person's thoughts were evil, and God was sad that He made people. God decided to send a flood to destroy all the creatures on the earth and to clean up the world.

God showed favor to a man named Noah. Noah was a righteous man; he followed God. God warned Noah about the flood. He told Noah to make an ark to save himself, his family, and all kinds of animals.

God told Noah exactly how to make the ark. God said that He would make a covenant, or agreement, with Noah and his family. Noah did everything that God commanded.

When the ark was finished, God told Noah to go inside. Noah went inside with his family and the animals, and God shut the door. Rain came for 40 days and 40 nights, and water rose from the ground. Noah was 600 years old when this happened.

Now the ark floated on top of the water. The water rose higher and higher until all of the

mountains were covered. Every living thing on the earth died; only Noah and those with him survived.

Finally, the rain stopped and the water started to go down. Noah waited inside the ark until the ground was dry. Then God told Noah to bring all the people and animals out of the ark. So Noah did. Noah built an altar and gave an offering to the Lord. God promised Noah that He would never completely flood the earth again.

God told Noah and his family to spread out over the earth and fill it with people. God placed a rainbow in the sky as a special sign of the covenant He made with Noah. Every time Noah and his family saw the rainbow, they would know God remembered the promise He made with all the living creatures on earth.

Christ Connection: God rescued Noah and his family from the flood. The story of Noah points ahead to a greater rescue. God's Son, Jesus—the only perfectly righteous One—came to take the punishment for our sin. By trusting in Him, we are saved from the punishment our sin deserves.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about a time that they did what was right, even when everyone else was choosing to disobey.

OPTION 1: Follow instructions

Supplies: lined paper, pencils

Give each kid a pencil and a piece of paper. Explain that this activity will require kids to follow instructions. You will read each instruction twice, but not a third time, so they should listen carefully. Read the first instruction, pause, and then repeat the instruction. Read through all of the instructions. Then let kids compare their papers.

1. Write your first name at the bottom left corner.
2. Write the numbers 1 through 9 on the first line of the paper. Leave a space between each number.
3. Circle the number 4.
4. Fold your paper in half the long way. Then open your paper and fold it in half the short way.
5. Open your paper and use the tip of your pencil to poke a hole where the two folds meet.
6. Draw a star around the hole you made in your paper.
7. Write the first letter of your last name in the top right corner of the paper.
8. On the last line of the paper, write the word finished near the right edge.

- Did you follow the instructions exactly?

OPTION 2: Float a boat

Supplies: shallow tub of water, clay or play dough, aluminum foil, craft sticks, towels (for cleanup)

Provide play dough, foil, and craft sticks for kids to construct their own boats. Discuss what features might help a boat float. Allow kids to predict whether or not a boat will float, and then test each boat in the shallow water.

- What would you need to build a boat that would hold people?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

God created the world and people. The first two people were Adam and Eve, but they chose to sin against God. God promised a Rescuer would come from Eve's family. So when Adam and Eve had children, they probably wondered if any of them was the Rescuer. But none was. As their family grew, sin spread. Today's Bible story describes a family who lived ten generations after Adam. By this time, people had stopped following God.

Read Genesis 6:11-22; 7:6-10; 8:1-4,15-19; 9:8-17.

- What does this story teach us about God?

God is our Creator and King. God made everything, and He is in charge of everything. When God saw that people everywhere were sinning, He was very sad and decided to send a great flood. God punished sin but chose to rescue Noah and his family.

- Why did God rescue Noah and his family?

The Bible says that Noah was a righteous man. This doesn't mean that Noah never sinned; rather, Noah followed God. He had faith. Noah believed that God is who He says He is and that He would do what He says He will do. So when God warned Noah about the flood and told Noah to build an ark, Noah obeyed God. God did not rescue Noah because he deserved to be rescued. Noah deserved punishment like everyone else, but **God showed mercy to Noah and his family.**

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

God rescued Noah and his family from the flood. The story of Noah points ahead to a greater rescue. God's Son, Jesus—the only perfectly righteous One—came to take the punishment for our sin. By trusting in Him, we are saved from the punishment our sin deserves.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Supplies: map of London (optional)

We can share the gospel wherever we live. Missionaries often share the gospel in places that are not their home, like the Rigney family living in London, England. The Rigneys spent time getting to know their new city. You can't see them on a map, but millions of people live in London. We can support the Rigney family by praying they will meet and share the gospel with many people. Pray that the people of London will trust in Jesus.

PRAY

God, thank You for sending a Rescuer! We deserve to die for our sin, but You loved us and sent Your Son. Help us to trust You and obey You, for Your glory. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

God made everything, and He is in charge of everything. God is all-powerful, knows everything, and is everywhere all the time. Nothing that happens surprises Him.

- How did God provide the payment for sin?
- Why does God have to punish sin? How is God both loving and just?

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Genesis 6. Ask kids to tell you what division of the Bible Genesis is in. (*Law*) Remind boys and girls that the books following Genesis (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) contain commands God gave His people. Explain that the story of Noah is found in chapters 6–9 of Genesis.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 6:5-6. Call for another volunteer to read verses 7-8. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. Why do you think God punished sin?

Guide kids to recognize that God's anger toward sin and punishment of sin is a right reaction to evil and wickedness. To sin is to turn against God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 5:4.)

2. What was God's greater plan to deal with sin?

Lead boys and girls to recall that God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for our sin. By trusting in Him, we are saved from the punishment our sin deserves. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 3:17.)

3. Where do you see God's mercy in this Bible story? Where do you see God's mercy today?

Explain that the word mercy means "kindness or forgiveness when punishment is deserved." Point out that Noah trusted God, but he was still a sinner who needed mercy. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:8-9.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: chalkboard or dry erase board, chalk or marker

Lead the kids to open their Bibles and read Colossians 1:16-17 together. Then write out the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board, making some changes by adding extra words, substituting alternate words, or removing words. Challenge kids to raise their hands if they see a mistake. Take turns correcting one mistake at a time until the key passage is written correctly. Then lead everyone to read it aloud together. If time allows, play another round.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for His grace and provision. Pray that boys and girls would believe God and His Word. Ask God to give kids courage to tell others about Jesus, the Rescuer.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Easy tie-dye art

Supplies: unscented baby wipes, rubber bands, washable markers, paper towels, scissors (optional)

Demonstrate the following steps and then assist kids in making tie-dye art:

1. Pinch the center of a baby wipe and twist the wipe into a short rope.
2. Carefully wrap a few rubber bands around different sections of the wipe.
3. Use a marker to color the sections of the wipe. Color different sections different colors.
4. Remove the rubber bands (you can snip them off with scissors) and gently unfold the wipe. Lay the wipe on a paper towel until it is dry.

Consider displaying kids' art by using clothespins to fasten it to a string across a wall. As kids work, remind them that after the flood, God put a rainbow in the sky as a sign that God would remember His covenant with all living creatures: water will never again become a flood to destroy every creature. (Gen. 9:14-15)

Explain that God punished sin but chose to rescue Noah and his family. Only the people in the ark were saved. The Bible says that one day, God will judge and punish sin. (2 Cor. 5:10) In our sin, we have turned away from God, but God loves us! He provided a Rescuer—Jesus—to come to earth and take the punishment we deserve for our sin. Everyone who is “in Christ”—those who have trusted in Jesus as Lord—will be saved.



Unit 1, Session 5

The Tower of Babel

Genesis 11

Story Point: People tried to build a tower to glorify themselves instead of God.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 11:1-9, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

After the great flood, God told Noah and his sons to grow their families and fill the earth. Noah's sons and their wives had children. Their families grew, and the people started to travel through the land. At this time, everyone in the world spoke the same language.

One day, the people traveled through a valley. They liked it there, and they decided to stay.

"We don't want to be scattered all over the earth," they said. "Let's build a city and a tower so big that it touches the sky. The tower will make us famous!"

The people were not doing what God had told them to do. They wanted to be as important as God. They were saying "Look how great we are," instead of "Look how great God is." They wanted glory for themselves instead of God. But God is greater than anyone. God created people to give glory to Him alone.

The people made bricks out of clay and baked them in the fire to make stones. Then they used the stones to start building the tower.

God came down to look at the tower. God

said, "If they are doing this, they will keep thinking up more bad things to do." So God mixed up the people's words. Instead of everyone speaking the same language, everyone spoke different languages.

When people tried to make plans, they could not understand what other people were saying. If one workman said, "Hand me another brick," nobody else knew what he wanted.

The people had to stop building the city. Families had to move away from each other to live with people they could understand. God made it so the people did just what He had told them to do after the flood. They were scattered all over the world. The city with the unfinished tower was called Babel (BAY buhl).

Christ Connection: People chose to give glory to themselves instead of God. They ignored God's plan, so God confused their language and scattered the people all over the earth. One day, Jesus will gather together all of God's people—people from every tribe and people who speak all kinds of languages—and they will worship Him together. (Revelation 7:9-10)



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about times this week they had to follow instructions. Did they follow them? Why or why not? What makes following instructions difficult?

OPTION 1: Opposites challenge

Supplies: bell or buzzer

Form two teams. Invite a player from each team to stand at the front of the room. Position a bell or buzzer between the players. Explain that you will announce a word, and the player who can name its opposite must hit the bell.

Call on the first player who hits the bell to give an answer. If she answers correctly, award her team one point. If incorrect, allow the other player to answer and earn a point for his team.

Invite two new players to compete in each additional round. Begin with simple opposites and then increase the challenge in subsequent rounds. Use the pairs suggested or provide your own: hot/cold, wet/dry, on/off, up/down, light/dark, long/short, back/front, under/over, full/empty, top/bottom, low/high, apart/together.

- Have you ever done the opposite of what a parent or teacher told you to do? Did you face any consequences?

OPTION 2: Construction challenge

Supplies: flexible drinking straws, play dough, scissors

Before the session, cut drinking straws into 2- or 3-inch lengths. Form groups of three or four kids. Give each group a lump of play dough and a bundle of straws.

Challenge them to work together to construct a tower. Kids can form small balls of play dough and use them to connect the straws. After several minutes, compare towers to see which is the tallest or which can hold the most weight.

- How tall is the tallest tower in the world? (*more than 2,000 feet*)



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

After Adam and Eve sinned, sin spread throughout the earth. But God had a plan to rescue sinners, and that is the plan we see unfolding in the rest of the Bible. Last time we saw how God punished sin but chose to rescue Noah and his family. Today's Bible story tells us what happened after Noah's family left the ark.

Read Genesis 11:1-9.

- Why did people build a tall tower?

The people said, "Let's build a city and a tall tower. And let's make a name for ourselves so we won't be scattered all over the earth." In other words, the people did the opposite of what God had commanded them to do. Remember, God created everything to bring Him glory. But these people didn't want to bring glory to God. **They wanted to bring glory to themselves.**

- How did God keep the people from stopping His plan?

God knew that the people would continue to disobey Him and build the tower unless He acted. So **He confused their language.** The people stopped building the tower because they couldn't understand one another. People had to move away to be with other people who spoke their language, so the people scattered all over the earth—just as God had commanded.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

People chose to give glory to themselves instead of God. They ignored God's plan, so God confused their language and scattered the people all over the earth. One day, Jesus will gather together all of God's people—people from every tribe and people who speak all kinds of languages—and they will worship Him together. (Revelation 7:9-10)



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Having so many languages in the world makes sharing the gospel a little more challenging. The Rigneys are a missionary family living in London, England, where more than 300 languages are spoken. The Rigneys cannot learn all the languages spoken there, so they partner with other believers in the city who speak different languages.

PRAY

Lord God, we confess that like the people who built the tower of Babel, we desire glory for ourselves. We seek our own fame, though You alone deserve all honor and glory. Forgive us, and show us the joy that comes in living for You instead of for ourselves. We love You! Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

We need to understand who God is to make sense of the Bible and what God has been doing all along. God made us, and He rules over everything.

- Is it ever OK to be proud of something you've accomplished?
- What are some ways we try to glorify ourselves today, instead of giving God the glory?

Distribute Bibles. Ask kids if they remember which book of the Bible the tower of Babel story is found in. (*Genesis*) Ask if they know which chapter the story is in. (*Genesis 11*)

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 9:15-17. Call for another volunteer to read Genesis 11:2-4. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. Why did God stop the people from building the tower?

Lead kids to recognize that God was not threatened by the people, but He cared about them and confused their language to slow their evil actions. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Hebrews 12:7,11.)

2. What are some ways people today might try to make a name for themselves? Is there anything wrong with wanting to be famous?

Prompt kids to consider athletes, musicians, and so on. Point out that pride is seeking to put yourself before others or before God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Jeremiah 9:23.)

3. Why does God deserve all glory and honor?

Guide kids to identify God as our Creator and King. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Chronicles 29:11.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: paper, marker, scissors

Before the session, write the key passage on a piece of paper, a few words per line. Cut the paper into strips. If your group is large, make multiple sets. Guide kids to find Colossians 1:16-17 in their Bibles. Lead the kids to read it together. Provide the prepared key passage strips and challenge boys and girls to arrange the strips in order.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, asking for the Holy Spirit to empower boys and girls to act humbly and to seek God's glory. Thank Jesus for showing true humility by coming to earth and dying on the cross.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Practice humility

Supplies: strips of paper, marker or pen

Write the following scenarios on four separate strips of paper: 1. *You score the winning goal in the soccer game;* 2. *You get a third place ribbon in the school science fair;* 3. *You borrowed your sister's toy and accidentally broke it;* 4. *Your grandfather offers donuts to you and your sister. One donut is plain. The other has frosting and sprinkles.*

Form up to four groups of kids. Assign each group a scenario. Explain that they will have a few minutes to read the scenario and decide as a group how to act it out as a short skit. Kids should decide how to respond to the scenario in a humble way.

Remind kids that humility is the opposite of pride. *Humility* is thinking of others before thinking of yourself. After each group performs its skit, discuss how the group demonstrated humility. Talk about possible reactions to the scenario that would be prideful.

Soccer: Politely wins and gives glory to God vs. Brags about how awesome he or she is.

Science: Gladly accepts the ribbon for his or her hard work vs. Makes excuses or gets angry about not winning.

Toy: Says "I'm sorry" and asks for forgiveness vs. Denies wrongdoing or blames someone else.

Donut: Wants the best for others vs. wants the best for him- or herself.



Unit 1, Session 6

The Suffering of Job

Job

Story Point: Job learned that God is good, even in suffering.

Open your Bible and read aloud Job 1–2; 42; or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

Job (JOHB) was a wealthy man who loved God and wanted to follow God’s plan. One day, Satan came to God. God told Satan about Job. “No one else on earth is like him,” God said. Job was an honest man. He feared God and turned away from evil.

“**Job only follows You because You protect him and bless him,”** Satan said. “**If You take away everything Job has, he will not follow You anymore.**”

So God gave Satan permission to take away everything Job had, but Satan was not allowed to hurt Job. Satan sent men to steal Job’s animals. He caused Job’s children to die. **In one day, Job lost everything. Job was sad, but he still followed God.**

Satan came to God. He said, “**If Job gets sick, he will not praise You anymore.**” So God gave Satan permission to make Job sick, but **God did not let Satan kill Job.** Job became ill with sores all over his skin. Job’s wife asked, “Do you still have faith in God? Curse God and die!”

“That’s foolish,” Job said. “How can we accept good things from God and not trouble?”

Then **three of Job’s friends visited Job.** They said, “**Job, you must obey God. If you do what**

is right and stop sinning, God will give you back everything you lost.”

“**I haven’t done anything wrong,”** Job said. **Job** wished he had someone to talk to God for him. He wanted answers; he **did not understand why he was suffering.**

Finally, a man named Elihu (ih LIGH hyoo) came to Job. “**God is greater than man,**” Elihu explained. “**God always does what is right.**” Then God spoke to Job through a whirlwind. “Were you there when I made the earth?” God asked. “Are you the one who told the sea where to stop? Did you decide when the sun would rise or when snow would fall? Did you put the stars in the sky? Can you tell the eagles when to fly in the sky?”

Job could not completely understand God’s plans, but he could trust God. God is all-powerful, sovereign, and good. **Job was sorry for doubting God. God gave back to Job everything he had lost—and so much more.**

Christ Connection: Job learned that God is all-powerful, sovereign, and good. When we face suffering, we can hope in God. God sent Jesus, the only truly innocent One, to suffer and die so that everyone who trusts in Him can have forgiveness and eternal life.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to describe what helps them feel better when they are having a bad day.

OPTION 1: Speedy messengers

Supplies: index cards, paper, pencils

Write these phrases on separate index cards. Make two sets:

- *Fire came down and burned up the sheep. I alone have escaped to tell you!*
- *The camels were taken away, and the servants were killed. I alone have escaped to tell you!*
- *A strong wind knocked down the house, and your children have died. I alone have escaped to tell you!*

Form two teams. Guide teams to sit in rows. Give the last player in each row paper and a pencil. Give the first player in each row a card with a message. The first player will read the card and whisper the phrase to the next person. Players will whisper the phrase until it reaches the last player. Instruct the last player to write down what she heard. When both teams finish, compare their results and reveal the original message. As time allows, mix up the order of players and play again.

- How would you react if you got messages like these?

OPTION 2: Have you ever?

Supplies: sheets of paper, tape, markers

Before the session, list seven activities on separate sheets of paper. (Examples: *ridden a train, been to another country*, and so on.) On three other sheets, write *told the sun where to rise, walked in the depths of the oceans*, and *told lightning bolts where to go*. Tape the papers in a row on a wall or table. Invite kids to write their names under activities they've done. When kids finish, point out any blank papers.

- Could you command the sun? Who has?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

We've seen how God created the world and everything in it, and we learned that everything He made was created for His glory. But when sin entered the world, people's sin separated them from God. Sin spread, but God had a plan all along to rescue sinners. Today we will hear a story that happened around the same time God scattered the people at the tower of Babel and their families began to grow.

Read Job 1–2; 42.

- What did Job learn from his suffering?

Job was a sinner, but that wasn't why he was suffering. Suffering is pain that is caused by injury, illness, or loss. Sometimes it's physical pain, and sometimes it's mental or emotional pain. And one thing we know about pain is that it hurts! God spoke to Job through a whirlwind and **Job learned that God is good, even in suffering.**

- What should we remember when we face suffering?

Sometimes, like Job, we can forget that **God is always in control.** Even when bad things happen, God is in control. His ways are greater than our ways and we don't always understand what happens, but God loves us and we can trust Him because of who He is.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Job learned that God is all-powerful, sovereign, and good. When we face suffering, we can hope in God. God sent Jesus, the only truly innocent One, to suffer and die so that everyone who trusts in Him can have forgiveness and eternal life.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Being a missionary isn't easy. When missionaries—like the Rigney family—move to a new country, they often leave behind things that are very important to them. Missionaries may have to leave a favorite pet or move far away from family. Let's pray for the Rigneys—and other missionary families—as they adjust to a place that is new and unfamiliar. Pray that God gives them new friends and that London, England, feels more and more like their home.

PRAY

Lord God, we admit that we don't completely understand why bad things happen. Help us to trust that You are good, even in suffering. Lead us to show Your love to people who are suffering. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Who is God? God is our Creator and King.

Everything was created through God the Son. He has always existed, and He holds everything together. Even when we don't understand why things happen, we can hope in God. He is good, and this is His world.

- Why do you think God allows bad things to happen?
- Can you think of a time God used something difficult to bring about something good?

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find the Book of Job. Suggest they use the table of content in their Bibles if they need help finding it. Ask kids what book comes after Job. (*Psalms*)

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Job 42:16-17. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What did Job learn about God and about himself?

Lead kids to recall that Job learned that God is good, even in suffering. Guide them to see how Job realized he cannot completely understand God or His ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isaiah 55:8-9.)

2. How is God near to us in our suffering?

Lead kids to recognize God's presence through His Word, through the Holy Spirit, and through fellow believers who offer comfort and encouragement. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 139:7-10.)

3. How have friends encouraged you in a hard time? How can you encourage others?

Invite kids to share their experiences. Remind them that God is present and working for our good and joy, even in times of trouble. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: paper; markers; scissors; ziplock bags, 1 per kid

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Colossians 1:16-17 and copy the key passage onto a piece of paper. Provide scissors for kids to cut their paper into about 20 pieces. Gather each set of pieces in a separate ziplock bag. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Give each kid a bag of puzzle pieces. Prompt kids to put the puzzles together. When they finish, guide them to read the key passage aloud together.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for loving us and caring for us in our suffering. Pray that our suffering would bring us closer to Him. Thank Him for sending Jesus, who suffered on the cross for our sin so that we can have life with Him forever.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Cards of encouragement

Supplies: construction paper, envelopes, markers, crayons, Bibles

Provide supplies for boys and girls to create notes or cards of encouragement for friends, family members, or neighbors who are suffering.

Consider displaying a list of verses for kids to find in the Bible and copy onto their cards: *Psalm 9:9; Psalm 23:4; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 27:13-14; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 55:22.*

Explain that when a person is suffering, it can be hard for that person to believe the truth about God. We saw that Job learned that God is good, even in suffering. We can encourage people who are suffering and pray that God would bring them comfort and peace.

Distribute envelopes and encourage kids to deliver their cards this week. If kids do not know someone who is suffering, pray that God would put someone in their path whom they could comfort with God's love.



Unit 2, Session 1

God's Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12; 15; 17

Story Point: God made a covenant to bless all the world through Abraham.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 12; 15; 17 or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

Abram lived with his wife, Sarai (SEHR igh). Abram was part of Noah's family who had spread out on the earth after the great flood. **God chose Abram and told him to move to a place he had never been. God promised Abram three things: a large family, land for his family, and blessing. This was a good promise. But Abram was sad because he didn't have any children to inherit his blessing.**

Abram obeyed God. He went with his wife and nephew to the land of Canaan. **God had a plan. He took Abram outside to remind him of His promise. "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you can," God said. "Your family will be that numerous," God promised. Abram believed God, and God was pleased. God said, "I will give this land to your descendants." Abram asked, "How can I be sure?" So God confirmed His covenant with Abram.**

God told Abram to bring five animals: a cow, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon. Abram obeyed God, and he brought all these to him, cut them in half, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut the birds in half. Then, when the sun was setting, a deep sleep came over Abram.

While Abram slept, God told him what would happen in the future. He said that Abram's family would be slaves in another country for 400 years. Then God would judge the nation and bless Abram's family. But first, Abram would live a long, peaceful life.

When it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch representing God passed between the animals. This showed that God would be responsible for keeping His promise.

Years passed, and Abram still did not have the promised son. God hadn't forgotten, though. He promised that Abraham would become the father of many nations. **God was so serious about His promise that He changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "Father of Many." He changed Sarai's name to Sarah.**

God said, "I will bless Sarah. She will have a son, and you will name him Isaac." God promised to keep His covenant through Isaac and his future family.

Christ Connection: God promised to bless all the world through Abraham. God sent Jesus from His home in heaven to be born on earth into Abraham's family. Through Jesus, all the nations of the earth are blessed because Jesus saves people from their sins.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share how many people are in their family. How many cousins do they have? Imagine a family as numerous as the stars!

OPTION 1: Secret handshakes

Invite kids to form pairs. Partners should work together to develop a secret handshake. After several minutes, invite them to demonstrate their handshake with the group. Explain that handshakes are often used to greet people, congratulate others, or show good sportsmanship. Handshakes are also used to show agreement.

- Do you always keep your part of an agreement?

OPTION 2: Counting stars

Form teams of up to five kids. For each team, position two bowls side by side on a table at one end of the room. Pour star-shaped pasta into one bowl. Give each player a small plastic spoon. Instruct teams to line up across the room from the bowls. Explain that players will compete in a relay to move the stars from the first bowl to the second.

On a player's turn, he will walk to his team's first bowl, put the spoon handle in his mouth and—without using his hands—scoop one spoonful of stars into the second bowl. Then he will return to his team, and the next player will go. After 90 seconds, call for teams to stop. Give each team its second bowl of stars and challenge them to count the stars.

- How many stars do you think are in the universe?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

After sin entered the world, sin spread. God told Noah's family to spread out, but they built a city instead. So God confused their language and scattered them. Abraham was a descendant of Noah, and God made him a promise.

Read Genesis 12:1-3; 15; 17:1-8.

- How do you think Abraham felt about moving?

When God called Abraham, He told Abraham to move away from his family and friends. God didn't even tell Abraham where he was going! **Abraham probably felt unsure**, but he just had to trust God. Let's answer our big picture question: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

- What was special about God's covenant with Abraham?

God made a covenant to bless all the world through Abraham. A *covenant* is a special promise between God and a person or group of people. God promised Abraham three things: a large family, land for his family, and blessing. **The promise did not depend on Abraham** doing something. God would keep His promise no matter what.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Abraham showed his love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. God provided a ram instead. This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so that we could have eternal life through Him.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Call out a word that identifies a group of people. Kids will then call out what country or nation those people live in. For example, “Americans.” (*America*) Other identifiers: Australians (*Australia*), Serbians (*Serbia*), Estonians (*Estonia*), Saudi Arabians (*Saudi Arabia*), Hondurans (*Honduras*), Albanians (*Albania*), Russians (*Russia*), South Asians (*Canada*) Point out that last one. Of course, many people move away from the places they are from, but many people from South Asia are moving to Canada for jobs and other opportunities. Missionary families like DJ’s tell people in Canada about Jesus.

PRAY

God, thank You for keeping Your promise to Abraham by sending Your Son, Jesus, into the world to save sinners. Through Him, we are truly blessed. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD’S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

We can trust God when we realize that He is God, and we are not. God is in control, and He loves us! We know He is faithful and always does what is right.

- How do you think God blesses the world?
- In what ways have you experienced God's blessings in your life?

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find Genesis 12. Ask kids if they remember what the word *genesis* means. ("beginning") Challenge kids to identify what type of beginning is described in today's Bible story.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 12:1-3. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. Why do you think Abraham was willing to leave his home and obey God?

Lead kids to consider that Abraham believed God's plan for his life was better than Abraham's own plan for his life. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Proverbs 19:21.)

2. Do you think it would be hard to obey God if He called you to do something you didn't completely understand? Why or why not?

Point out that our desire for comfort and control may tempt us to disobey God, but His way is always best. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 5:3.)

3. How do our actions affect our relationship with God? Can our sin cause God to stop loving us?

Prompt boys and girls to acknowledge that God saves us through grace. Salvation is a free gift, not dependent on our own works. God will never stop loving us. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Romans 8:37-39.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Lead the kids to find Galatians 3:29 in their Bibles and read the key passage together. Form two groups of kids. Lead group 1 to say a phrase of the key passage and then pause for group 2 to echo the phrase. (Example: “If you belong to Christ,” / “then you are Abraham’s seed,” / “heirs according to the promise.”) Continue until kids say the entire key passage. Then let group 2 lead, and group 1 will echo.

Encourage boys and girls to memorize the key passage.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, asking that God would give us faith like Abram. Pray that boys and girls would trust and obey Him even when they don’t know God’s whole plan for their lives.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Stained glass stars

Supplies: heavyweight paper or poster board, hot glue guns, aluminum foil, glue sticks, colored permanent markers, scissors

Prior to the session, cut large stars (approximately 4 inches wide) from heavyweight paper or poster board. Prepare one star per kid. With teacher assistance, allow kids to use a hot glue gun to make thick lines of glue across the star in various directions.

Instruct kids to wait 30 to 60 seconds for the glue lines to dry. Guide each kid to glue aluminum foil to the star with a glue stick. Kids should fold the edges of the foil around the back of the star.

Provide colored permanent markers for kids to color the areas between the glue lines. Encourage boys and girls to tape their stars to a window at home as a reminder that God made a covenant to bless all the world through Abraham.



Unit 2, Session 2

Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 22

Story Point: Abraham trusted God even when he did not understand God's plan.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 22, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

God kept His promise to give Abraham a son. Abraham and his wife Sarah were very old when their son, Isaac, was born. One day, God tested Abraham. God wanted to make sure that Abraham loved God most of all.

"Abraham," God said.

"Here I am," Abraham answered.

"Take your son Isaac to the mountain and give him to Me as a sacrifice," God said.

Abraham obeyed God. He got up early the next day and left with Isaac, two servants, and a donkey carrying supplies. They walked for three days before they got to the mountain where God wanted Abraham to make the sacrifice. Abraham asked his servants to stay with the donkey, and he and Isaac went up the mountain with the supplies for the sacrifice.

Isaac saw something was missing. "My father," he said, "where is the lamb for the offering?" Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb."

When they got to the place God had directed them, Abraham built an altar and placed the wood on top. Then he put Isaac on top of the wood. Just as Abraham was about

to sacrifice Isaac, the angel of the LORD called out, "Abraham, Abraham!"

Abraham stopped. "Here I am," he said.

The angel of the LORD said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from Me."

Abraham looked up and saw a ram trapped by its horns in the bushes. He offered to God the ram instead of Isaac. Abraham named the place, "The LORD Will Provide."

The angel of the Lord reminded Abraham that God would keep the covenant He made with Abraham. God again promised to bless Abraham, to make his family as numerous as all the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashores. God promised victory over Abraham's enemies and blessing to all the earth through Abraham's family.

Christ Connection: Abraham showed his love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. God provided a ram instead. This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so that we could have eternal life through Him.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time someone provided something they needed. How did they feel when they received what they needed?

OPTION 1: Where is it?

Supplies: quarter or other coin

Form two teams of kids and instruct them to sit on opposite sides of a table. Choose a leader for each team. Give team 1 a quarter and challenge players to pass it back and forth with their hands underneath the table. The leader of team 2 will slowly count to 10 and then say, “Hands up!”

Players on team 1 must raise their closed fists above the table. Then team 2’s leader will say, “Hands down!” Players on team 1 must slap their opened hands down on the table. Team 2 should listen closely for the sounds of the quarter hitting the table and then quietly discuss who might have it.

Team 2’s leader will begin naming players he believes do not have the quarter. They will pick up their hands when named. If the quarter appears before the last player is called, team 1 may hide it again. If team 2 finds it with the last player, they may take a turn at hiding the quarter.

- What do you do when something is missing?

OPTION 2: Take two

Announce that you are going to test the kids in two ways. The first test will be a memory test and the second test will be a physical test. Explain that you will read a list of words and will not repeat them. Read the word list slowly and then challenge kids to repeat all the words they heard: *red, cabbage, bank, rabbit, orange, spoon, church, clock, spin, music.*

Invite kids to do a wall sit. Instruct them to stand with their backs against the wall and then slide downward by moving their feet forward until their knees are bent at a 90-degree angle and their upper legs are parallel to the floor. Challenge kids to hold that position.

- What is the purpose of a test?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

God made a covenant with Abraham, and He promised to bless all the world through Abraham. God promised to give Abraham a family, even though Abraham and Sarah were old and did not have any kids. God kept His promise, and He gave Abraham a son named Isaac.

Read Genesis 22.

- Why did God test Abraham?

God tested Abraham's love for God by asking him to sacrifice his son. **Abraham showed that he really loved God**; he was willing to give up what was probably most important to him—his own son. A sacrifice usually involved killing an animal. Where was the lamb for the sacrifice? Abraham said, "God will provide."

- How did God provide for Abraham? How did He provide for us?

Abraham trusted God even when he did not understand God's plan. God saw that Abraham trusted Him, and the angel told Abraham not to hurt Isaac. **God provided a ram** to sacrifice instead. This is how God showed His love for us: **He sent His Son**, Jesus, to die on the cross so that we could have eternal life through Him.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Abraham showed his love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. God provided a ram instead. This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so that we could have eternal life through Him.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

When God called DJ's mom and dad to be missionaries, DJ's family moved to a country in South Asia. Before long, the family had to return to the United States. They now see God's plan for their family to share the gospel with South Asians is in Canada! Many people won't hear the gospel unless someone tells them. We can support missionaries through giving and prayer. God is keeping His promise to bless the whole world—through His Son, Jesus.

PRAY

Lord God, thank You for Your Word. After Abraham offered the ram in place of his son, he named that place “the LORD Will Provide.” God, You will provide for us. You have already provided for our greatest need—salvation from sin—through Your Son, Jesus. Give us power to obey Your Word and live for You. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

God promised to give Abraham a big family and then he gave him a son, Isaac. So when God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham did not understand. Abraham trusted God even when he did not understand God's plan.

- How does God provide for people?
- How has God provided in your own life?

Distribute Bibles and ask kids what book of the Bible contains the story of Abraham and Isaac. (*Genesis*) Challenge them to identify the chapter, and then instruct them to turn there. (*Genesis 22*) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 22:7-8.

Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. How did Abraham show that he had faith in God?

Guide kids to recognize that Abraham proved his faith by obeying God. True faith leads to action. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read James 2:21-22.)

2. Why do you think God sometimes tests us or asks us to do hard things?

Use Abraham's story as an example to emphasize that God may test us to prove our faith. By enduring trials, our faith is made stronger. Remind boys and girls that God never tempts anyone to sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read James 1:12-13.)

3. God provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac. How did God provide a substitute for us?

Help kids express that God sent His Son to be our substitute. Jesus lived a perfect life and took the punishment we deserve for our sin so we can have forgiveness and life with God forever. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 5:21.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: marker, craft sticks

Encourage kids to find Galatians 3:29 in their Bibles. Lead them to read the key passage together. Write the words of the key passage individually or as phrases on separate craft sticks. Prepare one stick per kid. Mix up the sticks and allow each kid to draw one. Then challenge kids to hold the sticks and arrange themselves in the correct order. When kids finish, guide them to say the key passage aloud.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus as our substitute so that we could live.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Prove it

Call two or three volunteers to talk with you quietly. Ask the volunteers to suggest a special talent or skill they could demonstrate to the group. Choose one of the suggestions and explain that each volunteer should tell the class that he or she has that talent. (For example, each volunteer says, “I can say the alphabet backward.”)

Allow the group to ask the volunteers a few questions related to the skill to figure out who actually has the skill. (Examples: When did you learn this skill? How long did it take you to master this skill? Who taught you this skill?)

Invite the group to guess which of the volunteers actually has the skill. Reveal if they guessed correctly and encourage the volunteer to demonstrate his skill. Play additional rounds with new volunteers as time allows.

Ask if kids believed the volunteer really had that skill. They tested him by asking him to prove it. Point out that in the Bible story today that Abraham trusted God even when he did not understand God’s plan. God tested Abraham’s faith, and Abraham proved that he loved God by being willing to give up what was most precious to him—his only son. (Gen. 22:16) But God provided a ram as a substitute at just the right time.

This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross as our substitute so that we could have forgiveness and eternal life through Him.



Unit 2, Session 3

Isaac and Rebekah

Genesis 24

Story Point: God gave Isaac a wife to keep His covenant with Abraham.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 24, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

When Abraham was old and his son Isaac was grown, Abraham wanted to find a wife for Isaac. He said to his servant, “Go to the land of my relatives and find a wife for my son.”

The servant agreed to go. He took with him ten of Abraham’s camels and all kinds of gifts. **When he got to the land, he went to a well.** It was evening, and he knew the women from the town would soon come to the well to get water.

The servant wanted to find the right wife for Isaac, so he prayed. “God, help me find a wife for Isaac. I will ask a girl for a drink of water. If she is the one Isaac should marry, let her also give water to my camels.” When the servant looked up, he saw Rebekah. She was beautiful and had never been married. **The servant asked her for a drink of water.**

“Drink,” she said. “I will also give water to your camels.”

Abraham’s servant watched Rebekah. When the camels had enough water, the servant gave Rebekah a gold ring and two bracelets. “Whose daughter are you?” he asked. Rebekah said, “I am the daughter of Bethuel.” **The servant asked to stay at her father’s house. Then the servant**

praised God for providing a wife for Isaac.

Rebekah ran home and told her family what had happened. Rebekah’s brother Laban invited Abraham’s servant into their home. The family set a meal before the servant, but he did not want to eat. “First, let me tell you why I am here,” he said. **The servant told them about Abraham and Isaac and how God showed him that Rebekah should be Isaac’s wife.**

Rebekah’s family believed that God wanted Rebekah to be Isaac’s wife. The servant brought out gifts for Rebekah and her family. **The next day, Rebekah went with Abraham’s servant to the land of Canaan.**

In the evening, Isaac was walking in the field when he saw the camels coming. Rebekah got down from her camel and covered herself with her veil. **The servant told Isaac everything that had happened. Isaac married Rebekah and loved her.**

Christ Connection: God provided Rebekah as a wife for Isaac as part of His covenant to bless the whole world through Abraham’s family. One day, Jesus would be born into Abraham’s family as the promised Savior.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share the hardest job someone ever asked them to do. Were they able to do it?

OPTION 1: Spot it!

Supplies: small figure of a person (preferably female)

Gather kids and explain that they will play a game in which they try to quickly find a hidden person figure without letting other players know where it is. Show the figure and then choose one player to hide it in the room where it can be seen or partially seen while the rest of the players wait in the hall or a corner with eyes closed and backs to the room.

Invite the players to return and begin looking for the object. Players may only use their eyes. The first player to spot the hidden object should keep walking around, counting silently to 10, and then say, "Spot it? Got it!" and then sit down. Allow other players to find the object and do the same. If time allows, let the player who first spotted the object to hide it for another round.

- Where do you think a person could go to look for a wife?

OPTION 2: Watering relay

Supplies: 4 buckets, 2 with water; cups, 1 per kid; towels (for cleanup)

Form two teams. Instruct each team to stand in a line. Give each player a cup. Position an empty bucket at one end of a team's line and a bucket with water at the other end.

When you say go, the first player will scoop water from the bucket and pour it into the next player's cup. Players continue passing the water down the line. The last player dumps it into the empty bucket and moves to the front of the line to scoop more water to pass down the line. Allow kids to move water for a few minutes. Then compare buckets to see who moved the most water.

- How do you get water? How did people in Bible times get water?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Abraham's wife Sarah had a son named Isaac. God tested Abraham and told him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham trusted God even when he did not understand God's plan. God stopped Abraham and provided a ram to be the sacrifice instead. Our Bible story today is about Isaac's family.

Read Genesis 24.

- How did the servant go about finding Isaac's wife?

The servant prayed and asked God for help. He asked God to give him a sign so that he would know he had found the right woman for Isaac. The servant decided he would ask a girl for a drink of water. He said, "If she is the one Isaac should marry, let her also give water to my camels." Well, that is exactly what happened! The servant praised God because God had clearly answered the servant's prayer.

- How does this story show God working out His plan?

This story shows us how God was working out His plan to keep the covenant He made with Abraham. God gave Isaac a wife to keep His covenant with Abraham to bless the whole world through Abraham's family. One day, Jesus would be born into Abraham's family as the promised Savior.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

God provided Rebekah as a wife for Isaac as part of His covenant to bless the whole world through Abraham's family. One day, Jesus would be born into Abraham's family as the promised Savior.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Rebekah obeyed God's plan by leaving her home and marrying Isaac. Missionaries also obey God's plan by going! God calls people to go to people all over the world and tell them about Jesus. DJ and his mom left their home in Canada to help their friends who are Christian workers in South Asia. Let's pray for their work in sharing the gospel around the world.

PRAY

Lord God, thank You for Your Word. We see in the Bible how You showed kindness and faithfulness to Abraham, and we realize that You have shown kindness and faithfulness to us as well. Help us to trust You. You are faithful and do everything for Your glory and our good. We love You. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



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JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

When Abraham's servant met Rebekah, he praised God! God is gracious to us, and He has blessed us. God loves us, and He provides for us. We can trust Him!

- Why should you pray if God already knows everything?
- Have you ever noticed God answer a prayer in an unexpected way?

Distribute Bibles and ask kids if they know what the first five books of the Bible are called. (*Pentateuch* [PEN tuh tyk]) Explain that the word *pentateuch* means "five books."

Challenge kids to name the first five books of the Bible. (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*) Comment that these five books were written by Moses. Guide kids to find Genesis 24 in their Bibles. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 24:40.

Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. God provided a wife for Isaac. What does He provide for us?

Prompt kids to consider the many ways He provides for their needs. Highlight God's provision for their greatest need in sending Jesus to be the Savior of the world. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Philippians 4:19.)

2. Does God care about the small details of our lives?

Lead kids to realize that God created them and cares about them. He even knows the number of hairs on their heads! (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 12:7.)

3. How can knowing that God is powerful and in control help us to trust Him?

Guide kids to recall that God is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good. Emphasize that He is our loving Father who has unlimited power, so His plans always come to pass. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isaiah 14:24.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: construction paper, marker, masking tape or painter's tape

Before the session, write words and phrases of the key passage on nine sheets of paper. Mix up the pages and tape them to the floor in a 3-by-3 grid. Instruct kids to find Galatians 3:29 in their Bibles. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Guide kids to line up at the grid, and invite them to take turns jumping through the key passage in order.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for His kindness and faithfulness. Praise Him for always keeping His promises.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Bead bracelets

Supplies: pony beads, narrow ribbon or nylon cord, tape

Provide pony beads and encourage kids to choose several beads to lay out in a row. Help each kid cut a length of ribbon several inches longer than the distance around her wrist. Assist kids in tying a knot three inches from one end of the ribbon. Demonstrate how to wrap the other end of the ribbon with tape. The tape should help keep the ribbon end from fraying. Thread the beads onto the ribbon.

When a kid adds the last bead, help her measure the bracelet against her wrist. Assist in tying a knot to keep the final bead from sliding off. Instruct her to cut off the excess ribbon a few inches from the knot.

Help kids wrap their bracelets around their wrists. Tie the ends together in a bow or loose knot. You may also suggest they make a bracelet to give to a sibling or friend.

If a kid does not want to make a bracelet for himself, encourage him to create one for a family member or friend.

Remind kids that God had shown kindness to Isaac by providing a wife. God gave Isaac a wife to keep His covenant with Abraham to bless the whole world through Abraham's family. One day, Jesus would be born into Abraham's family as the promised Savior.



Unit 2, Session 4

God's Promise to Isaac

Genesis 25–26

Story Point: God's covenant with Abraham continued with Isaac's family.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 25–26, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

Abraham's son Isaac was married to a woman named Rebekah. After many years, they still did not have any children. **Isaac prayed and asked God for a child.** God blessed Isaac and answered his prayer. **Rebekah became pregnant with twins, but the two babies fought inside of her, and Rebekah was worried.**

"Why is this happening?" Rebekah asked the Lord.

The Lord told Rebekah part of His plan. God said, "Two people will come from you. They will grow up and have families who will be two separate nations. One nation will be stronger than the other, and the older child will serve the younger."

When Rebekah's babies were born, the first brother was red-looking and hairy. They named him **Esau** (EE saw).

The younger brother was born holding onto Esau's heel, and they named him Jacob.

When the boys grew up, Esau was a hunter and Jacob stayed at home. One day, **Jacob was cooking a stew when Esau came in from the field.** He was exhausted. **"Let me eat some of that," he said.**

Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." Esau did not care about his birthright, so he agreed to give it to Jacob for some bread and stew.

Some time later, there was a famine in the land. Isaac went to Gerar (geh RAHR). **The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "Live in the land I will tell you about. I will be with you and bless you. I will give all these lands to you and your descendants. I will keep the promise I made to your father Abraham."**

God said He would give Isaac a large family—as numerous as the stars—and land for his family. "All the nations of the earth will be blessed because of your family," God said. "I will do this because Abraham listened to Me and kept My commands." So Isaac settled in Gerar.

Christ Connection: God's covenant with Abraham continued to the next generation. Esau sold his birthright, giving Jacob the right to the wonderful blessings God promised to his father Abraham. Through Jacob's family, God would send the promised Savior to bring blessing and salvation to the world.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share the names of places where they have lived. If you have a map, allow kids to mark those places on the map.

OPTION 1: A bigger picture

Form two teams of kids. Invite one player from each team to stand at the front of the room. Whisper a secret phrase to both players. When you say “go,” the players should begin sketching the secret phrase. Teams may shout out guesses. The first team to identify a drawing wins the round. Choose two new players for each round of drawing.

Sample secret phrases: *a dog driving a car, a pig playing basketball, a giraffe bowling, a penguin at school, a bird making pizza*

- How much of the bigger picture did you need to see before you could figure out what was going on?

Explain that sometimes we aren’t sure how God is working out His plan because we don’t see the big picture. In today’s Bible story, Isaac wondered how God would keep His promise when everything seemed to be going wrong.

OPTION 2: Special privileges

Supplies: small basketball or paper wad, laundry basket or empty trash can, stickers

Position a laundry basket at one side of the room. Call for kids to form a single-file line about six feet away. Ask kids who are the firstborn to raise their hands (this includes only-children). Give each firstborn kid a sticker. Explain that on each turn, a player may toss the ball once. If the ball lands in the basket, the player earns one point. Then explain that anyone with a sticker may toss the ball twice on his turn. After a player takes a turn, he should give the ball to the next player and move to the back of the line. Play several minutes. Then determine the winner.

- Who had better chances of earning points? Was this game fair?

Explain that in Bible times, every firstborn son had a special honor called a birthright. This was a privilege giving the firstborn the right to a double portion of the inheritance from his father. In today’s Bible story, Isaac’s firstborn son did something surprising with his birthright.



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

We've been learning about Abraham and his family, who were descendants of Noah. We first heard how **God made a covenant to bless all the world through Abraham.**

God gave Abraham and his wife Sarah a son, Isaac. Abraham showed his love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, but God provided a ram as a substitute at just the right time. When Isaac got older, **God gave Isaac a wife to keep His covenant with Abraham.**

Read Genesis 25:19–26:6.

- Why did Esau give up his birthright?

Esau traded his birthright **because he was so hungry.** At that moment, Esau cared more about eating than about his birthright. His birthright would have been important for the rest of his life. Esau made a bad choice.

- How did God show that He was still in control?

God reaffirmed His promise with Abraham's son Isaac. Reaffirmed means that God repeated the promise. **God told Isaac the promise again** so Isaac would know it was true. God said He would grow Isaac's family and give him land to live on.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

God's covenant with Abraham continued to the next generation. Esau sold his birthright, giving Jacob the right to the wonderful blessings God promised to his father Abraham. Through Jacob's family, God would send the promised Savior to bring blessing and salvation to the world.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

God promised He would send His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins—and He did! God always keeps His promises. DJ's friends, Auntie Hellen and Uncle Donald, are telling people in South Asia this good news. Jesus cares about all people, no matter where they live or how much they own. Like Hellen and Donald, we can show people that Jesus loves and accepts them by loving and accepting them ourselves. We can also give to and pray for missionaries around the world as they share the gospel.

PRAY

Lord, we need You. We can do nothing good on our own. We praise You because You are in control. You use us—even our mistakes—to bring about the plan which brings You ultimate glory. You always keep Your promises. You are faithful and good. We love You. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

God had a plan to grow Abraham's family into a great nation. Year after year, God kept His promise. Abraham's family grew generation after generation. God is the Creator and King of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is our Creator and King too. We can trust Him.

- Why do you think God sometimes does things in ways that don't make sense to us?
- What do you know about God that helps you trust Him?

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find Genesis 25–26. Challenge kids to summarize the events from previous stories in Genesis 12; 22; 24. (*God made a covenant with Abraham, God tested Abraham, and God provided a wife for Isaac.*)

Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What might cause someone to doubt God's promises?

Guide kids to consider God's unlimited knowledge and our limited knowledge. We might doubt when we don't understand God or His plan. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Proverbs 3:5.)

2. What happens when we fail to obey God? Does our disobedience ruin God's plan?

Lead kids to recognize that God's plan does not depend on people. Even if we disobey or turn away from God, He will still accomplish His plan and keep His promises. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 2:13.)

3. How do you feel knowing that God uses imperfect and undeserving people to accomplish His plan?

Invite kids to share their thoughts. Point out God's grace in calling people to share in His mission and empowering them to obey Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Acts 1:8.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: index cards, marker

Before the session, write the words of the key passage on separate index cards. Create additional word cards using words that are not in the key passage. (Suggested additional words: *we, Isaac's, family, children, under, covenant*) Mix up the cards. Guide kids to find Galatians 3:29 in their Bibles and read the key passage together. Then distribute the key passage word cards. Challenge kids to arrange them in order, identifying and removing words that do not belong.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for giving us—through Jesus—the right to the wonderful blessings God promised to Abraham.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Blessing books

Supplies: index cards, heavyweight decorative paper, scissors, stapler, markers, Bible

Invite kids to make coupon books to bless others—parents, siblings, friends, teachers, and so forth. Provide five or more index cards for each kid. Cut heavyweight paper to fit around the cards as a cover. Staple the cover to the cards at the fold.

Encourage kids to write on the index cards something they could do to bless someone else. (Examples: Make breakfast, prepare a snack, help with laundry, help with homework, help with chores, wash the car, and so on.)

Allow kids to use markers to decorate their blessing books. Prompt them to write the key passage reference, Galatians 3:29, on the back of each coupon. As kids work, read Genesis 26:2-5 to remind kids of God's promise to Isaac.

Remind kids that through Jacob's family, God would send the promised Savior to bring blessing and salvation to the world. Emphasize that when they give someone the coupon book, they should be sure to keep the promises they made. They can tell that person how he or she can be blessed the most by trusting in Jesus.



Unit 3, Session 1

Jacob and Esau

Genesis 27–28

Story Point: Rebekah and Jacob tricked Isaac into blessing Jacob.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 27–28, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

When Isaac was old and could not see, he called for his older son Esau. “Make a meal for me,” he said. “I want to bless you before I die.” So Esau went out to hunt for food.

Rebekah made her own plan. Rebekah told her younger son Jacob, “I will make your father’s favorite meal. Take the food to your father so that he may bless you before he dies.” Jacob did what Rebekah said. **Rebekah put Esau’s clothes on Jacob and covered his hands and neck with goat hair so that Isaac would think Jacob was Esau. Then Jacob took the meal to his father.**

“Who are you, my son?” Isaac asked. “I am Esau,” Jacob said. Isaac felt Jacob’s hands. “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau,” Isaac said. Jacob brought his father food and drink, **and he ate. After the meal, Isaac kissed him and offered him the blessing.** The blessing included land, riches, and power. **Then Jacob left.**

About this time, Esau came home. When he gave food to Isaac, his father told him that he had been tricked. Jacob had been given the blessing. Esau begged his father to bless him too, but Isaac had nothing left to give. **Esau was angry, and he made a plan to kill Jacob. Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob away** to stay with relatives, and Isaac told him to find a wife.

On the way, Jacob stopped to sleep. He put a stone under his head as a pillow. **Jacob had a dream of a stairway set on the ground with its top reaching the sky. Angels were going up and down the stairs. Then God spoke to Jacob: “I am the God of your grandfather, Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. I will give you and your offspring this land.”**

He gave Jacob the same covenant He made with Abraham. God told Jacob that his family would be like the dust of the earth. They would spread out in all directions, and all the people on earth would be blessed because of his family. **God said, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.”**

Jacob woke up and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place. What an awesome place this is.” Early the next morning, as a way to remember the place where God had shared His promise, Jacob poured oil over the stone where he had slept. He renamed the place Bethel, and Jacob promised to follow God and honor Him.

Christ Connection: The promises for Abraham and Isaac also became the promises for Jacob. At Bethel, God showed that His plan was to continue the covenant through Jacob’s family and eventually a whole nation, leading to the birth of Jesus—the promised Savior.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to find a partner and share a time they were tricked by someone (or a time they tricked someone else). After both partners share, let a few kids tell their partner's story to the whole group.

OPTION 1: Who are you?

Supplies: blindfold

Ask for a volunteer who is willing to be blindfolded. Explain that the other kids will stand in a line behind the volunteer. As you silently point to a kid, he or she should say, "I am Esau, your firstborn." The volunteer will try to guess who spoke. Encourage the kids to disguise their voices to make it more fun and challenging. If the volunteer does not guess correctly, point to another kid to speak. Continue until the volunteer guesses correctly. Then choose a new volunteer. Play more rounds as time allows.

- Did you know the voices of others, or did they trick you?

OPTION 2: Blind touch

Supplies: box or bag, various items, blindfold

Place various items into a box or bag so the kids cannot see what is inside. Blindfold a volunteer and ask him to put his hand into the box or bag to feel the item. Lead him to describe to the group what the item feels like. Challenge the group to guess the item. The first kid to guess correctly gets to be blindfolded and describe the next item.

Use various classroom items or gather items that represent parts of the Bible story: a cooking pot, rock, bottle of oil, and faux fur.

- What other senses did you rely on when you could not see?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today, we're going to learn from a family found in the Book of Genesis. This family had two brothers, Jacob and Esau. These brothers worked hard, but they did not get along. They didn't have a lot in common. Esau—the older brother—liked to be in the fields and hunt. Jacob liked to take care of things at home.

Read Genesis 27–28.

- What was God's plan for Isaac's family?

God had already promised in Genesis 25:23—before Jacob was born—that **Jacob would be the next family leader**. But it appears that Rebekah and Jacob didn't trust God to keep His promise. They took matters into their own hands to make the promise come true. Rebekah and Jacob tricked Isaac into blessing Jacob.

- What promise did God make to Jacob?

When Jacob was running away from his brother, God revealed Himself to Jacob one night. **God promised to be with Jacob**, watch over him, and bless him. But Jacob still had to suffer the consequences of tricking his dad and his brother. He was away from home for many years.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

The promises for Abraham and Isaac also became the promises for Jacob. At Bethel, God showed that His plan was to continue the covenant through Jacob's family and eventually a whole nation, leading to the birth of Jesus—the promised Savior.



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

If your church supports missionaries, consider sending letters of encouragement to them. Encouraging missionaries is a great way to support them and the work they are doing all over the world. God wants people from every tongue, tribe, and nation to know and love Him.

PRAY

God, You are good. You always keep Your promises because You are faithful. God, we confess that we are not always faithful. Forgive us for turning from You and trusting in our own plans. You know what is best, and You love us. Help us to trust You with everything. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.

No matter what we do or how we mess up, God is always faithful. Even when Rebekah and Jacob didn't fully trust God, God was faithful.

- How can we know God's plan for us?
- How can we follow God's plan?

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find Genesis 27–28. Ask kids what testament the Book of Genesis is in. (*Old Testament*) Ask who wrote the Book of Genesis. (*Moses*)

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 28:12-13. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. Why do you think God said the older son would serve the younger?

Lead kids to consider that culturally, the younger brother would have served the older. God showed He has the freedom and power to work in ways that are different than our ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Romans 9:15-16.)

2. In his dream, Jacob saw a stairway going up to heaven. What are some ways people try to get to heaven?

Guide kids to identify that people often try to get to heaven by doing good deeds. Point out that we can never be good enough to get to God on our own. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 14:6.)

3. How can we be part of God's mission to bless the whole world through Jesus?

Help kids conclude that we can share Jesus with everyone—family members, friends, and even complete strangers. God has a role for each of us in His plan. We can be open to His calling and willing to obey. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 1:8-9.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: Bibles

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Genesis 28:15. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Form two groups of kids, assigning the first half of the passage to group 1 and the second half of the passage to group 2. Ask the groups to come up with motions for their assigned part of the passage. When each group is ready, invite them teach their motions to the other group. Say the entire key passage together using the motions.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, asking God to help kids remember His promises to them so they can live our lives in faithful obedience to Him.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Rock on reminders

Supplies: Bibles, poster board, fine-point permanent markers, medium or large smooth stones

Before the session, write on a piece of poster board several references about God's promises. Suggested references: *Numbers 23:19; Psalm 27:13-14; Psalm 32:8; Psalm 103:8; Romans 8:39; Psalm 145:9; Isaiah 26:3; Matthew 6:26; John 1:12; James 1:17; 2 Corinthians 12:9*

Place smooth stones on the table and display the poster board. Provide Bibles and markers. Guide kids to look up the references and choose one to write on a stone. As time allows, invite volunteers to read their chosen passage from the Bible. Encourage kids to keep their stones in a place they will see them often as a reminder of God's promises.

Remind kids that after Rebekah and Jacob tricked Isaac into blessing Jacob, Jacob had to go away to escape Esau's anger. God spoke to Jacob in a dream. Then Jacob set up the stone he slept on and poured oil on it. He did this to remember the place where the promises for Abraham and Isaac also became the promises for Jacob. At Bethel, God showed that His plan was to continue the covenant through Jacob's family and eventually a whole nation, leading to the birth of Jesus—the promised Savior.



Unit 3, Session 2

Jacob and Rachel

Genesis 29–31

Story Point: Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah and Rachel.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 29–31, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

Jacob traveled from Bethel toward his uncle Laban's land. He came to a well where shepherds were watering their sheep. The shepherds were from Haran. "Do you know a man named Laban?" Jacob asked.

"Yes," they said. "Here comes his daughter Rachel with his sheep."

Rachel brought the sheep to the well, and Jacob gave them water. Jacob told Rachel that he was her relative, a son of Rebekah. Rachel ran to tell her father Laban. Laban welcomed Jacob into his house. Jacob stayed with Laban and worked for him. After about a month, Laban said, "What should I pay you for your work?"

Now Laban had two daughters: the older was named Leah, and the younger was Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will work for you seven years if you will let me marry Rachel." Laban agreed. Jacob worked for seven years, but he loved Rachel so much that seven years seemed like only a few days. Then Laban had a feast, but instead of giving Rachel to Jacob, Laban gave his older daughter, Leah.

Jacob was upset. "Why did you trick me?" he asked.

Laban said, "Around here, the older daughter must be married before the younger. I will give you Rachel too, but you must work another seven years."

So a week later, Jacob married Rachel. Then he worked for Laban seven more years.

Now Jacob had two wives, but he loved Rachel more than Leah. When God saw Leah was not loved, He gave her children. Rachel wanted children too. God heard her prayer, and in time, God gave her children too. In all, Jacob had twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. God told Jacob to go home to the land of Canaan. So Jacob gathered his family and his possessions, and he headed home.

Christ Connection: Nothing could stop God's plan for the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even though Jacob did not love Leah, God loved her and used her in His plan. Through the family of Jacob and Leah's son Judah, God would show His love for the world by sending His Son to be the Savior He promised.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share if they have any brothers, sisters, or close cousins. Do they always get along? Why or why not?

OPTION 1: My favorite things

Supplies: dry erase board or poster board, marker

Explain that God made each of us unique and different, even when it comes to things we like or dislike. Invite kids to make a chart of our favorite things. Suggest different topics. Then chart the favorites for the class. Examples: favorite dessert, favorite professional sports team, favorite color, and so on. Point out when kids' favorites are different or the same.

- What about favorite people? Can people's feelings get hurt if we have favorite people? How?

OPTION 2: Water the sheep

Supplies: masking tape or painter's tape; paper wads, different color per team; heavyweight paper or cardstock, 1 sheet per kid

Tape a circle in the middle of the playing area approximately 18 inches in diameter to represent a well. Form two or more teams, and give each player a sheet of heavyweight paper. Prepare 10 to 20 paper wad "sheep" for each team. Each team should have its own color of sheep. Guide teams to stand around the playing area. Assign each team a color, and scatter the "sheep" around the floor.

Challenge the teams to use their heavyweight paper to fan the "sheep" to the "well." After several minutes, call time. The team with the most sheep inside the circle is the winner.

- Do you take care of any pets at home? How hard would it be to care for a bunch of sheep?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Last time, we focused on two brothers, Jacob and Esau. It's easy to see they didn't get along well. Today's story continues with Jacob, but we're also going to meet two sisters. Sadly, they didn't seem to get along well either.

Read Genesis 29:1-30; 30:25-26; 31:17-18.

- Why did Laban and Jacob trick others?

After seven years of hard work, Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah and Rachel. At the end of the story, Jacob tricked Laban by leaving with his family and flocks without telling Laban. All the tricks showed times when **Laban and Jacob didn't trust God to keep His promises**. Each person was trying to accomplish God's plan on his or her own, or worse; these people were living for their own plan.

- Why is trusting God better than trusting in ourselves?

When we trust God, **we don't have to try to be in control of our lives**. We can trust that God loves us. Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful. He is in control.

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Nothing could stop God's plan for the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even though Jacob did not love Leah, God loved her and used her in His plan. Through the family of Jacob and Leah's son Judah, God would show His love for the world by sending His Son to be the Savior He promised..



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

God's plan is for people from all nations to hear the gospel. Many people live in countries that are "closed" to the gospel. That means some people there do not want others hearing or telling about Jesus. But nothing can stop God's plan! Many people from those places are moving to countries like Canada and the United States, where the gospel can be freely shared. Think about friends, neighbors, and other people in the community who might be from these countries. Consider how you can show God's love and share the gospel with them.

PRAY

Lord God, thank You for Your Word. Through the Bible, we see that You love us so much! Even when others are unloving to us, Your love never changes. Help us to share Your love with others, especially those who may feel lonely or misunderstood. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.

Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah and Rachel. Jacob did not want to marry Leah; he only wanted to marry Rachel. God had a better plan for Jacob and Leah. Leah and Jacob had a son named Judah, and God chose to continue His promise through Judah's family. Through Judah's family, God would show His love for the world by sending His Son to be the Savior He promised.

- How do you know God loves you?
- How can you show God's love to others?

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find Genesis 29–31. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 29:18. Ask kids to identify all of the people in today's Bible story. Review their relationships to one another: Laban was Jacob's uncle and the father of Leah and Rachel. Leah was older than Rachel. Jacob worked for Laban, and Jacob loved Rachel.

Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. God's plan always happens. How does knowing this help you face difficult or unexpected events in your life?

Emphasize that God is good, and He loves us. Even when life doesn't go according to our plan, it always goes according to God's plan. We can trust Him even though we don't always understand His ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isaiah 46:9-10.)

2. How much does God love you? How do you know?

Remind kids that God is our Creator and King. Lead them to recognize God's greatest display of love in sending Jesus to die the death we deserve for our sin so that we can live with Him forever. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ephesians 5:1-2.)

3. How can we show love to people who are lonely or misunderstood?

Guide kids to consider how they want to be treated. Point out that God loves us unconditionally, so we can share His love with everyone. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 4:7.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: cotton ball or small stuffed animal sheep, stopwatch or timer

Guide kids to find Genesis 28:15 in their Bibles. Read the key passage together. Instruct the kids to stand in a circle and pass around a small stuffed animal sheep or a cotton ball to represent a sheep. As each kid receives the sheep, she should say the next word in the key passage. Time how long it takes the group to get through the entire key passage. Challenge them to do it again and beat their first time.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking Jesus that He loves us all and has no favorites among His children.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Movie posters

Supplies: poster board, crayons or markers, Bibles

Form three or four groups. Give each group a half-sheet of poster board and crayons or markers. Provide Bibles and lead kids to find Genesis 29–31.

Assign each group a passage from the Bible story. Challenge them to imagine they are producing a movie about Jacob and Rachel. Kids should design a movie poster depicting their assigned scene and use pictures and words to entice people to see the movie. When groups finish, invite them to share their posters with the rest of the kids.

Suggested assignments:

- Jacob met Rachel. (Genesis 29:1-10)
- Jacob worked for seven years. (Genesis 29:15-20)
- Jacob fled from Laban. (Genesis 31:17-21)



Unit 3, Session 3

Jacob's New Name

Genesis 32–33

Story Point: God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.

Open your Bible and read aloud Genesis 32–33, or tell the story from the following Bible story script.

Jacob took his family and all his possessions, left the land of his uncle Laban, and headed home to Canaan. Going home meant that Jacob would see his brother Esau again. **Jacob was afraid that Esau would still be angry with him for stealing his blessing.** So Jacob sent messengers to tell Esau that he was coming. When the messengers came back, they told Jacob that Esau was coming to meet Jacob, and he had 400 men with him.

Jacob was very afraid! God had promised that his family would be as numerous as the stars, but how could that happen if Esau was going to kill them all? **Jacob made a plan. He divided his family into two groups. If Esau attacked one group, maybe the other group could escape. Then Jacob asked God to keep His promise. Jacob prayed, "Please rescue me from my brother Esau." Jacob sent a large gift of animals—goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys—to try to make Esau happy.** Maybe then Esau would forgive him.

That night, Jacob moved his family across the stream where they might be safer, but Jacob stayed behind. **A man appeared. (The man was actually God Himself!)** The man wrestled with Jacob all night.

Jacob refused to give up, so the man injured

Jacob's hip. "Let Me go. The sun is coming up," the man said. **But Jacob would not let Him go. "I will not let You go unless You bless me," Jacob said.**

"Your name will no longer be Jacob," said the man. "Your name will be Israel because you wrestled with God and men, and you won." The man blessed Jacob. The sun came up, and Jacob limped because of his hip.

Now Jacob looked and saw Esau and his 400 men coming to meet him. **Jacob went to meet Esau.** He bowed down seven times to show respect to his brother. **Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. He was not angry anymore.** The two brothers cried together. **Esau returned to his home. Jacob and his family traveled on to Shechem (SHEK uhm), and Jacob bought land for them to live on. He was finally home in the land God had promised him.**

Christ Connection: God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into the family of God we also receive a new name—children of God.



INTRODUCE the Story

WELCOME TIME

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share what they like about their name. If they could change their name, what would it be and why?

OPTION 1: What are you afraid of?

Supplies: large sheets of paper or dry erase board, marker

Play a picture drawing game with the kids. Ask for volunteers to draw something they are afraid of. The first person to guess correctly gets the next turn to draw. Be sure to monitor the discussion so no kid is made to feel inferior because of a particular fear.

Option: Write common fears on strips of paper for kids to pull from a bag. (Examples: *spiders, snakes, heights, storms*, and so on)

- Why are people afraid of certain things?

OPTION 2: A long journey

Supplies: list of distances to various locations

Before the session, research the distance from your town to various locations, moving farther and farther away from your town. (Examples: the next town, the closest large city or landmark, the next state, the closest country or ocean)

Line up kids on one side of the room. Challenge them to guess each distance by taking steps. Each step represents 1 mile, 10 miles, or 100 miles—whichever is most appropriate for the actual distance. Reveal the correct distance before announcing the next location.

- What is your favorite and least favorite part about traveling?



TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

God had made a covenant with Jacob's grandfather, Abraham. Then God told His promise to Jacob's father, Isaac. God had a plan for Jacob too. Even though Jacob was the younger brother, God wanted Jacob to receive the blessing for his family.

Years before, Jacob tricked his father and his brother; he stole the blessing from Esau. Then Jacob ran away to escape Esau's anger. After 20 years, God told Jacob that it was time to go home. On the way home, Jacob had another surprising encounter with God.

Read Genesis 32–33.

- How did God change Jacob?

God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people. *Jacob* meant "deceiver." His new name was *Israel*, which meant "struggles with God." God changed Jacob from the inside out. From then on, Jacob would look to God, not himself.

- What new name do we receive when we trust in Jesus?

When we trust in Jesus, God changes us from the inside out. Jesus forgives our sin and adopts us into His family. When we are adopted into the family of God, we also receive a new name—children of God!

- Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into the family of God we also receive a new name—children of God. (John 1:12).



TEACH the Story

MISSIONS MOMENT

Remind kids that we can partner with missionaries through prayer. Form groups of four to six kids. Lead groups to form a tight circle, clasping their hands behind their backs. Toss a tissue “parachute” in the air and challenge kids to keep it aloft by blowing. When the tissue falls on the floor, pause and discuss one specific way to pray for missionaries and the people to whom they minister. End the activity with prayer.

PRAY

Lord God, thank You for the work You are doing through missionaries around the world. We pray you would bless their obedience to You in taking the gospel to the nations. Soften the hearts of the people who hear the gospel so that they would receive the good news about Jesus with joy. God, thank You for always keeping Your promises. We love You. Amen.

THE GOSPEL: GOD’S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES. Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED. Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



GOD PROVIDED. Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



JESUS GIVES. Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND. Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.



APPLY the Story

Big Picture Question

Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.

From the very beginning, God promised to bless Jacob and be with him, but time and time again, Jacob tried to accomplish God's plan on his own. He never seemed to fully trust that God would keep His promise.

- How does God change you when you trust in Jesus?
- How might God use you for His glory?

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find Genesis 32–33. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 32:28. Invite kids to share what they have learned about Jacob from Genesis 25–33.

Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. How does God change us when we trust in Jesus?

Lead kids to understand that when a person trusts in Jesus, that person goes from being God's enemy to being God's child. He or she is no longer a slave to sin but is counted as righteous. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Colossians 1:21-22.)

2. How can God use difficult circumstances for our good?

Guide kids to consider how difficulties can draw us closer to God, leading us to turn away from sin and depend completely on Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.)

3. What are some ways God has blessed you? How can you be a blessing to others?

Allow kids to consider physical blessing, but ultimately point them toward the love and grace God shows us in providing Jesus as our Savior. As we live for God, He calls us to show this same love and grace to others. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Colossians 3:12-14.)



APPLY the Story

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Supplies: index cards, colored pencils or markers

Guide kids to find Genesis 28:15 in their Bibles. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Then distribute index cards and colored pencils or markers. Instruct kids to spend a couple of minutes writing out the key passage and decorating it as a bookmark. Collect all of the cards and mix them up. Give each kid a card that is not his own. Encourage kids to keep the cards somewhere they will see them often.

PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for adopting us into His family when we repent (turn away from our sin) and trust in Jesus.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Practice thankfulness

Supplies: strips of paper, pencils, envelopes

Remind kids that Jacob had been away from home for more than twenty years, and God finally brought him back to the land of Canaan. Even though Jacob's life had not been easy, he had much to be thankful for.

Prompt kids to write on strips of paper things they are thankful to God for. Instruct them to place their strips in an envelope and put the envelope in their Bible. Encourage them to read the strips when they need a reminder of all that God has done for them.