Use Week of:

Solomon Thought About Life

1

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

MAIN POINT: God gives us purpose.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 100:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is good.

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(15–20 MINUTES)
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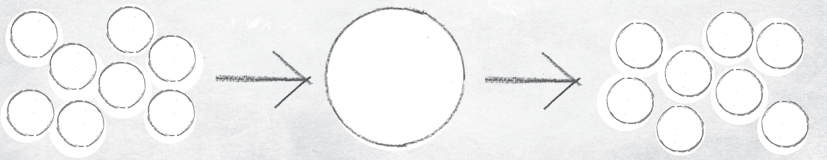

Leader BIBLE STUDY

What is the point? This doesn't make any sense! Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? Do I have purpose? Most people wrestle with these thoughts at some point; even wise King Solomon did. Thoughts like these are recorded in the Bible—in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

God made Solomon a wise king. He ruled over Israel for over 40 years. He wrote wise sayings in the Book of Proverbs and was respected by other kings and queens. Though Solomon was considered to be "wiser than anyone else in the world" (1 Kings 4:30-31), he pondered a key question: What is the meaning of life?

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The first chapter of Ecclesiastes describes the futility or vanity of life. The author declares that "everything is futile" (Eccl. 1:2) and makes observations about life: generations come and go, the sun sets and rises and sets again, the wind blows around and around, and streams flow without ceasing. (See Eccl. 1:4-7.)

But why? Apart from God, what purpose do people have? While preschoolers may not spend much time considering deep, philosophical thoughts, use Ecclesiastes to build a foundation that will last into adulthood. Point them to God as Creator. God created everything for His glory, and He gives everything a purpose through His Son.

Jesus said, "A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). Ultimately, purpose and hope is found in Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again. The reality of the gospel makes life worthwhile. It answers the foundational questions about life. In Jesus, we find purpose in this life and look forward to eternal life with Him.

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Solomon Thought About Life

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

Solomon was the king of Israel. Solomon asked God to make him wise, and God did. **God gave Solomon wisdom** so Solomon could make right choices. Solomon was a good leader, and he taught other leaders how to make right choices too.

Solomon thought about his life. He thought about how things work and wondered why. Sometimes Solomon did not know why things happened. He thought about what life would be like without God. Without God, life did not make sense.

Solomon wrote down what he thought about life, and we can read Solomon's words in the Bible. Solomon's words are in the Book of Ecclesiastes. These are some of the words King Solomon wrote.

"Meaningless! Meaningless! Without God, everything is meaningless. Nothing has meaning.

"People work very hard on the earth, but why? Do they get anything from working so hard? People are born, and then they die." Why?

"In the morning, the sun comes up. In the evening, the sun goes down. The next day, the sun comes up. Then it goes down. Over and over. And the wind blows this way and that way. The wind blows around and around. The water in the rivers flow to the ocean, but the ocean never fills up. The rivers keep flowing." Why?

"Without God, everything makes me tired. We have nothing to say, and our eyes cannot see enough. We look around, but we are not happy. Our ears cannot hear

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enough. We listen, but **we are not happy." Why? Only God makes us truly happy.**

"Everything that happens has happened before, and it will happen again. Without God, nothing on earth is new. **There is nothing new** under the sun. No one can say, 'Look! This is new!' because it is not new. It was already there, before we were even born.

"Without God, no one remembers the people who were born long ago. In the future, no one will be remembered after they die. They will be forgotten too."

Solomon thought about everything. Then he said, "God knows everything—even the secret things. Everyone should respect God and obey Him."

Christ Connection: God gives us purpose. God created everything to give glory to Himself. Jesus gives us a reason to live. Jesus came so we might live for Him. (John 10:10)

WANT TO DISCOVER GOD'S WORD? GET *MORE!*

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Solomon wrote that life does not have purpose apart from God. God's plans for us are good because He is good, and His love is eternal. (Ps. 100:5) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out *www.lifeway.com/devotionals.*

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Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Solomon Thought About Life
BIBLE PASSAGE: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
MAIN POINT: God gives us purpose.
KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 100:5
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is good.

Welcome time

- "Firm Foundation" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect offering at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Color by Number" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to use the guide to color each square the appropriate color to reveal a cross.

SAY • You colored a cross! The cross reminds us of Jesus. In our Bible story today, Solomon did some serious thinking about life. He realized that God is the only One who gives life meaning. We can know and love God because of Jesus.

Stump the leader

Tip: Assign an adult to help younger preschoolers form questions.

Option: Invite a pastor or leader for preschooolers to stump.

Challenge preschoolers to compete with their adult leaders in a game. Designate a leader to keep score. Explain to preschoolers that they will take turns coming up with questions and asking their adult leaders to answer. If the adult leader can answer the question, the adults get a point. If the adult leader cannot answer the question, the

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preschoolers the point. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

SAY • You all had many questions! Today's Bible story has many questions too. King Solomon thought about life. He had many questions about how things work and why things happen. Solomon didn't learn the answer to all his questions, but he did learn what's most important. Let's find out what he learned.

What's the purpose?

- various items
- pillowcase

Gather various items such as a pencil, toy, key, phone, glasses, toothbrush, and so forth. Place the items in a pillowcase. Invite a preschooler to pull an item from the pillowcase without looking. Encourage her to hold up the item for the group to see. Ask the group, "What is the purpose of [the item]? Explain that a thing's purpose is what it is used for or why it exists.

SAY • These things all have a purpose. What about me? What about you? Do we have a purpose? Why do we exist? We will talk about our purpose today, and especially Who gives us purpose.

Transition to Bible study

- countdown video (optional)

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to make their best thinking pose as they move to Bible study. They may scratch their head, put their hand to their chin or their finger to their lips or temple.

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Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Solomon Thought About Life
BIBLE PASSAGE: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
MAIN POINT: God gives us purpose.
KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 100:5
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is good.

Introduce the Bible story

Tell preschoolers to close their eyes and think. After a few seconds, invite preschoolers to open their eyes. Call on volunteers to share what they thought about.

SAY • In today's Bible story, King Solomon thought about life. He had a lot of questions and thought about a lot of things. Let's hear what he had to say.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- bookmark
- Bible
- "Solomon Thought About Life" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Ecclesiastes in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is the most important book of all. The Bible has God's words in it, and all God's words are true. Today's Bible story comes from Ecclesiastes.

Show the Bible story video "Solomon Thought About Life" or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • In all his thinking about life, King Solomon realized that God is the One who makes life make sense. **God gives us purpose**. God created everything to give glory to Himself. God's Son, Jesus, gives us a reason

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to live. Jesus came so we might live for Him.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. In what Book of the Bible are the words Solomon wrote as he thought about life? (*Ecclesiastes*)
2. Who makes life make sense? (*God*)
3. Who gives life meaning? (*God*)
4. Who is the only One who can make us truly happy? (*God*)
5. Does anything new ever happen? (*no*)
6. Who knows everything? (*God*)

Learn the big picture question

- Big Picture Question Poster

SAY • Listen to our big picture question and answer. ***Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is good.*** Sometimes we don't understand how or why things happen, but we can trust that our good God has a purpose for everything that He does.

Practice the key passage

- Key Passage Poster
- "Yahweh Is Good" song

Open your Bible to Psalm 100:5. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Yahweh Is Good."

SAY • Solomon said, "God knows everything—even the secret things. Everyone should respect God and obey Him" (Eccl 12:13-14). This same God who knows everything and gives us purpose is good and loves us. Our key passage tells us that God is good and His love is eternal. We can live for God because of His great love.

Transition to small groups

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Small Group ACTIVITIES

SESSION TITLE: Solomon Thought About Life
BIBLE PASSAGE: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
MAIN POINT: God gives us purpose.
KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 100:5
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is good.

Work puzzles with missing pieces

- puzzles

Set out an assortment of puzzles. Remove one piece from each puzzle. Invite the preschoolers to work the puzzles. When a preschooler points out the missing piece, give the final piece to her.

SAY • A puzzle with a missing piece does not make sense. You can't complete the picture without all the pieces. These puzzles with missing pieces remind me of someone who lives his life apart from God. **God gives us purpose.** God created everything to give glory to Himself. Jesus gives us a reason to live. Jesus came so we might live for Him. Life just does not make sense without Jesus.

Make sun art

- newspaper
- paper coffee filters, 1 per child
- red, orange, yellow, and pink markers
- spray bottle
- hair dryer (optional)

Lay a few layers of newspaper on a table. Provide a paper coffee filter for each child. Invite preschoolers to use various red, orange, pink, and yellow markers to color their filters. Guide preschoolers to spray water on their filters using a spray bottle. Place filters in a safe place to dry or enlist an adult leader to dry them with a hair dryer.

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SAY • Your sun art is beautiful! King Solomon saw that the sun comes up and the sun goes down over and over again. He wondered why. King Solomon realized that God is the reason why. God gives everything purpose, including you and me. **God gives us purpose.**

Look at how things work

- various non-functioning items
- any tools needed to take the items apart

Tip: Watch for small parts that may present a choking hazard.

Gather various non-functioning items such as a wall clock, landline phone, hand vacuum, remote control, camera, keyboard, and so forth. Take out batteries and remove any power cords. Invite preschoolers to help you take the items apart and discover how they work.

SAY • Solomon thought about how things work and wondered why. In all his thinking about life, Solomon discovered that **God gives us purpose.** God made us to show how amazing He is!

Look at books

- books
- Bible

Provide an assortment of picture books or magazines that teach about nature, human growth or senses, or history for preschoolers to browse. Place a Bible among the books. Invite preschoolers to browse through the books.

SAY • All these books teach us about the purpose of life. [*Hold up the Bible.*] Only the Bible tells us how God sent Jesus to earth so that we can live for Him. **God gives us purpose.** When we turn from our sin and find our joy in Jesus, we glorify God the way He created us to do.

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Play out daily routines

- blankets
- pillows
- toy food
- toy utensils
- books
- dress-up clothes

Invite preschoolers to play out daily routines such as waking up, eating breakfast, brushing their teeth, brushing their hair, getting dressed, eating dinner, reading a book, putting on pajamas, and going to bed. Invite preschoolers to play out the daily routines multiple times.

SAY • Solomon said people do the same things over and again. People work hard on earth. He asked, "Do they get anything from working so hard?" It is true we do the same things over and over again, but **God gives us purpose.** Each new day is a chance to live for Jesus and show the world how wonderful He is!

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Snack

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

As you serve snack, talk about the different purpose of each item used for snack. The purpose of food is to eat. The purpose of water is to drink. The purpose of a cup is to hold a drink and so forth. Remind preschoolers that **God gives us purpose,** too. God created us to give Him glory. Jesus came to rescue us from sin so that we might live for Him.

Transition

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool*

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of a way they can give glory to God. Encourage creativity but be prepared to offer suggestions. Remind preschoolers that **God gives us purpose.** Pray for the children.

SAY • God, without You, life has no meaning. You make life make sense. You are the only One who can make us truly happy. God, help us to remember that our purpose is to give You glory in everything. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

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Journal Page

Wisdom Literature

Key Passage: Psalm 100:5

Big Picture Question: Why can we trust God?
We can trust God because He is good.

Session 1: Solomon Thought About Life
Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
God gives us purpose.

Session 2: Job
Job 1–42
Job learned that God is in control.

Session 3: Praises of God's People
Psalms 1; 100; 110
People wrote songs to praise God.

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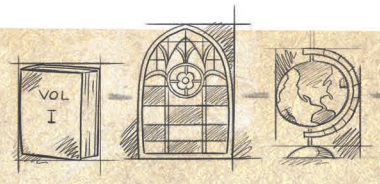
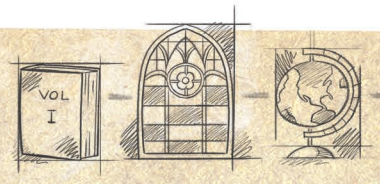


The Lord is good and his love endures forever.

Psalm 100:5



The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting.

Psalm 100:5

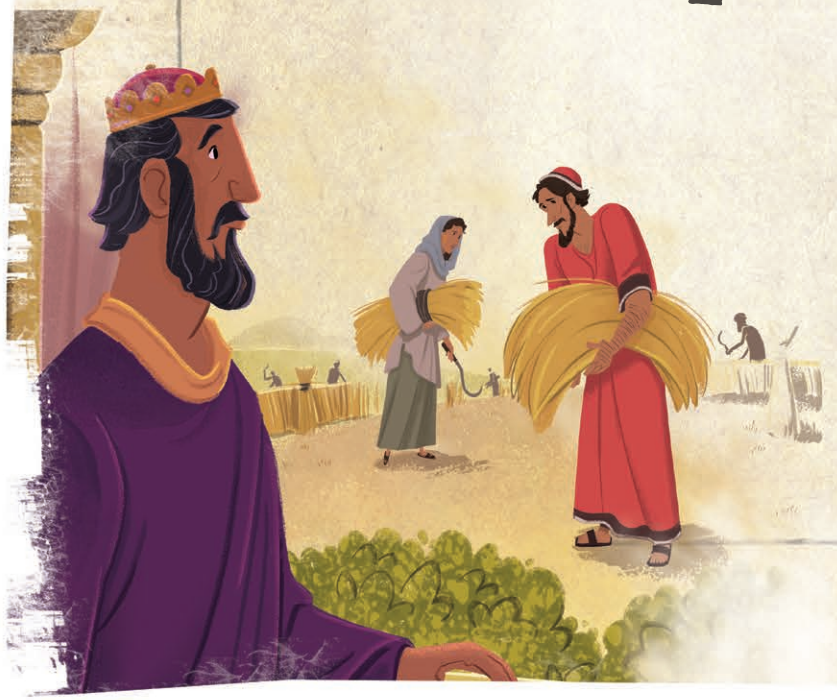
Yahweh is good, and His love is eternal.

Psalm 100:5

The Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever.

Psalm 100:5

God gives us purpose.



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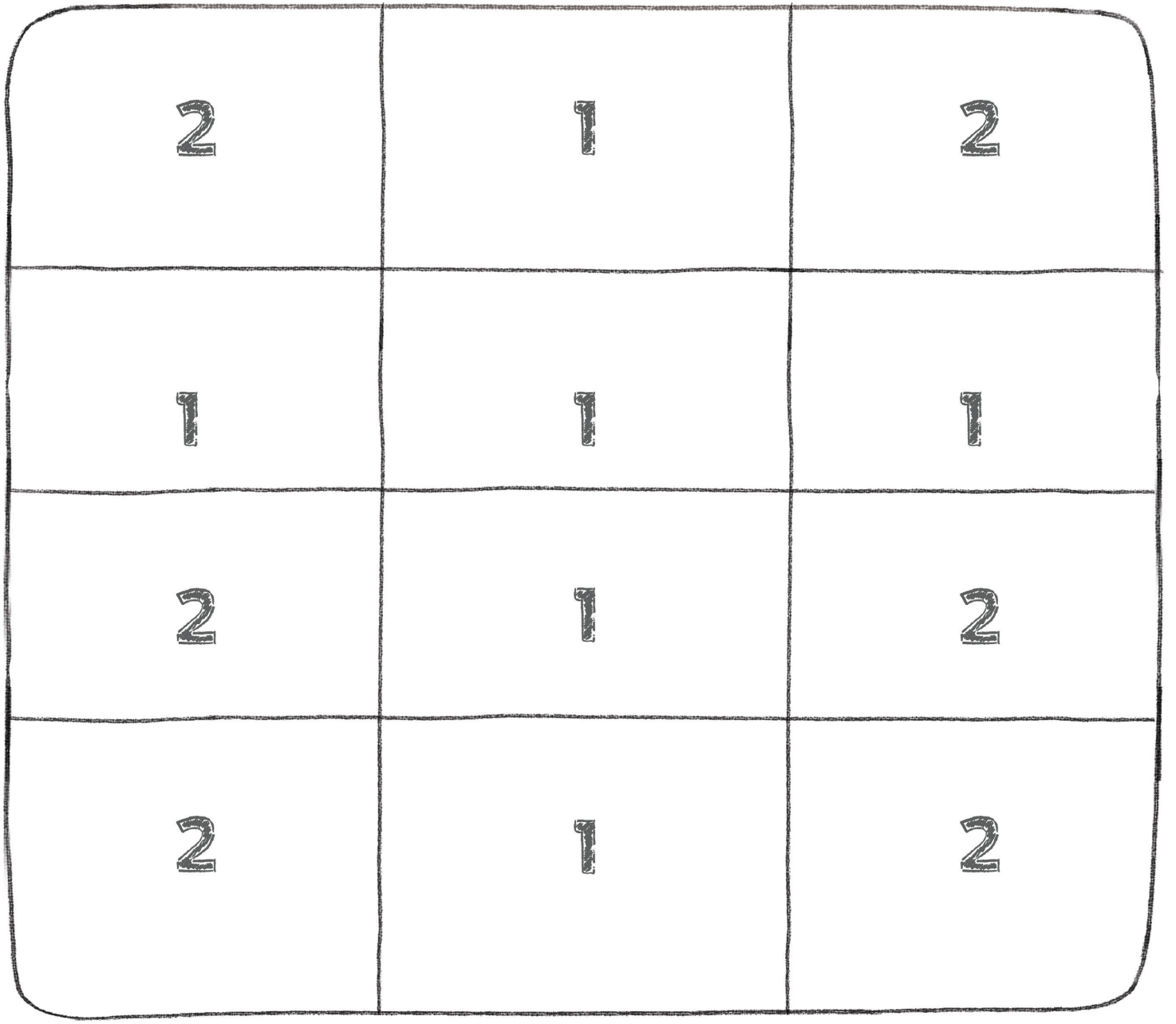
Color by Number

INSTRUCTIONS: Color the blocks with the number 1 in them yellow. Color the blocks with the number 2 in them blue.



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DOWNLOAD THE TGP FAMILY APP

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 100:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is good.

BIBLE STORY:
SOLOMON THOUGHT ABOUT LIFE

- Solomon wrote down his thoughts about life in the Book of Ecclesiastes.
- Without God, life has no meaning.
- Only God makes us truly happy.
- God gives us purpose.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What are some things we do over and over again? Why do we do those things?
- How can you live out your purpose of giving God glory?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Watch a sunset or a sunrise. Talk about how God makes the sun rise and set each day.
- Invite children to identify an item they were really excited to get but have grown tired of. Donate that item or give it away. Remind children that only God can make us truly happy.

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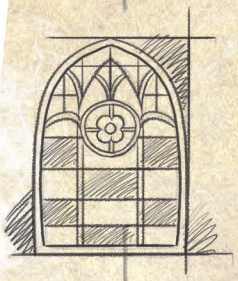
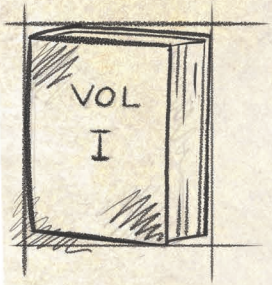
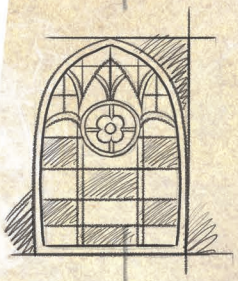




Why can we trust God?



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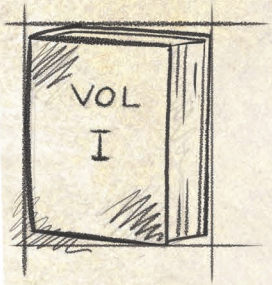

We can trust God because He is good.