



# 3rd grade

## GOD'S BIG STORY

We tend to think of the Bible as a single book. But it is actually a collection of 66 books, written by more than 40 different authors, who lived at different times over a period of 1,500+ years. The authors of the Bible came from every walk of life - priests, prophets, kings and nomads. They wrote in different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) and in multiple literary styles: songs and poems, history, letters, speeches, lists of laws and collections of wisdom.

Yet in all this diversity, each part of the Bible connects to tell a singular story. It tells of a God who loves us and who will stop at nothing to fix all that is broken within us and within the world He created. Now *that's* a pretty great story!

God has fashioned the human brain to connect to stories. Think about your children, and how they lean forward when a good story is being told, even if it's one they've heard before. Children love to *tell* stories, too, whether they're recounting something funny that happened at lunchtime or imagining some grand make-believe adventure.

Your child's perspective on the world will be impacted by the stories they consume. No doubt they'll collect stories from many sources: movies, television, books, drama, friends and family. But what if, in the mix with all those other stories, their imaginations were captured by the stories of the Bible? Think of the lessons they could learn from ...

- The faithful Noah, who built an ark and saved his family (and a lot of animals) from the flood that no one else saw coming.
- The dreamer Joseph, who was sold into slavery, but by God's direction would eventually become the second-in-command in Egypt.
- The strong-man Sampson, whose strength depended on the length of his hair, and who in the end learned to depend on God instead of his own strength.
- The loyal Ruth and Naomi, who leaned on each other for survival and found that God provided more than they ever could have fathomed.

This list could go on and on, and we haven't even broken into the New Testament and the wonderful stories of Jesus that we find there!

When we help kids discover God's story, we create in them what Reggie Joyner calls "a bigger story perspective"—the understanding that our lives are connected to something bigger that God is doing in the world. Kids begin to imagine a God who speaks to people, who protects those who are in trouble, and who asks individuals to dare great things in order to rescue others. And if God did all these things 3,000 years ago, then perhaps God wants to do the same with our lives today!

# coding your bible

## ADVANCED PREPARATION:

ī Bible and tri-lighter  
(included with this packet)

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

Children learn in school the importance of highlighting text. When information is highlighted, it lets us know it's important or has something valuable to offer. When it comes to the Bible, highlighting scripture can be a wonderful tool to help children (and adults) remember important passages, favorite verses or valuable lessons God wants us to learn.

### Step #1: Color Coding Your Bible

The following are suggestions for color-coding passages in your Bible. Look up these suggested passages and highlight each with the assigned color:

- **Blue** - Promises  
(*2 Corinthians 12:9; Isaiah 54:10*)
- **Yellow** - Commands  
(*Matthew 22:37-39; 1 John 3:17-18*)
- **Green** - Prayer/Praying  
(*Luke 11:2-4; Ephesians 3:14-19*)

To help remember what each color stands for, create a key in the front of your child's Bible writing each word (Promises, Commands and Prayer) and highlighting with the appropriate color. Feel free to create new categories or add to these suggested ones. (For instance, pink could stand for descriptions of God's love, or you could make orange the color for favorite verses.)

### Step #2: Practice Makes Perfect

Encourage your child to practice highlighting in his or her Bible over the coming weeks. A good way to do this is to use the Where to Turn in My Bible section at the back of your Hands-On Bible (pages 1273-1278). Encourage your child to look up a few verses each day, going at a pace that is comfortable for them. Perhaps set a reward for when they've found them all! Check in with them every few days to debrief with the following questions:

- What has been your favorite verse so far? Why?
- Have there been any situations where knowing God's promises or commands has been helpful to you?
- What has been the hardest part of looking up these verses? Were there any verses that you have questions about?