



TEACHER BOOK

YEAR 1 • BOOK 1

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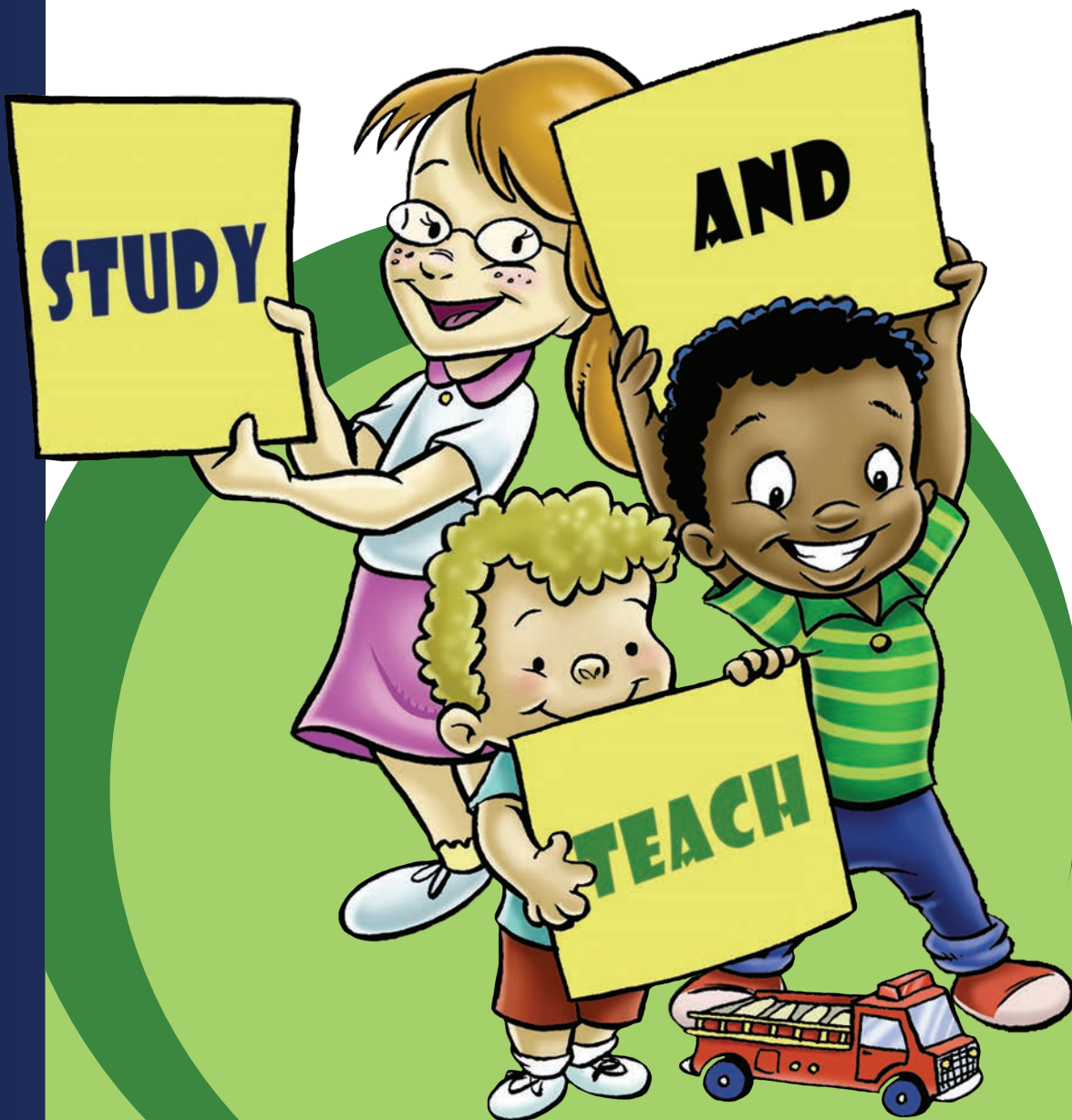
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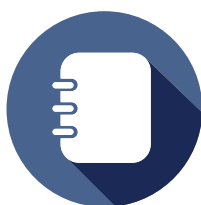
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WELCOME TO
Generations of Grace



This curriculum has been designed to deepen your own study of God's word so that you might be able to properly understand and accurately teach each lesson. It's our prayer that this curriculum would be a blessing to your ministry and home as God uses it to edify your teachers, evangelize your children, and encourage your families.



Study the Lesson

This section is designed to edify and equip teachers and to guide you through the preparation of an age appropriate Bible lesson.

- **Central Truth** – Identifies the theme and focal point of lesson.
- **Supporting Truths** – Provides appropriate objectives for mastering the central truth.
- **Spotlight on the Gospel** – Explains how each lesson connects to the gospel.
- **Lesson Commentary** – Communicates the truth of each lesson to the teacher's heart and mind.



Teach the Lesson

Use the child involvement resources to engage children from the moment they walk into the classroom until pick-up time.

- **Outlines** – Guide both teachers and children through the lesson.
- **Lesson Questions** – Foster greater interaction between teacher and child.
- **Activities** – Creative opening ideas, visual aids, and crafts to introduce, illustrate, and apply lesson.

Additional Resources

Use these additional resources to help support your lessons and to knit together the church and the home, ensuring that what is taught on Sunday matches what is learned throughout the week.

- **Coloring Book**
- **Student Journal**
- **Craft Book**
- **Family Devotional**
- **Activity Book**

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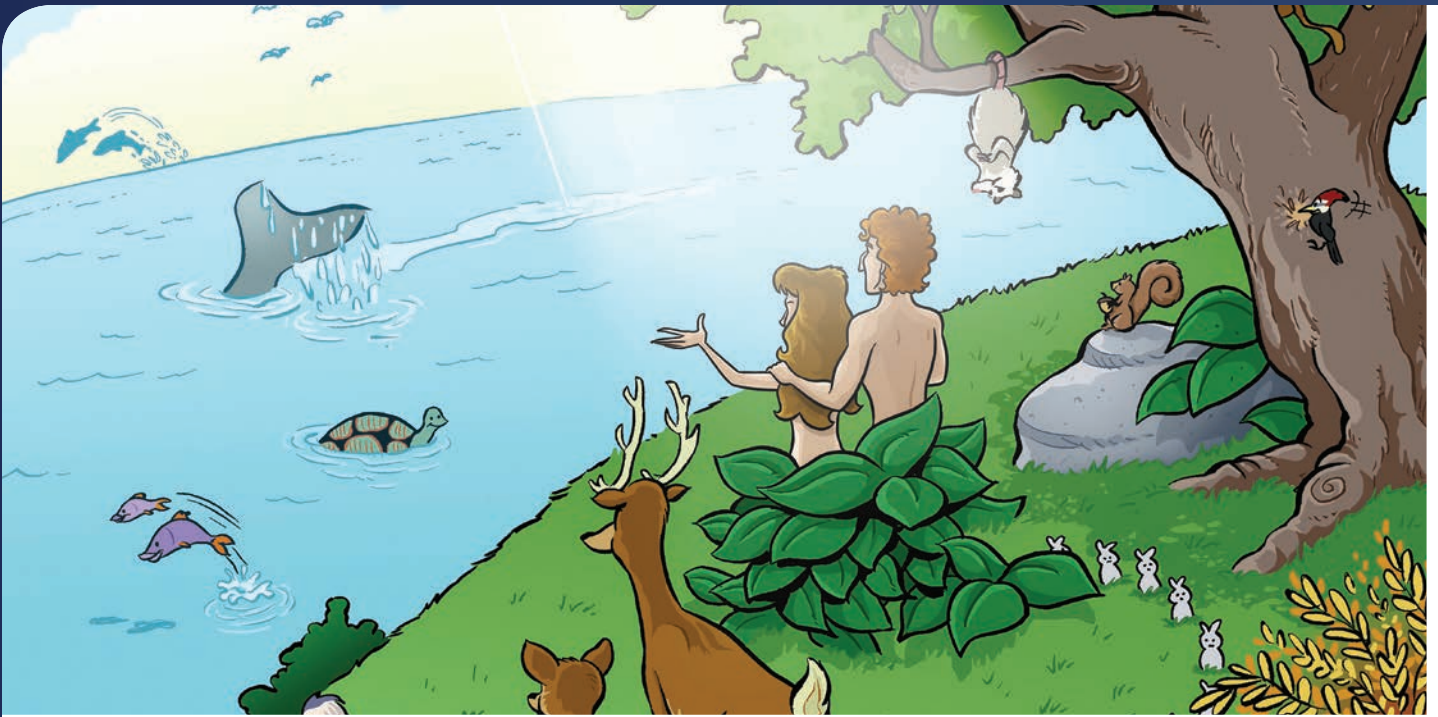
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LESSON 1

God creates the heavens and the earth

GENESIS 1:1-2:3



God created a perfect world and ruled over it.



"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1).

Supporting Truths

1. God created everything.
2. God created everything with the power of His words.
3. God's creation was very good.
4. God existed before anything was created.
5. God rules over His creation.

Objectives

1. List several things God created.
2. Tell someone in your family about the power of God.
3. Find three times Gen 1 calls creation good.
4. Discuss how God is different from everything else in creation.
5. Explain why God has the right to rule over His creation.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates the heavens and the earth • Genesis 1:1–2:3



Lesson Summary

In the beginning God created everything. From the tiniest ant to the largest elephant, God spoke everything into existence. But nobody created God. He was alive before anything was created because He has always existed. When God finished creating He said that His creation was very good. God created everything exactly as He wanted and ruled over His perfect creation.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God created a perfect world and ruled over it as King. Yet even in this perfect world man did not obey God. Man sinned against God by disobeying His command (Gen 2:17). Man has been in rebellion against the rule of God ever since. Only the salvation provided through Jesus Christ, who was the only one to perfectly obey God's commands, can restore man to God.

THIS WEEK



**God creates the heavens
and the earth**
Genesis 1:1–2:3

NEXT WEEK



**God creates man
and woman**
Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–24

IN TWO WEEKS



Man rebels against God
Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24

CREATION

FALL

Lesson Commentary

God created a perfect world and ruled over it.

Everything that exists, in both the spiritual and physical worlds, owes its existence to God (Gen 1:1). Nothing has been created apart from Him. Therefore, all things can be properly understood through the knowledge of, and a relationship with, the One who created all things.

God existed before creation (1:1–2)

In the beginning, before the creation of the heavens and the earth, there was God. This is because God always exists. Nobody created God. He is eternal, without a beginning or an end. He existed before creation and everything in creation owes its existence to Him (Col 1:16).

Genesis 1:2 indicates that the earth was empty before God created everything. This was the situation on earth before it was touched by the creative hand of God. Everything that we can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch has been created by God. Even things we can't identify with our senses—things we can't see or touch like angels—all of these things have been created by God too!

God created everything (1:3–30)

The heavens and earth and all things in them were **created** or made through the power of God's spoken word. Creation was not the result of physical processes

or universal laws. Rather, the existence of all things came as the result of God's divine command.

DAY ONE (1:3–5)

God called for light and separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. By giving names to the light and the darkness, God was declaring His right to rule over them. God is **sovereign** or in control of everything.

everywhere, all the time. He is king. To name something or someone in ancient times implied dominion or ownership (2 Kgs 23:34; 24:17). Day and night belong to the Lord (Ps 74:16).

DAY TWO (1:6–8)

God created the sky. God made the sky, or visible atmosphere, with the power of His words. God spoke and the sky appeared!

Consider the great expanse of the sky. Now consider the God who spoke it into existence. What a powerful God!

DAY THREE (1:9–13)

The water below the sky (Gen 1:9) was gathered together, and God created dry land, seas, and plants. The plants were to reproduce within categories ("kinds") that were carefully distinguished from one another. The creativity of God is also seen in the variety of His creation. Even today we are still discovering and identifying new kinds of plants and animals.

DAY FOUR (1:14–19)

God created the sun and the moon. Why are the sun and the moon called the "two great lights" in Genesis 1:16? Perhaps the words sun and moon are deliberately avoided here since in ancient times pagan nations deified them and worshiped them under those names. Moses, the author of Genesis, may have wanted his readers to understand that the lights are light-bearers to be appreciated, not gods to be worshiped. It is the one true God who made both the sun and the moon.

Verse 16 also mentions the fact that God created the stars. In reading the verse, the mention of the stars seems almost an afterthought, probably because of the emphasis on the specific functions of the sun and moon. Can you number the stars? God can. He has even given names to all of them (Ps 147:4).

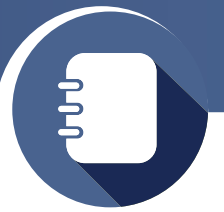
THINK ABOUT IT
Naming something shows personal ownership.



THINK ABOUT IT
We can make things with our hands, but only God can create with His words.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates the heavens and the earth • Genesis 1:1–2:3



DAY FIVE (1:20–23)

God created sea creatures and flying things (birds and flying insects). God showed gracious and loving concern to the animals by blessing them and telling them to fill the waters and the sky (Gen 1:22).

DAY SIX (1:24–30)

God created land animals and man. Verses 24 and 25 describe God's creation of animals that filled the land. Large and small animals, cattle, and creeping things (worms, creeping insects, and reptiles) were brought forth from the earth. From the enormous elephant to the crawling caterpillar we see God's power and wisdom on display in creation.

Included in the sixth day of creation is God's special creation—man and woman. Verse 26 reveals that man was created in the "image of God". Being created in the **image of God** means that God made man to be like Him. Think of a

picture or copy of something. Though man is not exactly like God, he is unlike the rest of creation because God created man with the ability to know Him and to have a relationship with Him.

God exalted man above the rest of creation and has "crowned man with glory and honor" and "made him to have dominion" or rule over the rest of His creation (Gen 1:26; Ps 8:5–8). Man was created by God (Gen 2:7) and is not a product of natural evolution.

Genesis 1:28 depicts God as man's provider. It is in this role that we first see His love. God provided for man's physical needs. He brought food (1:29; 2:9) and shelter (2:15) to man. (Note: 1:29–30 indicates that both people and animals were vegetarian before the flood.

See also 9:3.) God is also the provider of work (2:15, 19–20), giving man the job of cultivating the garden and naming and classifying the animals.

God also provided man with standards of right and wrong, telling man which trees in the garden he could eat from (2:16–17). God even provided relationships for man. Man was not left alone (2:21–23). The joys of friendship, the blessings of teamwork, marriage, and the family are all products of God's love. Finally, God provided mankind with purpose and hope. Ultimately, man's purpose is to glorify God by acting, thinking, and speaking in a way that praises God, pleases God, and accurately portrays God (2 Cor 5:9).

Everything God created was very good (1:31–2:3)

DAY SEVEN (1:31–2:3)

God saw everything He created and said that it was "very good". God made everything exactly the way He wanted it. There were no mistakes and nothing was missing. His creation was perfect. The entire universe is a testimony to the power of God. He is **omnipotent** or all powerful. God is able to do anything He desires because His power is unlimited.

Then on the seventh day, God rested. God did not need to rest (He never gets tired), but stopped creating on the seventh day to set a pattern of work and rest for man to follow. The world God made was perfect. There was nothing missing or broken. Everything was just as God wanted it to be and everything obeyed God's rule.



THINK ABOUT IT

Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, we were made to reflect God's glory as His image bearers.

THINK ABOUT IT
God gave us life so that we would glorify Him with our lives.



Lesson Outline

God created a perfect world and ruled over it.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God created everything (1:1–13).
2. God created everything by speaking (1:14–30).
3. Everything God created was very good (1:31–2:3).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God existed before creation (1:1–2).
 - In the beginning of time God spoke and created everything out of nothing (1:1).
 - The earth was formless and empty (1:2).
2. God created everything (1:3–30)
 - Day 1: God created light. He called the light “day” and the darkness “night” (1:3–5).
 - Day 2: God made an expanse in the midst of the waters. The atmosphere was created (1:6–8).
 - Day 3: God gathered the waters to let dry land appear. God caused the earth to yield plants (1:9–13).
 - Day 4: God created the sun, moon, and stars (1:14–19).
 - Day 5: God created the sea creatures and birds (1:20–23).
 - Day 6: God created land animals and man (1:24–30).
3. Everything God created was very good (1:31–2:3).
 - God saw all that He had created and said it was very good (1:31).
 - God rested on the seventh day and blessed it (2:1–3).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates the heavens and the earth • Genesis 1:1–2:3



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Who created the heavens and the earth?**
God created the heavens and the earth.
2. **How did God create the heavens and the earth?**
God created with His words.
3. **Was God's creation good or bad?**
God's creation was very good.
4. **How do we know that God is a powerful God?**
We see God's power in His creation.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **What existed "in the beginning"?**
The Bible says, "In the beginning, God." Before all creation, God existed.
2. **If God existed before the creation, where did He come from? When was God created?**
No one created God, nor did He just appear. God is eternal, without a beginning or an end.
3. **What does Genesis 1:1 say that God created?**
"God created the heavens and the earth." This means God created everything.
4. **How long did God take to complete the creation?**
He took six, 24 hour days of actual creation and one day in which He rested.
5. **Do you think that God needed six days to complete the creation?**
Why or why not? No. God is all powerful and could have created the world instantly.
6. **What did God create on each day of creation?**
Day one: light; day two: sky; day three: land, plants, and trees; day four: sun, moon and stars; day five: birds and fish; day six: animals and people.
7. **What was special about day seven?**
On day seven, God completed His creation and rested. He set it apart (made it special) and blessed it.
8. **What did God think of the work that He saw on each of the days of creation?**
On days one, three, four, and five, the Bible says that God saw that it was "good." But on day six, God saw that it was "very good."

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3-5



INTRODUCE

CIRCLE TIME

Ask children the following questions about God's creation. Using their answers, explain how all of creation shows the greatness of God.

1. What is your favorite kind of animal?
2. What is the biggest animal you can think of?
3. What is the smallest animal you can think of?
4. What is the fastest animal you think of?
5. If you could have any pet in the world what would it be?

SHOW AND TELL

Bring in various stuffed animals from home. Show each stuffed animal one at a time and tell the children how each different animal shows the greatness of God.



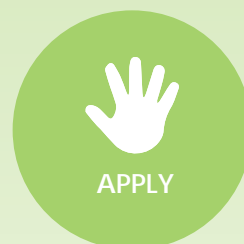
ILLUSTRATE

PICTURE CARDS

Use the following poster size picture cards produced by A Beka Book to create interest and improve retention (see www.abeka.com for more information).

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Turn the light off when you talk about the darkness of the earth. Turn the light on when you talk about God saying, "Let there be light." Let the children say, "Let there be light" as the lights are turned on. You may also turn the lights off during the "evening" and on during the "morning." Instead of using lights, you may ask children to open or close their eyes whenever "morning" or "evening" is mentioned.



APPLY

CREATION DIAL

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: White cardstock, crayons or markers, scissors, and metal fasteners (brads).

Directions: Use the "Creation Dial" craft pages in craft book as a tool to help children see the days of creation. Copy the two circles onto cardstock and cut out the circles, and give a set to each child. Tell the children to color the pictures. Help children assemble the dial by placing a metal fastener (brad) in the center of the two circles. The children can rotate the bottom circle to see what God created on each day of creation.

Creation Dial
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates the heavens and the earth • Genesis 1:1–2:3



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

THE DAYS OF CREATION

Bring in various objects that represent each day of creation. Reveal the objects one at a time to children in random order, and ask children if they know on which day of the week God created each object. Explain that in today's lesson they will learn what God created on each day of creation and how each object shows God's greatness. For example, for day one bring in a flashlight, light bulb, or laser pointer.

VERY GOOD

Using Play-Doh, ask children to create various objects (a tree, a dog, a person, etc.). After the completion of each object, ask children how their work turned out. Did their objects turn out exactly how they wanted? Explain that when God was done creating He said that His creation was "very good." Tell the children that in today's lesson they will see the greatness of God through His ability to create exactly what He wanted exactly how He wanted to create it.



ILLUSTRATE

CLOCKS

Use the hour hand on an analog clock to demonstrate that our great God created everything in six 24-hour days. Have the children watch as you rotate the hour hand once for the evening and once for the morning. Explain that this is the amount of time it took for God to create the heavens and the earth. Rotate the hour hand twice for each of the remaining days of creation.

REVEALING GOD'S CREATION

Number six paper bags 1 through 6. These bags will correspond to the days of creation. Place an item for each day of creation into the corresponding bag. As you work through the Bible lesson, choose different children to pull items out of the bags. Be ready to explain how each item represents what God made on each day of creation.



APPLY

CREATION CUBE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: White copy paper, scissors, crayons, glue.

Directions: Pass out a craft page to each child. Tell the children to color each picture of the days of creation. After coloring, tell the children to cut around the outside of the cube pattern on the solid lines. Model how to fold the cube on the dotted lines and then help children make the correct folds and glue the tabs to assemble the cube.

Creation Cube
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



Ages 9–11

**A CLOSER LOOK**

Bring to class some magnifying glasses and some things that God has created (a flower, a pine cone, some grass, a jar of water, bark from a tree, an earthworm, or some bugs). Set up different stations and have the children look at the items through the magnifying glasses. Ask the children how all these different things were created? Explain that God is the creator of the universe, and that He created everything. Tell the children that today we will look at how our world began.

BEGINNINGS

There are many ideas of how the world came into existence and how life began. Ask the children to tell you about some they have heard. List the ideas on the board. What do the children think about each one? Tell the children that in today's lesson, we will learn the truth about how life began.

**IDENTIFYING GOD'S CREATION**

Put the following items in separate bags: sand, seashells, leaves, a flower, grass, and a light bulb. Have the children close their eyes, reach in the bag, and try to identify things God made. Ask the children to describe what they feel to the rest of the class so that everyone can help identify what God created.

GOD SAID SO

Ask the children to identify some different things you can command with your voice (some examples might be certain kinds of lights, voice activated cell phones, dogs). Tell the children that God created the heavens and the earth with His words. Explain that Genesis 1 repeats the phrase "and God said" many times as it recounts the beginning of history. The universe was created simply because God said so! What a powerful God!

**DAYS OF CREATION GAME**

On a marker board write the number one. Instruct children to raise their hand if they want to name something God created on that day of creation. Do the same for the following days of creation. Try going through the days out of order once the children begin to master the days of creation.

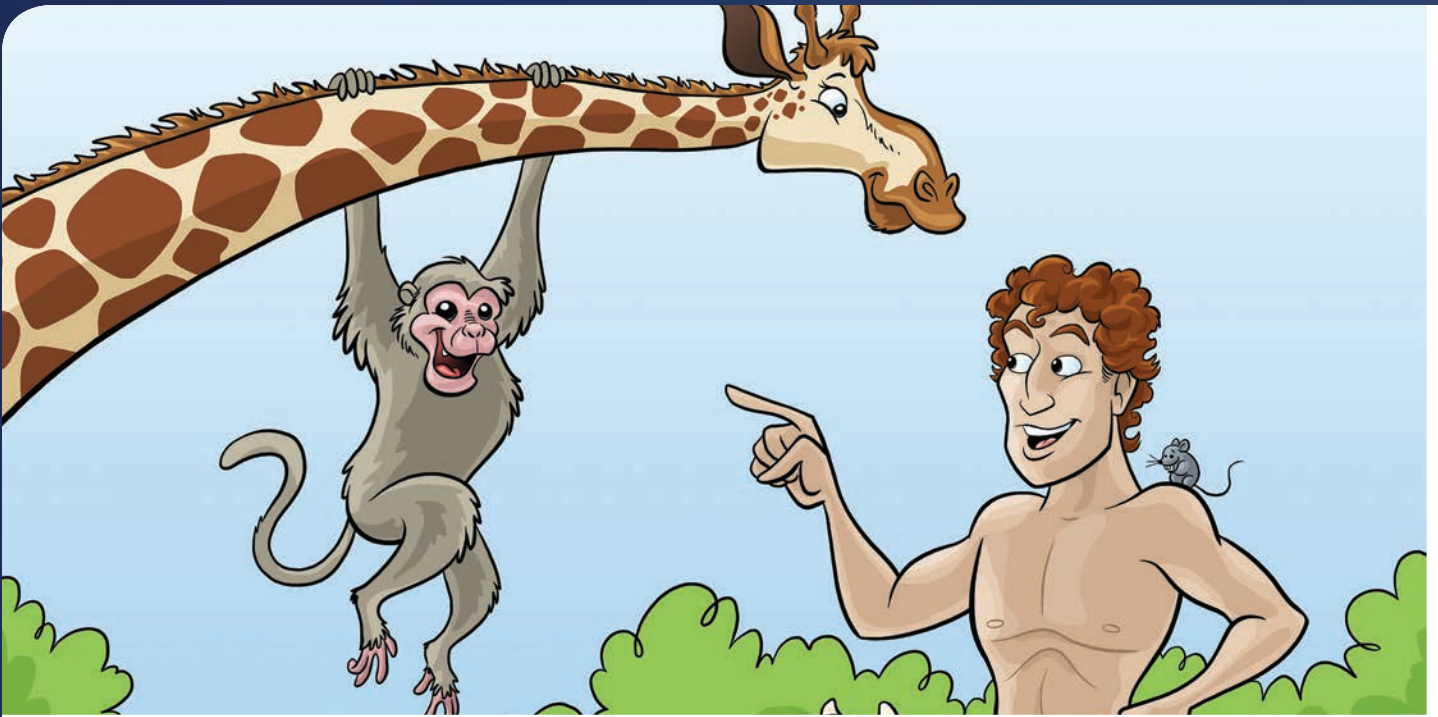




LESSON 2

God creates man and woman

GENESIS 1:26-31; 2:7-24



God created man in His own image.



“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).

Supporting Truths

1. Man is extremely different from the other creations of God.
2. Man is made to glorify God by reflecting His image.
3. God specially made man as the best of His creation.
4. Being made in God’s image, man was made to know God, rule for God, and obey God.
5. God made marriage to help man do the job God created him to do.

Objectives

1. State that only humans—no animals—are made in God’s image.
2. Define what it means to be made in God’s image.
3. Describe how God created man in a different way than the rest of creation.
4. Explain three unique purposes for man as one who reflects God’s own nature.
5. Define marriage, as well as the role of the man and the woman in marriage.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates man and woman • Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–24



Lesson Summary

God created man to be a living illustration of His glory. By divine design man was made in God's image, with the ability to know God, rule over creation for God, and obey God. Man was to display God's image in the jobs God gave him to do: (1) to cultivate the garden and (2) to obey God's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God provided man with everything he needed to do his job, including a woman as his helper.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Man was created in God's image in order to glorify and enjoy God in three ways: we are to know God personally, rule for God, and obey God. God even created marriage to help us do these things. But because of sin, we can't know, serve, or obey God as we should. Jesus is the only man who lived exactly as man was designed to live, and those who trust Jesus are made new creations in Jesus in order to live with God just as God originally intended.

LAST WEEK



**God creates the heavens
and the earth**
Genesis 1:1–2:3

THIS WEEK



**God creates man
and woman**
Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–24

NEXT WEEK



Man rebels against God
Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24

CREATION

FALL

Lesson Commentary

God created man in His own image.

Man is the high point of God's creation. In fact, God's creation of man is so important that the story is repeated twice. First, in Genesis 1, man is presented as the climax of the creation account. Only after the creation of man on day six did God declare His creation to be "very good" (1:31). Second, in Genesis 2, God's intimate involvement in the creation of man is described. God hand-made man from the dust of the ground and gave him life by breathing into his nostrils (2:7). In both stories, we see that man was uniquely created to display God's glory—he was to be an image of God for all creation to see.



THINK ABOUT IT

Both man and woman are made in God's image (Gen 1:27).

God created man as His best creation (1:26–31)

God showed man was special to Him by making him differently. God created everything else by saying,

"Let there be," but when He made man it was much more personal. God said: "Let Us make man." Not only that, but man alone of all creation is made in the image of God (1:26). Man is not God—he is distinct from God—but man is like a picture or copy that represents God.

God created man to be a living illustration of His glory. Like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, man was created to reflect the glory of God to the world. God created man in His own image so that the essence of who He is—His goodness, holiness, wisdom, and power—would be displayed for the whole creation to see through the thoughts, words, and actions of man.

Genesis 1 makes clear several specific characteristics of what it means to be made in God's image. First, God is relational, as indicated by the plural pronouns "Us" and "Our" in Genesis 1:26 and made clearer in the New Testament (Matt 28:19). Like God, man

was created to be relational. He was made to know God and to live in a relationship with the Triune God (John 17:21). This relationship between God and man becomes the theme of the Bible: How can mankind after Adam's sin have a relationship with a holy God?

Second, God is creator, and as creator, He rules over His creation as king. God also gave man power and authority to rule over creation (Gen 1:28). But man is not God, so man does not rule over creation in the same way that God does. Man is a **steward**, a person who takes care of his master's things for him. He depends upon God's power and authority. All that man needs to live he receives as a gracious gift from God (1:29). Like Adam, each of us will be held accountable to God for how well we use creation to display God's glory.

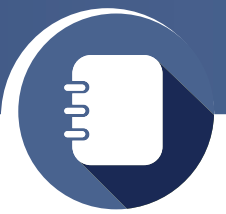
Third, God's good creation shows that God is good. Therefore, man is also to be good. Man is a moral being, created by God to understand right and wrong. God Himself is the standard of what is right and wrong, and we reflect God's character when we choose to think, speak, and act in ways that match God's standards of right and wrong. This is one way man was created to be different from the animals. Unlike animals, which are never said to be righteous or sinful, we are commanded to be holy, or separate from sin, because the LORD our God is holy (Lev 19:2). We most accurately reflect God when we most attentively obey His standards of right and wrong.

God prepared man to do the job He created him to do (2:7–24)

In Genesis 1:28 God gave man a job—he was to rule over creation. In the next chapter, God applied man's original job of ruling over creation specifically to the garden. Adam's job was to cultivate and keep the garden (2:15). As he worked, man was to demonstrate obedience to God by not eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16–17). Taking care of the garden was an important job, and God made sure that Adam had all the resources he needed to complete his job.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates man and woman • Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–24



First, God took special care in the creation of man. God fashioned man from the dust of the ground and breathed life into him. He shaped man just right to do the job He gave him.



THINK ABOUT IT

From the very beginning God has provided for all our needs.

Third, God created a helper for Adam. Adam had started to do his job, caring for the garden by first naming the animals (2:19). But man was alone, and God said that this was not good. It was at this time that God revealed His plan to make a helper for man (2:18).

God formed all the animals and birds out of the ground and brought them to the man to name them (2:19). But among all the animals and birds there was not found a helper suitable for Adam (2:20). So God used one of Adam's ribs to create a woman for Adam (2:21–22). Unlike the animals, the woman was perfect for man. She was the right match for man, having also been created in God's image (1:27). When the first man saw how good God's design was, he expressed his thankfulness in a love poem, the first words of man ever recorded (2:23).



THINK ABOUT IT

The ultimate purpose of marriage is to show God's love, not man's.

Second, God provided for all of Adam's physical needs. He gave Adam a home in the garden and provided every kind of tree for food (2:8–9).

for life, it is not marriage and does not please God. When marriage is twisted and destroyed, both man and woman are crippled in their efforts to do what God created them to do: To know Him personally, to rule over creation, and to live in obedience.

Despite all the resources God gave man to do his job, none of us, not even Adam, has perfectly fulfilled our job. Through sin, which is any thought, word, or action that turns away from God's standards of right and wrong, the image of God within us has been spoiled. Only one man, Jesus Christ, has perfectly completed the job God gave Him to do.

Jesus is the only one who has perfectly worshiped God, perfectly ruled over creation for God's glory, and remained perfectly holy in obedience to God. Only Jesus can represent us before God, substituting His perfect obedience for our disobedience. He is the second Adam (1 Cor 15:45). All who trust Him are represented by Him before God (Rom 5:19). Also, they are given His own righteous life so that they can once again live out their calling as creatures specially made in the image of God.

A special relationship between man and woman was established that day. They were united together in **marriage**—the joining together of one man and one woman for life (2:24).

This relationship was

created by God to be a picture that shows Christ's love for His bride, the church (Eph 5:25). Today, many people try to change marriage to be something different. But if it is not one man and one woman joined together by God

Lesson Outline

God created man in His own image.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God made man in His image (1:26–27).
2. God gave man a job to do (1:28; 2:15).
3. God made a woman to help the man (2:18–24).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God created man as His best creation (1:26–31).

- God did not say “Let there be man,” but “Let us make man in our image” (1:26).
- God created man in His own image (1:27).
- God created man to rule over the rest of creation (1:26, 28).
- God gave man all the plants for food (1:29).

- Now that man had been created, God said His creation was very good (1:31).

2. God prepared mankind to do the job He created him to do (2:7–24).

- God formed man out of dust and breathed life into him (2:7).
- God put man in a beautiful garden (2:8–9).
- God gave man two commands: take care of the garden and not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:15–17).
- God created woman to help man complete the mission God had given him (2:18–24).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Who made man and woman?**
God made man and woman.
2. **How are man and woman different from everything else God made?**
Only humans were created in the image of God.
3. **Who created marriage?**
God created marriage.
4. **What did God think of man and woman after He made them?**
He thought they were very good.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **How can you tell man and woman are the best of God's creation?**
Only humans were created in the image of God, and only after God made them did He see that creation was very good.
2. **What does it mean to be made in God's image?**
Being made in God's image means being made like God, kind of like a portrait shows a little bit what a person is like.
3. **Can you tell from Genesis 1 what God is like? How is man like God?**
Man is personal like God is, so man can have a relationship with God. Man rules over creation, kind of like God is the supreme ruler. Man was made to do what's right, kind of like God is perfectly good.
4. **What responsibilities did God give man and woman?**
Man and woman were supposed to be stewards, taking care of God's creation like good rulers. They were to fill and rule the earth.
5. **Did God create man in the same way He created everything else?**
No. Instead of speaking man into existence, God formed him out of dust and breathed life into him.
6. **What job did God give Adam in the garden?**
Adam was supposed to cultivate and keep the garden and obey God's commands. This shows that he is supposed to display God's image by being a steward and doing what is right.
7. **Why did God create woman?**
Like man, woman was made in God's image to glorify God. But she was supposed to do this by being a fit helper for man. Man needed a helper, and none of the animals were fit for him, because they were not in God's image.
8. **What is marriage?**
Genesis 2 shows that marriage is one man and one woman joined together by God for life. The man leads and loves his wife. The wife helps and loves her husband.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

AFTER THEIR KIND

Give each child a sticker (or picture) of a person, a bird, a fish, or land animal. Tell the children to come up front when the picture you hold up is the same kind of animal they have. Use this activity to explain that the animals were created “after their kind,” and man was created “in God’s image.” Next, ask questions such as “Did fish come from a dog?” Did a man come from a monkey?” Tell the class that in today’s lesson, they are going to see how God made a helper for Adam “according to his kind.”

MADE IN GOD’S IMAGE

Ask the children to create faces using Play-Doh. Explain that the pancake faces are made in the children’s image and represent them (both have face, eyes, nose, etc.)



ILLUSTRATE

NAMING THE ANIMALS

When Adam named the animals, he did not find a suitable helper for himself. Hold up pictures of some animals with funny or interesting names, such as an aardvark, armadillo, chameleon, hyena, llama, orangutan, ostrich, penguin, platypus, newt, or walrus. Test the children to see if they can name the animals. Conclude by noting that none of these animals was a suitable helper for Adam.

GOD MADE ME

God made Adam and Eve, and God made us too. Talk about the different parts of our bodies, and thank God for making us so special. First, ask the children to close their eyes and then open them. “Let’s thank God for eyes that can see.” Ask the children to hop, kick, and turn around with their legs. “Let’s thank God for our legs that can run and jump.” Continue with ears and arms. “Thank You, God, for creating me.”



APPLY

MADE FROM THE DUST OF THE GROUND

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Blue paper, cups, school glue, water, paint brushes, and sand

Directions: Copy craft page onto blue paper (or cardstock); give each child a copy. Have children use a glue stick to cover the inside of the man image and then help them sprinkle sand over the glue to create a dust man. For easy cleanup, line tables with butcher paper or newspaper before starting the craft.



*Made from the Dust of the Ground
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God creates man and woman • Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–24



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

“CLAYTIONARY” REVIEW

Pass out clay or Play-Doh to each child. Show a picture of an animal to one child and have him make the animal in clay/Play-Doh. Have the rest of the children guess what the animal is and which day of creation it was made on. Review with the children what God made on all six days of creation. In today’s lesson, we are going to see how God made Adam and Eve.

MADE FOR A PURPOSE

Bring in any number of different things and talk about their purposes (what they were made for). Some examples: a Frisbee, spoon, or water bottle. Show the class the first item and ask, what’s the Frisbee for? What if I tried using it as a wheel for my car? Ask the class what a spoon is used for. What if I tried using it as a shovel to dig a big hole? What’s the water bottle for? What if I tried using it as a Frisbee? Explain that when we use something the wrong way, it doesn’t work. It gets damaged, and a lot of times it damages other things too. There’s a word we use to describe what something is made for. That word is *purpose*. In today’s lesson we’re going to learn about God’s purpose for man and woman.



ILLUSTRATE

REFLECTING GOD’S IMAGE

Hold up a mirror. Have different children look into the mirror and ask them to describe to the class what they see. Explain to the class that God made man in His image, something like a reflection of Him. When God looks at us, He should see a picture of Himself in us. Tell the children that God commanded man to rule the earth. This is one way that man reflects God’s image by ruling over the plants and animals like Him.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE THERE?

Find the number of the earth’s population. During the lesson ask the children whether they know how many people live on the planet. Write the number on a blackboard or poster board. Briefly explain that all the people in the world came from one man and one woman whom God created.



APPLY

RIGHTLY REFLECTING ON CREATION

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Copies of craft page (two per child), aluminum foil, glue, and scissors.

Directions: Pass out two mirror patterns to each child. Instruct children to cut around the outside and inside of the mirror frame, along the solid black lines. Younger children may need assistance starting the inside cut of the mirror pattern. Direct children to cut aluminum foil squares slightly larger than the inside of the mirror (or you can have these precut). Insert the aluminum foil between the two mirror patterns, and glue the papers together to fasten the aluminum foil in place with glue. Read Psalm 139:14a to the class. Use this craft to discuss the importance of praising God for creating us in His image.



*Rightly Reflecting on Creation
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.*

AGES 9–11



BABY NAMES

Say the names of different animals. Ask children to give the names of their babies. Explain that each baby animal was made like its parent (after their “kind”). Explain that in today’s lesson they will learn that man was not made like the animals. Man was made in the image of God. For example:

- Bear - cub
- Pig - piglet
- Deer - fawn
- Kangaroo - joey
- Goat - kid, billy
- Goose - gosling
- Frog - tadpole, polliwog
- Cheetah - cub
- Alligator - hatchling

HANGMAN

Read Genesis 1:26 as a class. Make the appropriate number of blanks for the number of words in the verse on the chalk board or marker board. Choose children one at a time to fill in blank spaces with the missing words. Explain that today, they will learn the truth about how life began.



MIRROR, MIRROR

Pull out a mirror during the lesson. Have different children look into the mirror and ask them several questions: “What is the most amazing thing about the human body?” “What things could we learn about God by looking at how He made man?” “Why do you think God made you?” Explain that we can learn a lot about God by looking at our body because we’re made in His image.

SIGNIFICANT REPETITIONS

As you read through Genesis 1:26–31 with the class, instruct the children to listen for three repeated words. Write the words on the board as a reminder.

1. Image or likeness (1:26, 27).
2. Make/made or created (1:26, 27, 31).
3. All or every (1:26, 28, 29, 30).



ILLUMINATING THE IMAGE OF GOD

Study other Bible verses that discuss the image of God. Assign children to look up the verses listed below. Ask the children questions about each verse, and discuss the meaning of the passages together.

Genesis 9:6: Why is the murder of human beings wrong? (Man was made in God’s image.)

Romans 8:29: What did God predestine believers for? (To be conformed to the image of His Son.)

Colossians 3:10: How is the new man renewed in knowledge? (According to the image of Him who created him.)

James 3:9: Why is it wrong to curse men with our tongues? (Men have been made in the likeness of God.)



LESSON 3

Man rebels against God

GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-24



Man sinned against God by disobeying His word.



“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” (Gen 2:16–17).

Supporting Truths

1. Sin is disobeying God’s word.
2. Sin separates us from God.
3. God promises a Savior to save sinners.
4. Sin comes from following desires and temptations.
5. God punishes sin with pain and death, but He also shows mercy.

Objectives

1. State God’s command that Adam and Eve disobeyed.
2. Describe what Adam and Eve felt and what they did after they sinned.
3. State God’s promise of a seed of the woman crushing the serpent.
4. Explain how Eve was tempted.
5. List several consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin, along with God’s mercies.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Man rebels against God • Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24



Lesson Summary

Adam and Eve sinned by following Satan's temptation and their own thoughts and desires. Their disobedience brought spiritual death to all mankind and a curse affecting all of creation. God always judges sin, but God is good and kind—even in the curse God promised a Savior who would conquer Satan and provide a way for all who believe to be saved from the curse and from death.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Man was made in God's image in order to enjoy holy fellowship with Him, but now sin separates man from God. In response, God sent another man, Jesus, to rescue man from sin. Unlike Adam, Jesus lived in perfect obedience to God. When we trust in Him, our polluted nature is crucified with Him, and His righteous life is credited to us, so that once again we may live as friends of our holy Creator.

LAST WEEK



**God creates man
and woman**

Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–24

THIS WEEK



Man rebels against God
Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24

NEXT WEEK



Cain rebels against God
Genesis 4:1–15

CREATION

FALL

Lesson Commentary

Man sinned against God by disobeying His word.

Genesis 1 teaches the nature of God: He is the good, all powerful King. Genesis 1–2 teach the nature of man: he alone is made in God’s image in all creation. Genesis 3 is about sin: the evil that separates God and man.

Adam and Eve sinned (2:16–17; 3:1–6)

God gave Adam a specific command. He told Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16–17). But the man and woman did not obey God. Instead they obeyed their own desires and followed the temptation of Satan. **Temptation** is an attractive invitation to sin based on the lie that disobedience produces happiness. We are tempted by both Satan and our own sinful desires. Satan, taking the form of a serpent, tempted the woman in three ways. First, he targeted the weakness of woman. He waited until the woman was alone, when Adam, her leader and protector, was absent (1 Tim 2:13–14).

Second, Satan questioned what God said. The serpent did not immediately contradict God. He started with what seemed to be an innocent question (3:1), but the question was not innocent, for it assumed God had forbidden them from eating from any tree. In reality, God allowed them to eat from every tree but one. Only after this subtle attack did Satan directly contradict God’s word, telling the woman that she would “not surely die” if she ate from the fruit (3:4).

Finally, Satan tempted the woman by suggesting that God’s command was unfair. The serpent lied to the woman, claiming that God gave the command out of a selfish desire to protect His own position as king of the universe (3:5).

Eve followed Satan’s temptation and her own sinful desires when she did what she wanted rather than obey God’s word. Adam, instead of protecting and leading his wife in righteousness, followed her into sin

(3:6). **Sin** is disobeying God in thought, word or action. It includes both doing what God says not to do as well as not doing what God says to do.

Whereas Eve was deceived by the serpent, Adam was not (1 Tim 2:14). As the leader who failed to lead, and as the one who knowingly rebelled against God, Adam was held responsible for **the fall**, when both he and Eve, and all humans after them (except Jesus), became separated from God by sin (Rom 5:12).

Adam and Eve’s decision to eat from the tree was more than just wanting knowledge. It was turning away from dependence on God as the source of right and wrong. It was declaring independence from God and setting themselves in God’s place as the ones who get to decide what is good and bad. They tried to take God off of His throne as king and make themselves king instead.

Adam and Eve were separated from God (3:7–13)

The consequence of Adam and Eve’s sin was death, both spiritual and physical (Gen 2:17). The effects of spiritual death took place immediately, and eventually physical death followed (5:5). But the effects of their sin were not limited to death. Every aspect of life was stained by sin. First, they felt guilty and ashamed, and their relationship with one another was damaged (3:7). Second, instead of enjoying friendship with God, they were now afraid to be near God (3:8–10). Sin separates us from God (Isa 59:2). Sin destroys the very reason for man’s existence. Man was made in the image of God to reflect His character, but because of sin, man is unable to accurately represent God and seeks instead to live for his own praise. Third, their hearts became hard. God asked a number of questions to give them the opportunity to repent (Gen 3:9–11), but they refused to confess their sin and instead blamed others (3:12–13).

THINK ABOUT IT

We sin, just like the first man and woman, when we are not content with God’s provision.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Man rebels against God • Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24



God punished Adam and Eve's sin but also gave hope (3:14–24)

God judged their sin with a **curse**, declaring the evil that would be felt by Satan, the man and woman, and all of creation as the result of sin. But even in the curse God displayed His grace.



THINK ABOUT IT
Genesis 3:15 is often called the “first gospel” because it is the earliest declaration of Jesus’s victory over Satan.

First, He cursed the serpent, both the animal that had become Satan’s tool and Satan himself who had appeared as a serpent (3:14). The curse on Satan also affects mankind, for God causes the children of Satan (John 8:44) and the children of the woman to be enemies (Gen 3:15). In this curse is the greatest grace—there will come one particular child of the woman who will defeat Satan once and for all. Satan would wound the promised Savior, but in the end the Savior would triumph.

Second, God also judged the woman, showing that even though she was deceived by Satan, she was still responsible for her actions. Because of her sin, she would find pain in the place where she should have found her greatest joy—in her role as mother and wife (3:16). The joy of children would be marred by the pain of bearing and raising children. In marriage, she would be tempted to dominate her husband instead of submitting to him (“desire” means a desire to control, as in Gen 4:7), and her husband would be tempted to rule tyrannically, or unfairly, over her instead of lovingly leading her.

But even in this pain there is grace. This judgment implies that there will be children. Through these children God would bring about redemption, so women are called to find hope in raising children to fear God (1 Tim 2:15). Not only that, but all people, men and women, can be saved through one of Eve’s descendants, the perfect man, Jesus.

Finally, God judged the man by cursing his sphere of work, the ground (Gen 3:17–19). Work is a good thing, a blessing Adam enjoyed before the fall. But now work would be hard, painful, and less productive. This toil ends only at death, another result of the fall (3:19). Because the ground is cursed as a result of Adam’s sin, all creation suffers (Rom 8:20).

Yet again, in the curse there is a blessing. Though work will be hard, God still provides food, even from the cursed ground. Though Adam and Eve were driven away from Eden and removed from God’s presence, God graciously provided clothes to cover their nakedness, a symbol of the Lamb of God who would one day die to cover the sins of all who repent (Gen 3:21–24; John 1:29).

In the midst of sin and judgment, the story ends with hope: Adam named his wife Eve because he believed God’s promise that she would bear children, through whom would come redemption, the repairing of the relationship between God and man (Gen 3:20).

Lesson Outline

Man sinned against God by disobeying His word.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

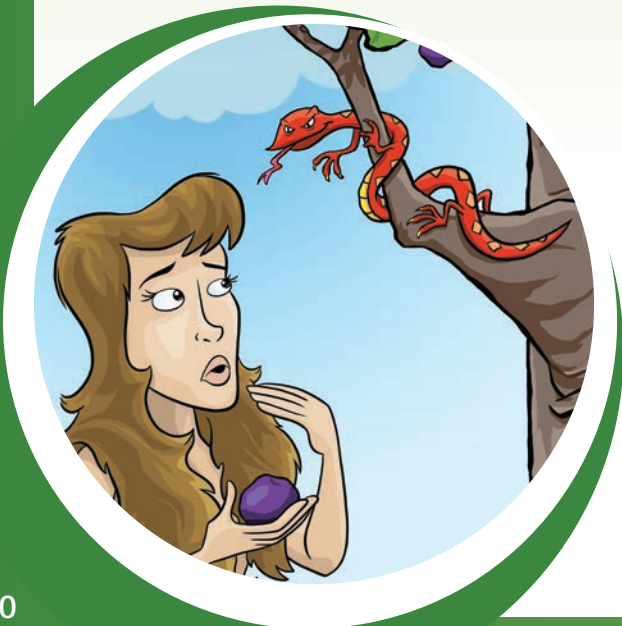


1. Adam and Eve disobeyed God (2:16–17; 3:1–6).
2. Adam and Eve could not be near God (3:8, 24).
3. God promised a Savior to rescue Adam and Eve from sin (3:15, 21).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Adam and Eve sinned (2:16–17; 3:1–6).
 - Satan questioned God’s Word (3:1).
 - Eve doubted God’s Word. She made God seem unfair (2:16–17; 3:2–3).
 - Satan said that God was a liar and was keeping her from a good thing (3:4–5).
 - Eve ate the fruit because it seemed good to her, and Adam ate too (3:6–7).
2. Adam and Eve were separated from God (3:7–13).
 - They now knew good and evil by experiencing evil, so they felt guilty (3:7).
 - They did not want to be with God, so they hid (3:8–10).
 - They did not repent right away but instead blamed others (3:11–13).
3. God punished Adam and Eve’s sin but also gave hope (3:14–24).
 - God gave pain in Satan’s enmity, but hope in a Savior to crush Satan (3:14–15).
 - God gave Eve pain in childbirth and marriage, but hope in having children (3:16, 20).
 - God gave Adam pain by making work hard, but hope in having food to eat (3:17–19).
 - God gave pain in death, but hope in one who would die in their place (3:19–21).
 - God gave pain by driving them from Eden, but hope by covering their shame (3:21–24).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Man rebels against God • Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **What could Adam and Eve eat in the garden of Eden?**
Fruit from all the trees but one.
2. **Who lied to Eve, saying that she would not die?**
The serpent, Satan.
3. **Did Adam and Eve eat from the forbidden tree?**
Yes. This was sin.
4. **Did Adam and Eve die?**
Yes. They did not die right away but they did die eventually.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **What was the one commandment that Adam and Eve had to obey when God put them in the garden?**
Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
2. **How did the serpent tempt Eve?**
First, the serpent began to place doubts about God in Eve's mind by having her question God's word and God's character. Then he told her a lie and said that she would not die if she ate from the tree.
3. **By saying these things to Eve, what was the serpent saying about God?**
The serpent was calling God a liar. But God is not a liar. The serpent was the liar.
4. **What two things did Eve do after listening to the serpent?**
She ate of the fruit and then gave some to Adam, and he ate.
5. **When God came to the garden to meet with Adam and Eve, what did they do and why?**
They hid because they were ashamed of their disobedience and afraid of God.
6. **In what way did Adam and Eve immediately die after they ate from the tree?**
Spiritually. Eventually, they died physically as well. They were separated from God in a way that they hadn't been before. It was as though a wall of sin came between God and them.
7. **What judgments did God bring on Adam and Eve?**
God judged Eve and now she would find pain in her role as mother and wife. God judged Adam by cursing the ground Gen 3:17–19. Work would be hard, painful, and less productive.
8. **What blessings did God provide Adam and Eve?**
God promised a Savior who would triumph over sin and Satan. God still provided food, even from the cursed ground. God graciously provided clothes to cover their nakedness.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

TREE RUBBINGS

Give each child a simple construction-paper cutout of a tree. Have each child place a blank piece of paper on top of the cutout tree and use crayons to make a rubbing of the tree. Talk about God making all different types of trees. Ask the children what grows on trees and how we use trees. Explain that in today's lesson, Eve takes fruit from a tree that God told her not to eat from. Ask the children what they think will happen to Eve.

FORBIDDEN-FRUIT CIRCLE

Have the children stand in a circle. While music is playing, have the children pass a piece of fruit around the circle. When the music stops, the child holding the fruit steps out of the circle, and the game continues in the same fashion until there is one person left. Explain that in today's lesson they will learn about Adam and Eve taking the forbidden fruit.



ILLUSTRATE

SERPENT'S LIES

While teaching the lesson, use a snake puppet to repeat Satan's lies to the class. After each statement, ask the children, "Was that the truth?" Let them answer with a bold "no." Share with them what God really said.

TEMPTATION HAND MOTIONS

Eve listened to the serpent's lies. *(Put hand to ear; hiss)*
Forbidden fruit opened their eyes. *(Place closed fists in front of eyes; pop fingers open.)*
They hid from God; they were ashamed. *(Cover front of body with hands and arms.)*
They knew that they had disobeyed. *(Shake head back and forth.)*



APPLY

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: White paper, crayons, glue, rainbow colored mini marshmallows.

Directions: Give each child a copy of a simple tree drawing on white paper, and have him color it. Next have him glue rainbow marshmallows on for fruit. Give each child a copy of the key verse to glue onto the page. Tell the children that the fruit looked good to eat.

Variation: Have the children glue marshmallows to the "Eve and the Serpent" coloring sheet at the back of this lesson.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Man rebels against God • Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

HIDE AND SEEK

Play a version of hide-and-seek by hiding pictures of Adam and Eve. Have children search for Adam and Eve as God did. Even when we are well hidden, does God know where we are? When we left Adam and Eve last week, they were enjoying God's fellowship in the Garden of Eden. In today's Bible lesson, Adam and Eve will try to hide from God. Why do you suppose they would do this? Is it possible to hide from God? Read Psalm 139:7–12.

GARDEN OF EDEN MURAL

Tear off two long sheets of butcher paper. Place the sheets of paper on the floor or on separate tables. Gather materials for the children to use to decorate these sheets of paper (crayons, markers, paints, etc.). As each child arrives at class, assign him a section of the paper and instruct him to draw trees and plants, recreating the Garden of Eden. Display the mural as you teach the Bible lesson. Use the review questions as you sit with children making the mural. When you are done, tell the children that these murals will be part of the lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

EDEN OBJECT LESSON

As you study through the Bible lesson, think of various objects to use as you teach. You could bring in fruit for the tree of knowledge, clothes for the curse, and weeds for the curse on the ground. Use these objects as you teach the Bible lesson.

HOUSE RULES FOR THE GARDEN OF EDEN

During the Bible lesson ask children to share rules given to them in various areas of life: home, school, Sunday school, library, etc. List several categories on the board, and add rules children give under each category. Point out that there are many rules we have to obey throughout life. Emphasize that God gave only one rule for Adam and Eve to obey (Gen 2:16–17).



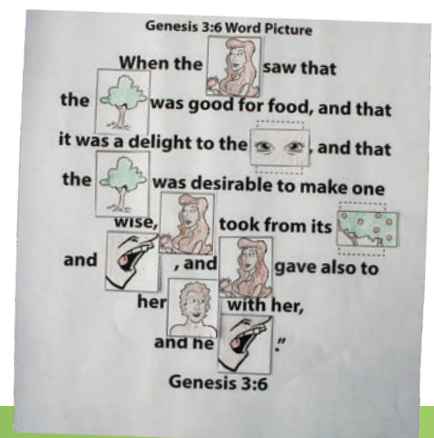
APPLY

GENESIS 3:6 WORD PICTURE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Make copies of both pages in the Craft Book. Have the children cut out the pictures and paste them in the appropriate places to complete the verse. If there is time remaining, have the children color the pictures.

*Genesis 3:6 Word Picture
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

THE TEMPTER

Arrange to borrow a non-venomous snake from a local pet store or from someone you know. Bring the animal to class and allow children to observe it. You could also bring in a replica of a snake or various pictures of different kinds of snakes if you're unable to locate a live snake. Tell children that in today's lesson they will learn how Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted Eve to disobey God. Using Genesis 3:14–15 share how God cursed the serpent (and Satan) for his deception.

ADAM, EVE, AND A SNAKE

To prepare children for the day's lesson, reenact the scene from Genesis 3:1–6.



ILLUSTRATE

WAD OF WEEDS

Bring several different weeds from your yard. See if children can identify some of them. What problems do they cause? Were weeds a part of God's perfect creation? Were there weeds in the Garden of Eden? When did weeds become a problem? (It would be interesting to have a farmer or landscaper lead this discussion. He might share something about the effort it takes to overcome the effects of weeds on his crops.)

LIE DETECTOR

Bring in a picture of a lie detector. Describe how this machine helps to determine if someone is telling the truth. Explain that in today's lesson Satan lied to Eve in order to persuade her into disobeying God. Ask the children if they know how Eve could have checked to see if Satan was telling her the truth. Explain that Eve had everything she needed to examine the claims of Satan. All she needed was the word of God. God never lies, and everything He says is true. Eve needed only to compare what the serpent said to what God had told her to determine if he was telling the truth.



APPLY

CATCH AND REVIEW

With children standing in a circle, toss a rubber ball from one child to another. The one who catches the ball answers the next question (*use Lesson Questions*).



LESSON 4

Cain rebels against God

GENESIS 4:1-24



Sin is rebellion against God.



"The LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door'" (Gen 4:6-7).

Supporting Truths

1. Refusing to worship God the right way is sin.
2. Sin separates us from God.
3. God promises a Savior to save sinners.
4. Sin enslaves the sinner and leads to more sin.
5. Sin separates us from God and destroys joy.

Objectives

1. Explain what was wrong with Cain's offering.
2. Describe how God offered Cain an opportunity to repent.
3. Describe how God punished Cain.
4. Describe how Cain's sin grew and was even multiplied by his descendants.
5. Compare Cain's anger and exile with what God promised him if he would repent.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Cain rebels against God • Genesis 4:1–24



Lesson Summary

Cain and Abel brought offerings to God, but only Abel's offering was accepted. An **offering** is something given to God as an act of worship. God rejected Cain's offering because he didn't obey God's instructions concerning the kind of offering he was to bring. Cain was angry with God for rejecting his offering and killed his brother. As a result, God punished Cain by cursing the ground so that it would no longer produce crops for Cain and by sending him away to wander the earth with no permanent home.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Cain's sin was rebellion against God. He intentionally resisted God by disobeying His instructions about offerings, murdering his brother Abel, and lying. Every sin is a direct challenge to God's authority. Through Cain's father, Adam, sin has spread to all men (Rom 5:12). But God is merciful. He gave Cain a chance to repent, and He gave Adam another son, Seth, through whom would come the promised seed (Gen 3:15), Jesus, who would give His life for the forgiveness of sin.

LAST WEEK



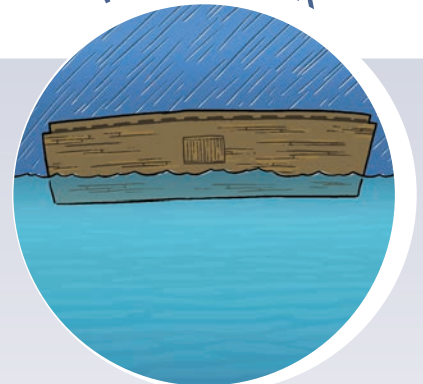
Man rebels against God
Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–24

THIS WEEK



Cain rebels against God
Genesis 4:1–24

NEXT WEEK



God floods the earth
Genesis 6:5–7:24

FALL

Lesson Commentary

Sin is rebellion against God.

All sin, however harmless it may appear, is a direct challenge to God's authority. This is the essence of sin. Sin is a revolt against God and what God has said to be true. This is what Adam and Eve attempted in the Garden of Eden. Biting into the forbidden fruit was an attack on the truthfulness of God's word. Adam's sin—his disobedience to God—spread to all men (Rom 5:12), and this sin immediately grew in Genesis 4. Adam and Eve's son, Cain, continued in his parents' sin, rebelling against the authority of God.

Cain rejected God's requirement for an animal sacrifice (4:2–5a)

Cain's rebellion began when he rejected God's instruction about sacrifices. **Rebellion** is intentional resistance against God. Cain and Abel both brought an offering to God, but God only honored Abel's offering (Gen 4:4–5).

What was wrong with Cain's offering? Since Israel was later commanded to bring both blood offerings like Abel's (Lev 1:3–5) and bloodless offerings like Cain's (2:1–2), some identify Cain's attitude as the central reason for God's rejection of his offering. It's true that Cain made no special effort to bring God the best of his crops. He was simply going through the motions of worship, and his heart was not in it. He did not bring the first and best of the flock like his brother, Abel (Gen 4:4).

However, even though Israel later brought both kinds of offerings, a blood offering had to precede a first fruits offering. This was because only a blood sacrifice could atone for sin (Lev 17:11). By bringing an offering of the fruit of the

ground, Cain effectively denied his personal need for cleansing from sin. This is the primary reason why Cain's offering was rejected by God. Abel's

offering was accepted by God because he offered the sacrifice prescribed by God—a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

Abel gave what God wanted, whereas Cain gave what he wanted. Abel came to God and said, in effect, "Lord, here is what You said You wanted. You told me that if I brought a blood sacrifice, You would forgive my sin, and I believe You, God. I confess that I'm a sinner, and I will follow your instructions for my offering." Cain had the same knowledge of what God required, but chose to worship God in his own way. Just like his parents, Adam and Eve, he did what he wanted and offered a sacrifice of his own choosing. By not bringing a blood sacrifice He was, in effect, denying his personal need to have his sin forgiven.

Somehow both Cain and Abel knew that God wanted an animal sacrifice. It's clear they both knew that God wanted them to worship Him. **Worship recognizes the supreme value of God and attributes this value to Him through words, thoughts, and actions**. It's also clear that their worship of God was to include an offering. God must have revealed this to them or to their parents. They knew they were to come to God to worship Him with an offering. God must have also given specific instruction regarding the type of sacrifice they were to offer.

Abel's obedience—bringing the correct offering and bringing the best of what he had—was evidence of his faith in God. It was because of his faith that Abel's offering was accepted by God (Heb 11:4). God desires true worship motivated by faith, not just the appearance of religion.

That is why Genesis 2:4–5 mentions God's reaction not just to the offerings, but to the men themselves. God looked into the heart, saw Cain's faithless attitude, and rejected him. God will reject even the most perfect sacrifice if that sacrifice is offered by an apostate heart (Isa 1:11–13; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6–8). The prophet Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Sam 15:22).

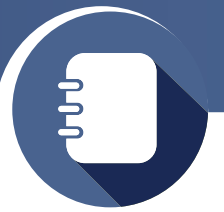


THINK ABOUT IT

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin (Heb 9:22).

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Cain rebels against God • Genesis 4:1–24



Cain rejected God's call for repentance (4:5b–8)

Cain's faithless offering led to further rebellion against God. Instead of admitting his sin and returning to God with a humble heart, Cain got angry, and his face showed it (Gen 4:5). His sin robbed him of joy. But God questioned Cain to show him his sin and his need for repentance (4:6). **Repentance** is sorrow over sin that causes someone to turn away from sin and turn to God. God reminded Cain that he could be accepted just like Abel if he would do what is right.



THINK ABOUT IT
Anger takes control of a person and produces more sin (Prov 29:22).

God warned Cain about the power of sin if he chose not to repent (4:7). He warned Cain that sin is like a lion ready to pounce on the sinner who does not flee from his sin. Those who reject God feel like

God's laws limit their freedom, but obedience to God is the only way to be truly free, free from the tyranny of sin. Those who do not repent often regret their sin (2 Cor 7:10), but they are trapped; slaves to their sinful passions, because they will not submit to God (Rom 6:16).

Cain refused to listen to God's gracious reminder and rejected His call for repentance. As a result, Cain's anger drove him to murder his own brother (Gen 4:8). Cain's anger was against God, but since he couldn't do anything to harm God, he killed his brother who was made in God's image. When Cain murdered Abel, he was yet again rebelling against God. He tried to lash out at God by killing Abel. Just as God had warned him, Cain's sin grew worse and in the end it led to death (Jas 1:15). No one should think they can enjoy some sin and keep it under control. The only right response to sin is to reject it entirely (Rom 8:13).

God punished Cain for his rebellion (4:9–16)

Before punishing Cain, God again gave him a chance to repent, but Cain lied and refused to take responsibility (Gen 4:9). He tried to ignore his crime, but God knew the murder he had committed because Abel's blood was crying out to God from the ground (4:10).

God punished Cain in a way that fit his crime. Since the ground had been covered in Abel's blood, the ground would no longer grow food for Cain (4:11–12). Cain was blind to God's justice—instead of repenting, he pitied himself (4:13). He was selfish from beginning to end. Remarkably, God continued to extend mercy. He still punished, but He protected Cain's life by placing a mark on him so that no one would kill him (4:15).

It appears that Cain never repented, and his sin encouraged sin in his children after him. In fact, sin grew worse. When one of Cain's descendants, Lamech, killed a young man, he boasted that his life would be protected in an even greater way than Cain's (4:23–24). It is good to remember that our sin spreads and harms people we might never even know of. But God is merciful. He gave Adam and Eve another son, Seth. Through Seth would come the promised seed (Gen 3:15), Jesus, who would give His life for the forgiveness of sin.

Lesson Outline

Sin is rebellion against God.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Cain offered the wrong offering (4:2–5a).
2. Cain got angry and did not repent (4:5b–8).
3. God punished Cain (4:9–16).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Cain rejected God's requirement for an animal sacrifice (4:2–5a).
 - Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd (4:2).
 - Cain offered to God the wrong sacrifice in the wrong way (4:3).
 - Abel offered to God the right sacrifice in the right way (4:4a).
 - God valued Abel and Abel's offering but not Cain or Cain's offering (4:4b–5a).
2. Cain rejected God's call for repentance (4:5b–8).
 - Cain got very angry and his face showed it (4:5).
 - God encouraged Cain that if he did what is right, he would be joyful (4:6–7a).
 - God warned Cain not to let sin control him and lead to more sin (4:7b).
 - Instead of listening to God, Cain killed his brother Abel (4:8).
3. God punished Cain for his rebellion (4:9–16, 23–24).
 - God gave Cain a chance to repent, but Cain lied instead of confessing his sin (4:9).
 - Cain's punishment was to be a restless wanderer instead of a fruitful farmer (4:10–12).
 - Instead of repenting, Cain complained that his punishment was too hard (4:13–14).
 - God graciously protected Cain, but Cain still chose to leave God's presence (4:15–16).
 - Cain's sin led his descendants to commit even worse sin (4:23–24).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What work did Cain and Abel do?**
Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd.
- 2. Was God pleased with Cain's and Abel's offerings?**
He was pleased with Abel's and not with Cain's.
- 3. How did Cain respond?**
He got angrier and killed his brother.
- 4. What did God do?**
He punished Cain.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What offering did Cain bring to the Lord?**
Cain brought fruit of the ground.
- 2. What offering did Abel bring to the Lord?**
Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and their fat portions.
- 3. Why did God have regard for Abel and his offering?**
He had regard for Abel and his offering because Abel offered to God the right sacrifice in the right way.
- 4. What was Cain's reaction when he found out that the Lord did not respect his offering?**
Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell (that is, the look on his face changed to show that he was very displeased).
- 5. What were the two parts of God's instruction to Cain?**
God told Cain that if he did well, he would be accepted. God also told Cain that if he did not do well, he would not be accepted. God was warning Cain to be careful because he was being tempted to sin.
- 6. Did Cain listen to God's warning and repent of his sin?**
No. Cain refused to listen to God's gracious reminder and rejected His call for repentance.
- 7. How did Cain respond to God's call to repentance?**
Cain's anger was against God, but since he couldn't do anything to harm God, he killed his brother who was made in God's image.
- 8. How did Cain respond to God's punishment and protection after killing Abel?**
Cain was blind to God's justice—instead of repenting, he pitied himself (Gen 4:13) and his sin encouraged sin in his children after him. In fact, sin grew worse.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3-5



PLAY-DOH TABLES

As the children arrive to class, direct them to a table with Play-Doh utensils and cookie cutters shaped like gingerbread men in assorted sizes. Have the children make a Play-Doh family, some sheep, and fruits and vegetables. In today's lesson, we will see what kinds of jobs God gave to Cain and Abel.

HAPPY/MAD FACES MASKS

Give each child a paper plate with eye-holes cut out, colored yarn for hair, crayons, and a wooden craft stick. To demonstrate Cain's fallen countenance, have the children draw and decorate a happy face on one side of the plate and a mad face on the other side. Glue a craft stick onto the plate for a handle. Tell the class that today they will learn how Cain's attitude was wrong and his countenance fell.



VEGGIES AND STUFFED ANIMAL PROPS

Bring a large basket of fresh vegetables to illustrate Cain's offering, and bring in stuffed lambs to illustrate Abel's.

A HEART OF SIN HAND MOTIONS

Cain was the world's first baby boy,
(Hold up one finger; rock folded arms back and forth.)
But his heart did not have joy.
(Point to heart and shake head back and forth.)
Instead, his heart was full of sin.
(Hold arms open wide.)
So God did not respect him.
(Shake head back and forth.)
Cain let sin come through the door.
(Pretend to open door with hand.)
And so his garden grew no more.
(Place wrists together; then fold hands in like the petals of a flower.)



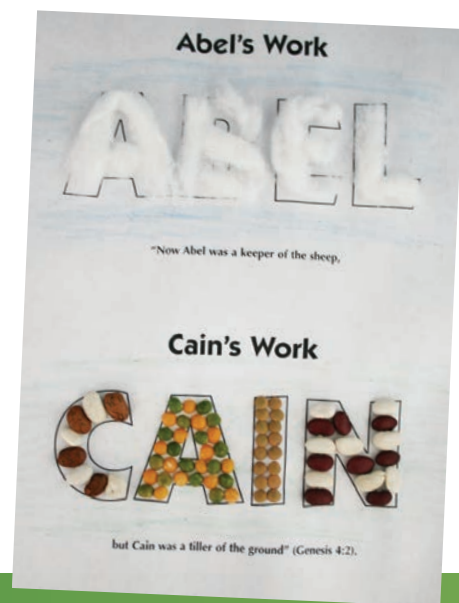
ABEL'S AND CAIN'S WORK

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Copies of the "Abel's Work, Cain's Work" craft page, cotton balls, dried beans and corn, glue.

Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft page and some glue. Tell each one to fill in the letters of Abel's name using cotton balls and Cain's name using the dried beans and corn.

Abel's and Cain's Work
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Cain rebels against God • Genesis 4:1–24



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

TELEPHONE

Have the children sit in a row. Whisper a message to the child next to you. In turn, he or she should whisper it to the next person, and so on. Messages could be tongue twisters, statements such as, “After church we go home, eat some lunch, take a nap, and play with toys,” or Bible passages such as, “Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.” Although the results often are humorous, this game demonstrates how one mistake—one sin—builds and compounds. At the end of the game, remind the children that the best way to know what God wants is to look in the Bible.

SKIT: CAIN AND ABEL

This story lends itself very well to a skit. Choose one person to be Cain, one to be Abel, and one to be the Lord. Bring in appropriate props for today’s passage. Act out the lesson and then go through the lesson with the children.



ILLUSTRATE

MY BROTHER’S KEEPER

Have the children demonstrate how we can care for others by leading a blindfolded person around the room, taking care to protect him from tripping or injury. This will show the children how to show love to others and how they can “keep” their brother.

LOVE YOUR SIBLINGS

During the lesson ask the children how they get along with their brothers and sisters. Ask them whether they have been jealous of one of their family members or have done something wrong to one of them. Ask them what God thinks of that. Ask them what they can do to show their brothers and sisters that they love them. Encourage them to find practical and tangible ways to care for their brothers and sisters.



APPLY

TWO-SIDED FACE MASK

Materials: Paper plates with eye-holes precut, wooden craft sticks, yarn, markers or crayons, glue.

Directions: Give each child a paper plate, a craft stick, and some yarn. Have children tape or glue the stick to the back side of the plate. On one side, have children draw a smiley face, representing Abel. On the reverse side, have children draw a frown, representing Cain. Glue yarn on each side of the plate as hair. Use markers or crayons to draw a nose and eyebrows.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

THE CURSE

On the children's arrival to class and continuing throughout the lesson, mark a helper or parent volunteer as "cursed." (This curse could be represented by a large piece of poster board with Cain's curse from Genesis 4:11–12 written on it.) Inform the children that the cursed person cannot sit (representing Cain's curse to be a vagrant), cannot play with toys, and must carry weeds or dried grass (to represent poor crops). This will give an example of a curse and could lead into a discussion of God's instructions, how Cain chose to disobey, and how he was punished. God's mercy could also be discussed. In today's lesson, we will learn about a man who had a severe curse.

SIX WAYS I CAN PLEASE THE LORD THIS WEEK

Give each child a blank piece of paper. Tell the children to write down six ways they can please the Lord this week. In today's lesson they will learn about two brothers. One brother pleased the Lord and the other did not.



ILLUSTRATE

CAIN'S REBELLION

Use this acrostic to help children remember the lesson.

Refused to repent (4:5)
Expressed anger at God (4:5–6)
Blamed Abel (jealousy; 4:8)
Executed his brother (4:8)
Lied to God (4:9)
Lost his livelihood (4:10–12)
Ignored God (4:9)
Opened the door to sin (4:7)
No fellowship with God (4:14, 16)

WARNING!

Bring in a variety of objects with warning labels (cleaning supplies, electrical appliances, and car seat). Read the warning labels to the children and ask why these warnings are given.

Then lead the class in a discussion of God's warning to Cain in Genesis 4:7.

- Bring an acceptable offering to God.
- Disobedience is displeasing to the Lord.
- Anger and hostility lead to sin.
- Sin can overpower you, if you let it.
- Sin leads to death.
- Humble yourself and obey God



APPLY

VENN DIAGRAM

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Make a copy of the Venn diagram for each child. Direct the children to fill in the Venn diagram, listing things that Cain and Abel had in common in the space where the two circles overlap, and listing Cain and Abel's differences in the sections labeled with their names. Samples of things children may come up with are listed below.

SIMILARITIES

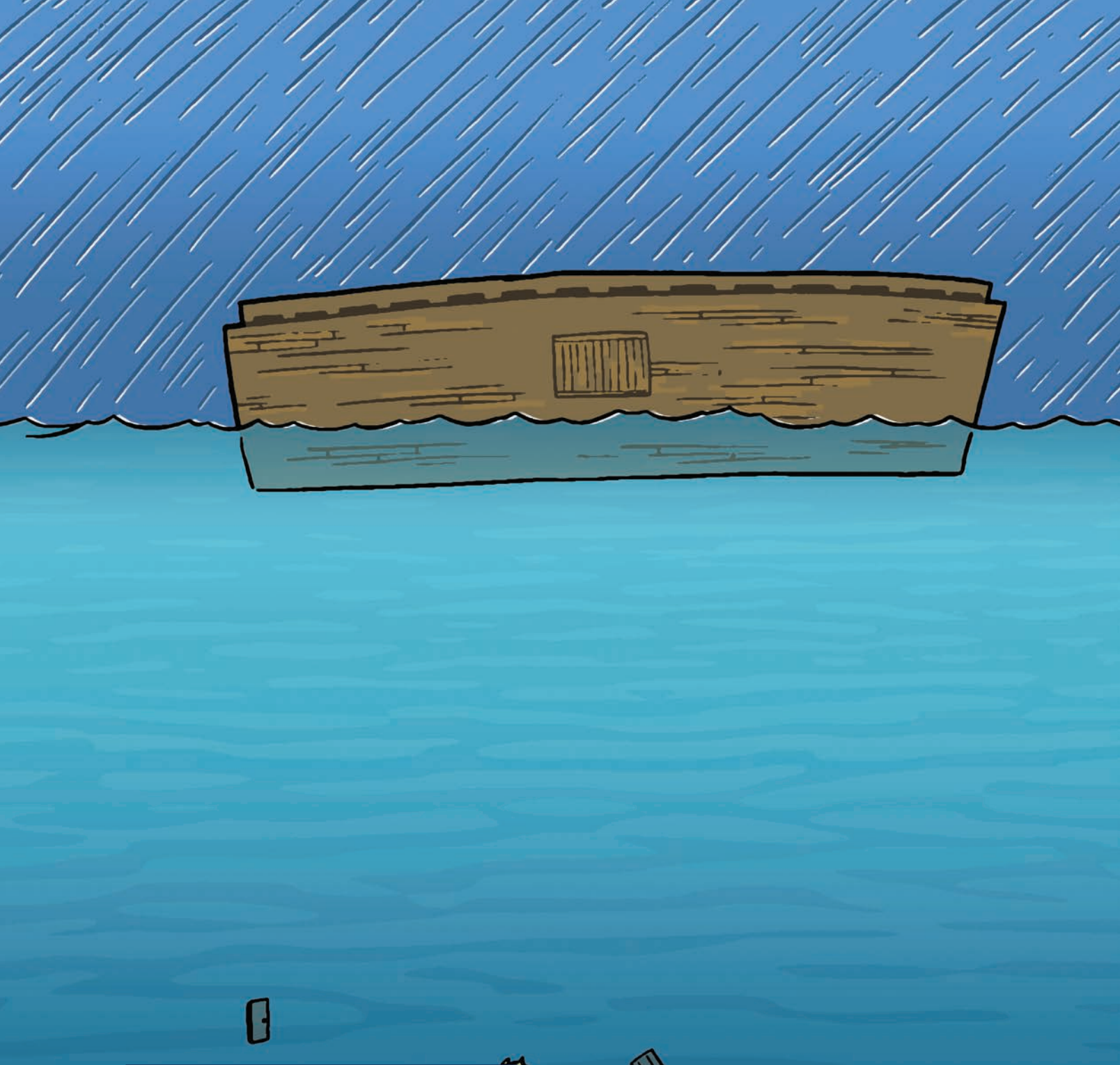
Brothers (4:2)
Brought offerings to the LORD (4:3–4)

CAIN

Firstborn son of Adam and Eve (4:1)
Farmer (4:2)
Brought fruit of the ground as an offering (4:3)
His offering displeased God and was rejected (4:5)
Responded in anger (4:5)

ABEL

Second son of Adam and Eve (4:2)
Shepherd (4:2)
Brought firstborn of his flock as an offering (4:4)
His offering pleased God and was accepted (4:4)
Obedient (implied in 4:4)



LESSON 5

God floods the earth

GENESIS 6:5-7:24



God judges the wicked and saves the righteous.



"And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth'" (Gen 6:13).

Supporting Truths

1. God judges the wicked.
2. God is gracious.
3. The righteous obey God.
4. Adam's sin infected the entire human race.
5. God saves a remnant, a small group of people who remain faithful.

Objectives

1. Describe the flood and its results.
2. Identify God's gracious act toward Noah.
3. Describe how Noah pleased God.
4. Describe how wicked the people were.
5. Discuss God's faithfulness to save Noah as He had promised.



Lesson Summary

God saw that mankind was totally sinful. They had stained God's image within them and had corrupted all of God's creation. Although God is patient, giving much time for repentance, God also hates sin because He is holy. So God displayed His wrath by drowning the world in a flood. But He also showed His grace, choosing one man, the righteous Noah, to build an ark that would save both man and animals.

Spotlight on the Gospel

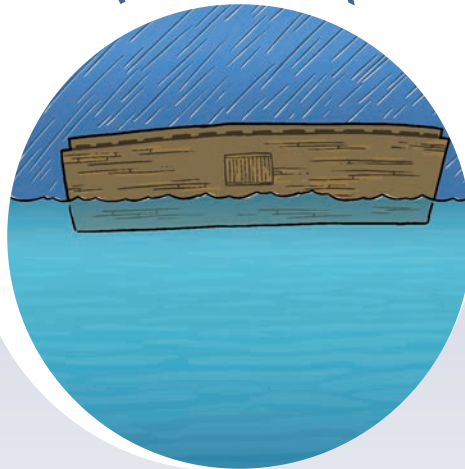
By the time of the flood, sin had polluted all of God's creation, and it seemed Satan was destroying the image of God in man. But God kept one righteous man, Noah, in order to keep His promise of a coming Savior. The Savior saves those who trust Him, just as the ark saved Noah from the flood. But those who reject God's grace should be afraid: when God's patience ends, He will destroy the unrepentant just as He did in the time of the flood.

LAST WEEK



Cain rebels against God
Genesis 4:1–24

THIS WEEK



God floods the earth
Genesis 6:5–7:24

NEXT WEEK



God preserves Noah
Genesis 8:1–9:17

Lesson Commentary

God judges the wicked and saves the righteous.

The story of the flood bridges two accounts in the book of Genesis. It begins at the conclusion of the story about Adam and those born from him (Gen 5:1–6:8) and continues through the story about Noah and those born from him (6:9–9:29). The first story, up through Genesis 6:8, lists the descendants of Seth, emphasizing the phrase “and he died” to show that sin had indeed brought death into the world (2:17; 3:19). The second story, beginning in Genesis 6:9 with the generations of Noah, chronicles the devastating spread of sin. When God looked at the earth He saw that “all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth” (6:12). In response to such far reaching sin, God told Noah that He would bring a flood of water upon the earth to destroy everything that breathes (6:17).



THINK ABOUT IT
Satan tried to destroy the line of Christ by perverting marriage.

The LORD was disappointed by sinful mankind (6:5–7)

Sin had multiplied on the face of the earth. The “sons of God” saw beautiful

women and took wives according to their own pleasure (6:2). These marriages were motivated by sinful desires, not holy ones. But who were the sons of God? Although there are several theories, it is likely that the sons of God were fallen angels (demons). The daughters of men were human women, and the sin included the improper marriage between the supernatural and the natural. There is biblical evidence to support this theory. First, the specific Hebrew phrase for “sons of God” elsewhere refers only to angelic beings, never to humans (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). Second, the New Testament refers to the angelic sin of Genesis 6 (1 Pet 3:19–20; 2 Pet 2:4–6; Jude 6–7). If this is the correct view of who the “sons of God” are, then it shows not only that man is thoroughly sinful, but also that the mongrel race born from these marriages was threatening to destroy the image of God in man (Gen 6:4). Satan tried to destroy

the line of Christ by perverting marriage. This sin had to be destroyed before the line of the promised Savior perished.

Whatever interpretation is correct, the main point is the same: mankind was very wicked. Their thoughts were always evil (6:5) and their actions were violent and cruel (6:13). They were evil inside and out. God called them “corrupt” three times (6:11–12), using the same Hebrew word used to describe how Jeremiah’s belt had become so rotten it was good for nothing (Jer 13:7). Mankind had ruined God’s image in them, and their sin had tainted all of creation.

God responded with sorrow and wrath. The word “regretted” (Gen 6:6) does not mean that God was taken by surprise, or that He decided His first try

had been a mistake. God does not change either His nature or His predetermined plan (Num 23:19). God is not like man. He never lies or changes His mind. Rather, it expresses His sorrow. God loves His creation, and He grieves deeply when He sees mankind dishonoring Him and turning from their greatest good. Mixed with His sorrow is also wrath. The word “grieved” (Gen 6:6) expresses God’s violent hatred of sin. This is God’s **wrath**, God’s severe anger against sinners because of His holy hatred of sin.

Even in His wrath, God was patient and fair. God had already waited at least over a thousand years since sin first began, giving much time for repentance. Even after declaring his plan to send destruction, He gave mankind another 120 years to repent (6:3). Not only did God wait, but He was actively involved, sending His Holy Spirit to restrain human wickedness (6:3). But mankind did not listen to the warning, so they deserved to be destroyed. The word for “destroy” (6:13) is the same word used for “corrupt” (6:11–12). Mankind ruined themselves and the earth, so God chose to ruin them. He would give them what they deserved.

THINK ABOUT IT
God is not like man. He never lies or changes His mind.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God floods the earth • Genesis 6:5–7:24



People make the same mistake today, taking advantage of God's patience and concluding that judgment will never come. In response, Peter used the flood as an example to show that judgment is definitely coming, but God is patient to give time for repentance (2 Pet 3:3–12). The correct response is to repent while God is still patiently waiting, for just as God's patience came to an end in Gen 6:3, so it will come to an end at the final judgment. We must not take His patience for granted.

While the story of Genesis 5:1–6:8 is dominated by sin and death, at the end there is a small glimpse of hope: the LORD looked with favor upon one man, Noah (6:8). Why? At this point in the story, no reason is given. God simply showed grace toward Noah. **Grace** is undeserved favor. It is like a gift. God took pleasure in Noah and gave him a blessing that he did not deserve or earn. Comfort and rest would come through the godly life of Noah (5:29), who is an "heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb 11:7).

The LORD was pleased by righteous Noah (6:8–7:16)

Noah was **righteous**, or without guilt or unforgiven sin. He was acceptable to God. Noah

believed and obeyed God with a pure heart. He stood out so much from the world around him that Genesis 6:9 describes his righteousness in three ways: He was righteous, he was blameless, and he walked with God. What three words or phrases describe the character of your life? Walking with God shows that Noah enjoyed a very special friendship with God, just as Enoch did (5:22). It is amazing the difference one faithful person can make. Sometimes God only seeks one obedient person in order to deliver a whole nation, or even the world (Ezek 22:30).

Noah was a man of faith (Heb 11:7), and faith always produces obedience (Jas 2:17). When God told him to make an ark and gave instructions for filling it, Noah did exactly as God commanded (Gen 6:22; 7:5, 16). He seems to have spent about 100 years building the ark and filling it (5:32; 7:6). The ark was made from cedar or cypress wood and was a huge box: 450 feet long (1 ½ football fields), 75 feet wide (slightly less than an average length high school basketball court), and 45 feet tall (4 story building). It was capable of holding provisions and all the species as God commanded: one pair of every unclean animal to repopulate the earth, and seven pairs of clean animals, since these would also be used for sacrifices after exiting the ark (7:2; 8:20). Because Noah obeyed, God confirmed that Noah was indeed a righteous man (7:1).

The LORD destroyed all that had breath except for Noah's family (7:17–24)

Noah obeyed God's instructions, and God did as He promised: He drowned the wickedness that had polluted the earth, but He saved Noah and his family. The flood was massive, with the earth erupting and the sky pouring rain for 40 days (7:17). Even then the water continued to cover the earth for 110 more days (7:24). It covered all the mountains (7:20). It killed everything that breathed (7:21). With great power, God commanded nature to destroy the wicked.

As He promised, God spared Noah. God even supernaturally shut the door of the ark (7:16). By saving Noah, God preserved the line of Christ so that the Savior promised in Genesis 3:15 could be born. God always saves a **remnant**, a small group of people who remain faithful to God (Rom 11:5). Today God saves a remnant through Jesus Christ. Those who are united with Jesus are saved in Him just as Noah was saved in the ark (1 Pet 2:18–21).



THINK ABOUT IT
What three words or phrases describe the character of your life?

Lesson Outline

God judges the wicked and saves the righteous.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God sent the flood to destroy sin (6:3–12; 7:17–24).
2. God saved Noah because Noah pleased God (6:8–7:16).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The LORD was disappointed by sinful mankind (6:3–7).
 - The LORD had been very patient and restrained sin (6:3).
 - The LORD saw that mankind was evil and violent all the time (6:5, 11–12).
 - The LORD felt grief and wrath because of man's great sin (6:6).
 - The LORD planned to destroy all living things (6:7, 13).
2. The LORD was pleased by righteous Noah (6:8–7:16).
 - Noah found favor in God's eyes (6:8).
 - Noah was righteous, blameless, and walked with God, even during a wicked time (6:9).
 - Noah proved his righteousness by obeying God's command to build an ark (6:14–7:1).
 - Noah proved his righteousness by obeying God's command to gather animals (7:2–5).
 - Noah proved his righteousness by obeying God's command to get into the ark (7:6–16).
3. The LORD destroyed all that had breath except for Noah's family (7:17–24).
 - God sent a flood which covered even the highest mountains (7:17–20).
 - Except for those on the ark, all that had breath died (7:21–23).
 - Only righteous Noah and the remnant with him survived (7:23).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Were the people who lived in Noah's time good or bad?**
They were bad and sinned a lot.
- 2. What did God decide to do because people sinned a lot?**
God decided to send a flood to destroy the sinful men.
- 3. What did God tell Noah to make?**
God told Noah to build an ark.
- 4. Did God save anyone from the flood? Who?**
Yes. Noah and his family.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. When God looked at the people on the earth, what did He see in their hearts?**
Man was very wicked and evil. People only thought about evil things all the time.
- 2. Why does man's wickedness grieve God?**
God hates sin, which always is ultimately done against Him.
- 3. When God saw how wicked the people were, what was His response?**
He was sorry that He had made man on the earth.
- 4. What did God decide to do to punish the sinfulness of the people on the earth?**
God decided to destroy the earth with a flood.
- 5. What three things do we learn about Noah that were pleasing to God?**
He was a righteous man; he was blameless in his time; he walked with God.
- 6. What plan did God have for Noah and his family?**
In Genesis 6:13, God told Noah about the wickedness of man and what He was going to do. He commanded Noah to make an ark and said that he and his family would be saved by entering it.
- 7. Describe what happened after God shut the door to the ark?**
The water came and flooded all the earth. God destroyed every living thing that was on the land and in the sky.
- 8. Did God succeed in His plan to destroy everything that lived on the land?**
Yes. God carried out His plan of judgment and God graciously protected those in the ark.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



BUILD THAT ARK!

Place a large sheet on the ground. As the children enter the classroom, direct them to the sheet. Give them small boxes and let them build their own arks. Tell the children that in today's lesson, they will learn about Noah, a man who listened to God and obeyed.

Variation: Place a pile of wooden blocks in the center of the room. As the children enter the classroom, direct them to the wooden blocks. Tell them to work together to build a very large boat.

ANIMAL PAIRS

Give each child some Play-Doh and tell him to make animal pairs. Let him tell the class what type of animals he made.



TWO BY TWO

Bring in a selection of stuffed animals in pairs (two teddy bears, two cats, etc.) to use while teaching the lesson.

AN ARK OF SAFETY

Form a large circle of chairs in the center of the classroom. Leave an opening for an entrance. This is your ark. Select children to represent Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and their wives. Pair the remaining children into matching pairs of animals. You will need braying zebras, roaring lions, barking dogs, etc. Make sure each child knows what animal he is supposed to be. Once everyone is ready, have the children enter the ark.

Variation: Bring a wide, flat board to use as a gangplank. Lay it flat on the floor.



ENTERING THE ARK

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Glue and animal crackers.

Directions: Make copies of the page in the Craft Book. Have the children color the picture. Next, give each child some animal crackers to glue to the page, representing the animals entering the ark.

Entering the Ark
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God floods the earth • Genesis 6:5–7:24



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

SINK OR FLOAT

Fill a small washtub with water and place it in the center of the room. Direct the children to sit in a semicircle around the tub. Pick up an object and have the children guess whether it will float or sink. Put the object into the tub. Repeat with another object. Explain to the children what a flood is and where rain comes from. Tell them that in today's Bible story they will learn where the floodwater came from in Noah's time.

FIND YOUR PAIR

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Make two copies of the "Find Your Pair" sheet on cardstock. Cut out the cards, and group them by pairs. Use only as many pairs as you need—each child should have one card, and every card must have a match. Give one card to each child. When you say "go," each child should find the person whose card matches his own. When the two animals find each other, they should sit down. The last pair to find each other are out. Remove their cards, shuffle, and hand out again. Play until two children are left as the winners.



ILLUSTRATE

FILL THE FISH TANK

Bring in a large fish tank. Set it on a sturdy table or stand. Put gravel in the bottom. Decorate the "ground" however you wish. Put army men or other figures in the bottom (make sure they don't float). Make an ark (a block of wood or foam) and place it on the gravel as well. Have a number of buckets filled with water. When you get to the part of the story where God sent the rain, pour the buckets of water into the tank. This will illustrate the flood's devastating effects on the earth and the people in it.

ARK

Before class, draw an ark on a large piece of butcher paper. Cut out the ark and display it in the classroom. Another option is to make a large ark out of a refrigerator box. Some children may even be able to get inside.



APPLY

WALL OF WATER

Materials: White butcher paper, crayons, blue plastic wrap or cellophane, construction paper ark, glue, and typed out verses Genesis 6:8, 13.

Directions: Place a long piece of white butcher paper horizontally on the wall. Let the children draw scenes of birds, mountains, and creeping things. When the drawing is done, cover it with blue plastic wrap or cellophane to demonstrate that the flood covered everything. Then place a construction paper ark on top. Glue Genesis 6:13 on top of the water at the bottom edge and Gen 6:8 on the ark.

Variation: Give each child a vertical half sheet of white paper instead of using a long piece of white butcher paper.

AGES 9–11

**SPEED TEST**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Give the children the speed test. Tell them that all the instructions they need are on it and that they have four minutes to complete it. Explain to the children that in today's lesson they will see that God gave Noah instructions and Noah followed them because he was righteous.

CHARACTER STUDY

Ask the children to identify information about Noah as you read through Genesis 6:4–7:24. Have children raise their hands and share their answers with the class.

Name: Noah (Gen 6:8)

Age: 600 years old when floodwaters were on earth (Gen 7:6); lived to be 950 years old (Gen 9:29)

Family: Married (Gen 6:18); three sons (Gen 6:10); his three sons were married (Gen 6:18, 7:7, 13)

Character: Found grace in God's eyes (Gen 6:8), a just man (Gen 6:9), "perfect" in his generation (Gen 6:22, 7:5, 9, 16), and was righteous (Gen 7:1)

**AND THE MOUNTAINS WERE COVERED!**

Ask the children if they know the name of the tallest mountain on earth today. Show the children a picture of Mount Everest and ask whether anyone knows the elevation (29,035 feet). Explain that the tallest mountain in the area where the ark floated was Mount Ararat (near modern-day Turkey). The top of the mountain was about 17,000 feet high. We do not know the elevation of the highest pre-flood mountain (since the geography of the earth was changed so drastically by the flood), but the Bible does tell us that the floodwater rose 22.5 feet over the tallest mountain.

SIGNIFICANT REPETITIONS

Write the phrase "did according to all that God commanded him" on the board. As you teach through Genesis 6:4–7:16, tell the children to watch for this phrase or similar phrases (See Gen 6:22, 7:15, 9, 16). Ask the children why Moses repeatedly recorded this about Noah in this passage. Emphasize that Noah was an excellent example of obedience to God's commandments.

**SUGAR-CUBE ARK**

Materials: Precut cardboard bases (three feet by one foot), sugar cubes (210 cubes per group), liquid glue, colored markers.

Directions: Divide children into groups. Explain that God instructed Noah to build an ark that was perfectly designed to withstand the catastrophic events involved in the flood. Inform the groups that they will be building a sugar-cube model of the ark to scale. Each sugar cube represents 10 cubits. God told Noah to build an ark 300 cubits (30 sugar cubes) long, 50 cubits (5 sugar cubes) wide, and 30 cubits (3 sugar cubes) tall. Instruct the children to draw a legend in the bottom left corner of their cardboard base, writing out the scaled dimensions. Explain that each group must work together to build the ark accurately before the floodwater comes on the earth.





LESSON 6

God preserves Noah

GENESIS 8:1-9:17



God faithfully loves His people and keeps His promises.



"The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth" (Gen 9:16).

Supporting Truths

1. God keeps His promises.
2. God cares for His people.
3. The right response to God's faithfulness is to trust and worship Him.
4. God values life.
5. God established the Noahic Covenant.

Objectives

1. Describe how God ended the flood and the sign He gave to remind us of His promise.
2. List several of the five blessings God gave to Noah and his sons.
3. Describe how Noah trusted and worshiped God.
4. Explain why God values all life, but especially human life.
5. Explain how the Noahic Covenant renews and protects God's original plan.



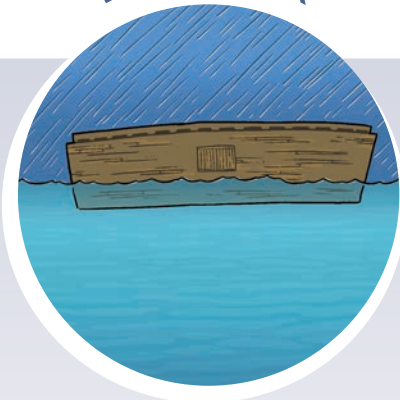
Lesson Summary

God promised to save Noah from the flood. Noah obeyed God's commands, and God rescued Noah and his family. God remembered Noah. He ended the flood, accepted Noah's burnt offering, and blessed Noah and his sons with renewed purpose and with new laws to restrain sin. God set up the rainbow as a sign of His mercy and faithfulness, promising never again to flood the earth.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God's covenant with Noah and the sign of a rainbow remind us that we are alive because God is faithful. If God were not faithful to His covenant, we would be without hope. But God has provided a way of salvation. He was faithful to Noah, and through Noah's descendants God faithfully raised up the promised seed. Now God continues to be faithful to all who trust in Jesus.

LAST WEEK



God floods the earth
Genesis 6:5–7:24

THIS WEEK



God preserves Noah
Genesis 8:1–9:17

NEXT WEEK



God judges the nations at Babel
Genesis 11:1–9

Lesson Commentary

God faithfully loves His people and keeps His promises.

The final words of Genesis chapter 7 capture the totality of God's judgment against sin: "[God] blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land" (7:23). This judgment encompassed everything that had breath—man, animals, insects, and birds. But God remembered Noah. Noah and those with him on the ark survived, floating on the water that covered the earth for 150 days (7:24). Noah obeyed God, and God graciously spared him, his family, and the animals with him.



THINK ABOUT IT

Noah did not trust in his own senses, but patiently waited for God's command to leave the ark.

God remembered Noah (8:1–17)

God did not forget about Noah during those five long months on the ark. God remembered him, providing for his needs and preparing for his return to land (8:1). To "remember"

someone in the biblical sense is more than recalling facts to mind, but it also includes care and action to ensure God's promises are kept. God was faithful to the **covenant**, an agreement between two or more people, like a promise, that He made to Noah before the flood (6:18).

Because God remembered Noah, the water on the earth began to recede. For the first time in this story, things began to get better. Up to this point (6:1–7:24), the situation had only gotten worse—mankind had become more and more evil, and God had responded with a flood that grew more and more severe. But beginning in chapter 8, God began to restore the earth. He caused a wind to pass over the water, and the water subsided (8:1). He closed the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven (8:2) ending the outpouring of water that began in Gen 7:11. The waters steadily receded from the earth (8:3), causing the ark to rest on the mountains of Ararat (8:4). The

water continued to recede, revealing the tops of the mountains (8:5). Before long, God commanded Noah to leave the ark (8:16). God remembered Noah. He was **faithful**, or trustworthy, doing exactly what He said He would do.

Noah obeyed God and worshiped Him (8:18–22)

Noah responded to God's faithful care with the same trusting obedience he had when getting onto the ark. While on the ark, he sent out a raven (8:6–7), a scavenger bird which was able to survive outside of the ark. But this did not mean the earth was ready to support life again, so Noah then sent out a dove three times (8:8–12). Doves cannot stay in the air as long as ravens, and they are more particular about the food they eat. So only after the third attempt did Noah know the earth was dry. Even so, Noah stayed on the ark for about another two full months, waiting for God's command to go out (8:13–14). Noah did not trust in his own senses, but patiently waited for God's command to leave the ark. God did not want Noah to leave the ark until the earth was completely dry; the words for "dry" in Gen 8:13 and Gen 8:14 are two different words, showing that though the surface was dry in Gen 8:13, the land was not yet ready for new life. Noah obeyed, just as he had before the flood.

As soon as Noah left the ark, he offered burnt offerings to the LORD (8:20). A **burnt offering** is an animal burned on an altar in order to show one's commitment to God. This proved his

faith, because he was sacrificing some of the very few remaining animals left on earth. It proved his love, showing his devotion to God. It also proved his desire for redemption, demonstrating his need for cleansing from sin. Because his first action after the flood was to make an offering, Noah reminds us that man was made in God's image in order to worship

THINK ABOUT IT

God will destroy the earth again, but not with water. God will incinerate the heavens and earth with intense heat (2 Pet 3:10)



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God preserves Noah • Genesis 8:1–9:17



God. The author of Genesis switches from “God” to “LORD” when referring to God in this section in order to emphasize God’s covenant name, the name associated with worship. That is why we exist—to worship God.

God was pleased by Noah’s offering. Even though the flood had not changed man’s sinful nature, God decided not to destroy the earth again with water (Gen 8:20–21). Because sin comes from within a person, not primarily from outside influences, the ultimate solution to sin is not to blame society or other people, but to seek God’s grace. As Noah’s offering shows, God gives that grace on the basis of an atoning sacrifice, which removes the guilt of sin.

God blessed Noah and his sons and made a covenant (9:1–17)

In Gen 8 God reversed the effects of the flood, and in Gen 9 God renewed His original creation. It was almost like a second creation. Genesis 8:1 had already hinted at this: “God made a wind to pass over the earth.” The word for wind is the same as the word for Spirit in Gen 1:2. Again God was creating order where there was none. God then renewed His original commands to man to be fruitful and multiply (9:1, 7; cf. 1:28) and to rule over creation (9:2; cf. 1:28). God also provided all the plants as food, just as He did in the beginning.

But not everything was perfect like it was in the Garden of Eden. The flood waters could not wash away the stain of sin. Man’s rule over animals now involved striking fear into them and permission to eat them. Also, God gave specific commands concerning life. First, even animal life was to be honored by not eating the blood. God values animal life because He created animals and because blood atones for sin (8:17; 9:4; Lev 17:11).

Second, even more than animal life, God values human life. Humans may kill animals for food, but they may never kill another human, except as punishment for

murder (Gen 9:5–6). Even animals are to be killed if they kill a human (9:5). This command was a direct response to the violence that filled the earth before the flood (Gen 6:11). Because man is made in God’s image, those who murder are destroying God’s special creation, so God justly condemns murderers to death.

God gave mankind the responsibility to carry out this punishment (9:6), but He does not allow personal revenge. Rather, God established human government to have the authority and responsibility to investigate and execute murderers (Num 35:15–34; Rom 13:1–5). Failure to kill murderers is disobedience (Num 35:33). This is a strong warning not to let corruption or a faulty understanding of mercy stand in the way of justice. When sin goes unpunished, the whole community is affected.

The permission to eat plants and animals and the commands to multiply, to rule, and to respect life are all blessings from God (Gen 9:1). The story ends with one final blessing, God’s covenant to never flood the earth again, and the sign of the rainbow as a reminder of God’s promise (9:8–17). God chose to show favor to Noah (6:8), and now, after Noah’s faithful obedience, God has showered him and his sons with blessings—blessings we still enjoy today. Through Noah’s descendants God faithfully raised up the promised seed (Gen 3:15). May the rainbow always draw us to thank God for His blessings.

THINK ABOUT IT
God established the sacredness of human life. Those who take life forfeit their own.



Lesson Outline

God faithfully loves His people and keeps His promises.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God remembered Noah and ended the flood (8:1–17).
2. God was happy when Noah offered sacrifices (8:18–22).
3. God gave a rainbow as a sign of the promise that He would never flood the earth again (9:8–17)

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **God remembered Noah (8:1–17).**
 - When God remembered Noah, he caused the water to decrease (8:1–3).
 - The water decreased until the ark rested on a mountain (8:4–5).
 - Noah sent out a raven and a dove until he knew the earth was dry (8:6–14).
 - God told Noah he could now leave the ark (8:15–17).
2. **Noah obeyed God and worshiped Him (8:18–22).**
 - Noah obeyed by exiting the ark along with all the animals he had saved (8:18–19).
 - Noah worshiped by gratefully offering burnt offerings to the LORD (8:20).
 - The LORD was pleased and decided never again to flood the earth (8:21–22).
3. **God blessed Noah and his sons and made a covenant (9:1–17).**
 - God blessed them by renewing man's rule over the earth and giving animals for food (9:1–3).
 - God blessed them by renewing His command to have children to fill the earth (9:1, 7).
 - God blessed them by commanding them not to eat blood to show the value of life (9:4).
 - God blessed them by making a law to kill murderers (9:5–6).
 - God blessed them by giving the rainbow as a sign of His promise never to flood the earth again (9:8–17).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who obeyed God and got into the ark?**
Noah and his family (Gen 7:2–3).
- 2. What happened during the flood?**
It rained for 40 days and 40 nights, and water covered the entire earth.
- 3. When Noah and his family got off the ark, what did Noah do?**
Noah built an altar and burned an offering of thanks to God.
- 4. What was God's promise, and what did God put in the sky so that people could remember the promise?**
God put a rainbow in the sky to remind people that He would never again send a flood to cover the entire earth (Gen 9:12–17).



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What two animals did Noah send out to see whether the land had dried?**
He sent a raven and a dove.
- 2. How did Noah know when the land had dried?**
The third time he sent out the dove, it did not return.
- 3. After he left the ark, how did Noah worship God?**
He built an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings.
- 4. How did God respond to Noah's sacrifice?**
He was pleased.
- 5. What command did God renew after Noah left the ark?**
It was the same command that God had given to Adam and Eve—be fruitful and multiply.
- 6. What command did God give Noah concerning animals?**
Man was now allowed to eat them, once the blood had been removed.
- 7. What law did God give Noah concerning man?**
If any man or animal killed someone, he or it was to be put to death, because man was made in God's image.
- 8. God made a covenant with mankind and all living creatures. What was it, and what was the sign?**
God said that He would never again destroy the entire earth with a flood. The rainbow was to be the sign of the covenant.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



RAINBOW MURAL

Draw a rainbow on a large sheet of paper. Have children tear colored construction or tissue paper and glue the pieces on the rainbow. Tell the children that today they will learn that the rainbow is a symbol of a very special promise from God.

ARK RELAY

Materials: One-inch squares of brown paper, two glue sticks, and two drawings of an ark.

Directions: Divide the children into two teams. Tape the ark drawings to a wall, and place a glue stick and a pile of paper squares on the floor underneath each drawing. Have the teams line up, single file, on the opposite side of the room. When you say “go,” the first child from each team should race to their team’s ark. He should pick up one paper square, glue it to the ark, and return to the end of his team’s line. The first team to finish wins.



HERE COMES A STORM

Fan the children with a cookie sheet to simulate wind blowing. Spray a water bottle above their heads to illustrate the rain. Flash the lights in the room to represent lightning. Have children stomp their feet quickly to simulate thunder.

GOD’S PROMISE HAND MOTIONS

God made wind blow;
(Hands on sides of mouth and blow).
The waters went low:
(Hold hands out to sides, palms down; slowly lower).
Raven and dove flew to and fro.
(Hook thumbs together, flap hands; move back and forth).
God sent His bow,
(Spread fingers; move hands overhead.)
And now we know
(Point to temple.)
He won’t again flood land below.
(Shake head back and forth while wiggling fingers and lowering hands in rain motion.)

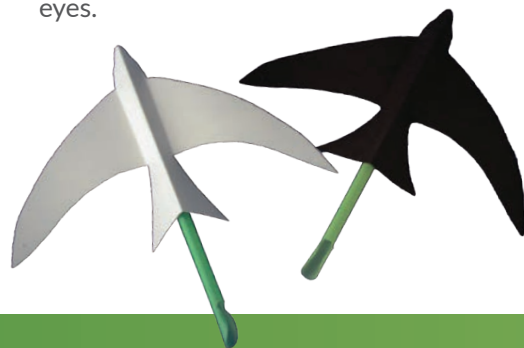


PAPER DOVE/RAVEN

Materials: Black & white construction paper, scissors, tape, and straw.

Directions: Cut sheets of black and white construction paper into 8 ½ x 5 ½-inch pieces. Fold them in half to make a 4 ¼ x 5 ½-inch rectangle. Cut a wing shape from the folded side to the other end. When you open the page, it should make the shape of a bird. Fold down each wing, leaving a half inch from the bottom. Tape a straw to the bird. Each child should go home with one dove and one raven. Practice various bird shapes before you make the template for the children.

Variation: The black and white construction-paper birds can be glued onto 8 ½ x 11-inch construction paper. Glue on plastic eyes.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God preserves Noah • Genesis 8:1–9:17



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

HUMAN RAINBOW

As the children enter the class, look for those wearing the various colors of the rainbow. Before beginning the lesson, call the children up and arrange them by color. The order of the rainbow is red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. Ask the children if they know what a rainbow represents. Tell them that in today's lesson they will learn about God's promise to Noah.

Variation: Bring different colored items and pass them out to the children.

WAITING TO GET OUT

Review Gen 8:13–16 with the class. Note that Noah determined the land was dry but waited for God's command to leave the ark. That command came almost two months later. Have the children sit on the floor while another teacher sets the tables with snacks. Show the children that everything is ready, but tell them that they must wait for your instruction to get their snacks. When you give the command, it's only for going to the snack, not eating it. Tell the children that first, like Noah, they should thank God.



ILLUSTRATE

UNDER WATER

At the beginning of the lesson, illustrate that the world was entirely immersed in water by dunking an inflated globe in a large bucket of water. Explain to the children that God made a wind blow to dry up the water. Ask the children to blow like the wind, and then remove the globe from the water.

PRISM RAINBOW

Bring a prism or crystal to class. Hold it where it will catch daylight, and refract the light onto a wall or another lightly colored surface (maybe paper). When we move the prism around, are the colors always in the same order? What are we seeing? What have we seen outdoors that looks like this? The first rainbow was seen on what occasion? What did it mean?



APPLY

GOD'S PROMISES

Materials: Cupcake liner, pipe cleaner, markers, rainbow stickers.

Directions: Let each child make an umbrella from a cupcake liner and a pipe cleaner. The children can color the liners with marker. Place a rainbow sticker on each umbrella. Push the pipe cleaner through the middle and make a tiny loop in the end over the top so it can't slip through. Form a curve in the other end of the pipe cleaner for the handle. Talk about God's promises in the Bible.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

PROJECTOR RAINBOW

Pour three to four inches of water into a clear plastic container, and set it on an overhead projector. Cover the front of the small upper projection lens with paper. Explain to the children that when white light passes between air and water, each color bends by a slightly different amount (a process called refraction). The result is the dispersion of white light into its many component colors.

NEWSWORTHY FLOODS

Gather information about recent floods that have occurred around the world. Read excerpts from news reports that tell the extent of the areas damaged. Use this discussion to help children understand that these floods were quite small in comparison to the worldwide flood of the Bible. Emphasize that we can be confident that God will never again flood the entire earth. This is because of the Noahic Covenant, which we will study in today's lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Ask the children to give you examples of important things they or their parents try to remember. Use this discussion to share the meaning of the word remember as used in Gen 8:1. Children may equate the word remember with simply “not forgetting.” Emphasize that “remembering” Noah meant God expressed concern for Noah and revisited him with gracious love.

THE POWER OF WATER

Show the class a video clip from a documentary on hurricanes or floods. Here are some suggested videos:

- *20th Century with Mike Wallace. Underwater: The Great Flood of '93* A&E Entertainment, 1998.
- *Deadly Forces: Killer Storms/ Savage Seas* TLC Video, 2000.
- *Raging Planet: Flood* Discovery Channel Video, 1998.
- *Tornado! Hurricane! Flood!* *Wonders of Weather* Discovery Channel Video, 2000



APPLY

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

After the lesson, ask children to note similarities and differences between this lesson and previous studies in Gen.

1. Contrast the beginning of the flood in Gen 6:5–7:24 with the culmination of the flood in Gen 8:1–19.
2. Compare God's command to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:26–31 with His command to Noah and his family in Gen 8:15–19, 9:1–7.
3. Compare Abel's sacrifice in Genesis 4:1–4 with Noah's offering in Gen 8:20–22.
4. Contrast what man could eat before the flood in Gen 1:29–31 with what man could eat after the flood in Gen 9:1–4.
5. Contrast God's curse on man and all creation in Gen 3:14–19 with God's covenant with Noah, his descendants, and all creation in Gen 9:8–17.



LESSON 7

God judges the nations at Babel

GENESIS 11:1-9



God defeats the proud.



"So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city" (Gen 11:8).

Supporting Truths

1. God punishes sin.
2. God is opposed to the proud.
3. Pride is boasting in man instead of in God.
4. Pride is transgression—crossing God's boundaries.
5. God is sovereign.

Objectives

1. Describe how God overturned the people's work.
2. Identify God's punishment of the proud people.
3. Explain what it means that they wanted to make a name for themselves.
4. Explain how the people tried to gain access to heaven on their own terms.
5. Match up the people's efforts to God's responses to show how God was in control.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges the nations at Babel • Genesis 11:1–9



Lesson Summary

After the flood, the people were supposed to worship God and fill the earth. But at Babel, the people disobeyed God's command to spread through all the earth, failed to worship God, and sought to honor themselves instead of God. But God defeated all their plans by confusing their language and forcing them to scatter.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The people at Babel chose to put their own glory on display instead of God's. In response to their sin, God scattered the people by confusing their languages. However, one day people from every language will be united in praising God because God's plan is to save people from every language through faith in His son, Jesus Christ.

LAST WEEK



God preserves Noah
Genesis 8:1–9:17

THIS WEEK



**God judges the nations
at Babel**
Genesis 11:1–9

NEXT WEEK



**God makes a promise
to Abram**
Genesis 11:27–12:9

FALL

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God defeats the proud.

After the flood, God commanded Noah and his sons to fill the earth (Gen 9:1), and Noah showed the way mankind should respond to God—with worship (8:20). Unfortunately, after several generations had gone by (Gen 10), mankind violated both of these principles. In the story of the tower of Babel, the people tried to resist God's command to fill the whole earth, and they tried to exalt themselves rather than God. But the people failed because God is **sovereign**, or in control of everything, everywhere, all the time. This story is about God undoing man's sinful plans so that He can accomplish His own plan.

The people had a sinful plan (11:1–4)

The people gathered together in Shinar, in southern Mesopotamia (11:2). To keep from being scattered, they decided to build a city (11:4). They used resources common to the area: fire-hardened bricks joined together with tar (11:3).

Genesis 11:4 explains their **rebellion**, which was their intentional resistance against God. First, they decided to build a city with a tower reaching into heaven. This tower was not an attempt to literally build up to heaven; rather, it was likely a ziggurat.

Ziggurats were massive structures shaped like a pyramid with a flat top. They were built by the Sumerians, Babylonians, Elamites, Akkadians, and Assyrians. Ziggurats had

shrines on top for pagan worship, representing the link between gods and men, between heaven and earth. Men were attempting to worship false gods in a way of their own choosing, rather than worshiping the true God through obedience. God alone dwells in heaven, so by building a tower to connect to the heavenly world on their own, the people were trying to reach heaven by themselves without God's help.

Second, they sinned by being **proud** or thinking they were more important than they were, even more important than God. They honored themselves instead of God by wanting to make a name for themselves (11:4). This sets up the story of God calling Abram, when God said that He would make Abram's name great (12:2). When humans worship God and not themselves, God makes their name great; in fact, God allows them to be called by the greatest name: His own (Jer 15:16). The name of God, received through faithful obedience, is far greater than any human name puffed up by pride.

Third, they decided to stay together in one place in direct opposition to God's command (Gen 11:4). Again, this was **sin**, or disobeying God in thought, word, or action. It was disobedience to God's command to not spread out through the whole earth (9:1). For these three reasons they deserved to be punished: (1) they crossed their God-given boundaries (Prov 29:6), (2) they boasted in themselves instead of in God (Jer 9:23–24), and (3) they disobeyed God's command (Deut 8:20).

God defeated the people's sinful plan (11:5–9)

The Hebrew words chosen throughout Gen 11:1–9 express strong irony. In fact, it is almost like a comedy to see mankind at their strongest fail so miserably against a God who easily defeats all their efforts. The words and ideas of Gen 11:5–9 match up with those in Gen 11:1–4, showing how at each step of the way God ruined their plan (see table).

But first, God came down to see what was happening (11:5). Of course God knew what was going on, but the language here pictures God having to stoop down even to see the tower that the people thought was so impressive. In God's eyes, it was puny. God saw their abuse of the common language and their united commitment to rebel, so He began to undo their evil plans (11:6).



THINK ABOUT IT
Pride is making much of man and little of God.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges the nations at Babel • Genesis 11:1–9



Just as the people said, “Come, let us make bricks” (11:3), so now God responded, “Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language” (11:7). The people made bricks to construct a city, but God confused their language and sent everyone out. Similarly, Genesis 11:3 begins, “They said to one another.” Genesis 11:7 undoes their efforts at communication, using the same phrase for “one another” when it says “that they may not understand one another’s speech.” They tried to communicate a sinful plan with one another, but God made communication impossible.

Again, Genesis 11:2 describes how they settled “there” in the land of Shinar, but Genesis 11:8 reverses this process as God scattered them from “there.” They tried to come together; God drove them apart. Yet again, Genesis 11:1 describes how “the whole earth” spoke one language, but Genesis 11:9 describes how God intervened to confuse the language of “all the earth.” God took away the gift of one language they had tried to use against Him.

Before God Punished	After God Punished
(11:1) “the whole earth” used the same language	(11:9) God confused the language of “the whole earth”
(11:2) the people settled “there”	(11:8) God scattered the people from “there”
(11:3) the people spoke to “one another”	(11:7) God made it impossible to understand “one another”
(11:3) people said “Come, let us make bricks”	(11:7) God said “Come let Us...confuse their language”

So when the people tried to make a name for themselves, they did get a name. But it was not a name of honor. Forever they would be remembered by the name “Babel”, which means “confusion”. They were famous, not for their greatness, but for God’s punishment of their failed attempt to reach heaven by their own effort. God had turned all their rebellious efforts upside down.

Sinful man is powerless before God. The story of Babel is a reminder of God’s judgment of sin in the days of Noah. God destroyed the world with a flood because of human sin. In the story of Babel, God prevented human sin from attaining that kind of level again. Even the combined efforts of sinful man are nothing compared to God. Genesis 11 is a picture of the greatness of God and the weakness of man. God defeats every effort of those who are His enemies.

This is critical to understand for all those who oppose God. God punished the people at Babel by confusing their language and causing them to separate from one another and gather where their own language was spoken. James, the half brother of Jesus, records God’s evaluation of the proud: He is opposed to them (Jas 4:6). Those who think they are more important than they really are, or think they are more important than God have become God’s enemy. Because of their pride they are separated from God and His grace.

However, in the same verse, James also records God’s kindness towards the humble: They receive God’s grace. Those who recognize their own weakness and sin and call out to God for help receive His grace. They are raised up to the heights of heaven by God’s strength and God’s work—the forgiveness of sins through Jesus’ death on the cross. One day people from every language will be united in one place praising God. This is because God’s plan is to save people from every language by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

THINK ABOUT IT
Man’s greatest achievements, viewed from the heights of heaven, are seen for what they really are—nothing.



Lesson Outline

God defeats the proud.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The people sinned by disobeying God's command to fill the earth (11:1–4).
2. God scattered the sinful people by confusing their language (11:5–9).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The people had a sinful plan (11:1–4).
 - They had one language and lived in one place (11:1–2).
 - They planned to build a city and a tower to reach into heaven (11: 3–4).
 - They wanted to make their own name great (11: 4).
 - They did not want to be scattered (11: 4).
2. God defeated the people's sinful plan (11:5–9).
 - God came down to see their city and tower (11: 5).
 - God chose to confuse their language (11: 6–7).
 - God scattered them, and the building stopped (11: 8).
 - The name Babel became a reminder of God confusing human pride (11: 9).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Did God tell the people to spread out over the earth?**
Yes.
2. **Did the people obey?**
No. Many of them settled in Shinar.
3. **What did they do?**
They built a tower to be famous and powerful.
4. **What did the Lord do?**
He confused their languages and scattered them over the earth.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Do you remember what God told Noah in Genesis 9:1?**
God told him to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”
2. **Were the men who settled in the plain of Shinar obeying God?**
No. God told man through Noah to fill all the earth.
3. **What did the men say that they wanted to do?**
They wanted to build a city for themselves and make their name great.
4. **What did the people mean when they said, “Let us make for ourselves a name” (Gen 11:4)?**
The people wanted to show how great they were. They were proud and sinful.
5. **What did the Lord think of what the people were doing?**
He did not like that the people were being disobedient to His commands.
6. **What did the Lord decide to do?**
God caused the people to speak many different languages.
7. **What happened after God confused their language?**
The people were scattered because it was impossible to understand their neighbors.
God made them stop building the city.
8. **Where were the people scattered?**
The people were scattered over the face of the whole earth.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



TALL TOWER

Place blocks in the center of the room. Instruct the children to work together to build the tallest tower they can. Tell them that they will hear a story about some people who built a very tall tower.

Variation: Have the children build a city with blocks.

SPREADING OUT

Have the children hold hands and form a circle. Say, "Crowd together." The children should go to the center of the circle and try to get as close to one another as they can without breaking hands. Say, "Spread out." The children should break hands and spread throughout the room, putting as much space between one another as possible. Noah's children and grandchildren did not want to obey God and spread out. They wanted to stay close together. They thought they could have a great and powerful city if they stayed together.



LETTER MIX-UP

Start the lesson by holding up a magnetic board with alphabet magnets on it. Talk about the ABCs with the children. Start pulling the letters off one by one and dropping them into a bowl. When all the letters are in the bowl, mix them up with your hand to illustrate that the language was confused.

LANGUAGE OF LOVE

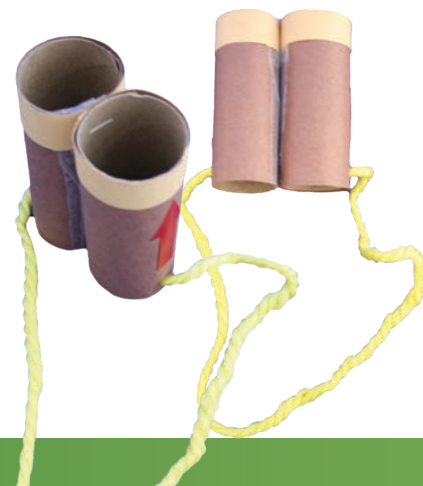
On a small piece of paper, write "I love you" in various languages, including English. This is for your own use. Use a puppet to say "I love you" in different languages. Ask the children, "What did I say?" After they guess, tell them what the puppet said and ask them to repeat the phrase that you just said.



PAPER-TUBE BINOCULARS

Materials: Paper tubes, hole punch, yarn.

Directions: Let the children decorate two paper tubes that you have stapled together. Punch two holes at one end of the paper tubes. Attach a piece of yarn to the holes so the "binoculars" can hang around the neck. Let the children look around with their binoculars. Talk about what you can see and how God can see everything at once. God doesn't need binoculars; He could see the people of Babel building the tower, disobeying Him, and thinking they were strong.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges the nations at Babel • Genesis 11:1–9



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

BILINGUAL SURPRISE

Play a game that requires you to give verbal instructions (“Simon Says,” for example). In the middle of the game, begin speaking another language. Let the children feel the confusion. After a few minutes, sit down and talk about what happened and how confusing it was to not be able to understand the language.

PIN A PERSON ON THE WORLD

Tape a large world map to the wall. Let the children cut pictures of people from magazines. Let the children take turns being blindfolded, walking up to the map, and taping a person on the map. For younger children, don’t use a blindfold. Simply let them tape the faces on the map. Talk about how the people at Babel were scattered so they would listen to God and obey Him rather than trying to do mighty things in their own power.



ILLUSTRATE

I CAN SEE YOU

Bring in a pair of binoculars. Describe how they work. Talk about how God can see everything at once. He doesn’t need binoculars. God saw the people of Babel building the tower, disobeying Him, and thinking they were strong.

ROLL CALL

Tell children to stand when you call their names. After you call all their names and the children are standing, tell them to sit back down when they hear their name again. This time, call out their names (first and last) in pig latin. Some children will recognize their names right away. Repeat the names of children who remain standing until they finally recognize them. Is pig latin really another language? Wouldn’t it be great if it were this easy to understand another language? How would you feel if everyone around you spoke a different language and you were not being understood or understanding others?



APPLY

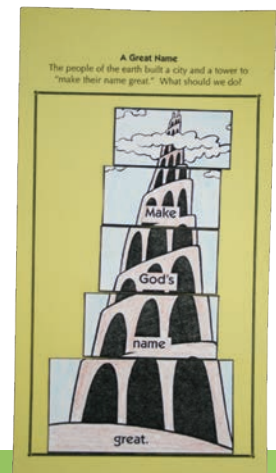
A GREAT NAME

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, glue, scissors.

Directions: The people of the earth built a city and a tower to make a name for themselves. Have children cut out the pieces of the tower. Have them “build” the tower and glue it in place to find out whose name we *should* make great.

A Great Name
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



AGES 9–11

**GREETINGS**

Before class, make a chart of greetings in various languages. As the children settle down for the Bible lesson, greet them in another language. Show them the chart and practice the greetings together. Tell them that in today's lesson they will hear where and why God created different languages.

TOWER OF BABEL SLIDE SHOW

Make a slide-show presentation of various ziggurats. There are a number of Internet sites that have pictures you can download. (Note: You may have to get permission to use the pictures.) We are not sure that the tower of Babel was a ziggurat, but it is possible, since ziggurats were common before the time of Abraham.

**LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD**

Bring in recordings of different languages. Ask the children whether they can guess what language the people are speaking and what is being said. Ask the children what languages they've heard others speak (or can speak themselves). Use the globe to point out different countries and tell children which language is spoken there. Tell the children that there was a time when everyone in the world spoke one language but that today there are thousands of languages spoken around the world.

TRIP AROUND THE WORLD

Ask the children where they would go if they could travel anywhere in the world. Allow a few children to give answers. Point out that many children will likely have different answers. Explain that after the flood all the people chose to live in the same place in disobedience to God's command to fill the earth. Tell the children that this disobedience was motivated by a prideful desire to display the power of man.

**LEARNING ABOUT MISSIONARIES**

Tape pictures of your church's missionaries onto a world map, marking the countries in which they serve. Display the map in the classroom. Explain to the class the different languages these missionaries must learn in order to speak the truth in those countries.



LESSON 8

God makes a promise to Abram

GENESIS 11:27-12:9



God blesses the world through Abram.



"Now the LORD said to Abram... 'I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Gen 12:1-3).

Supporting Truths

1. God is good.
2. God's blessing comes through faith.
3. God's blessing comes through the Messiah.
4. God chooses whom He will bless.
5. God's goodness overcomes obstacles.

Objectives

1. List a few of the seven blessings God promised to Abram.
2. Describe what Abram did that proved that he believed God.
3. Explain how God's story focuses on the family line of the Messiah.
4. Compare God's choice of Abram to His choice of Noah and Shem.
5. Identify two obstacles that seemed like they might stop God's plan.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God makes a promise to Abram • Genesis 11:27–12:9



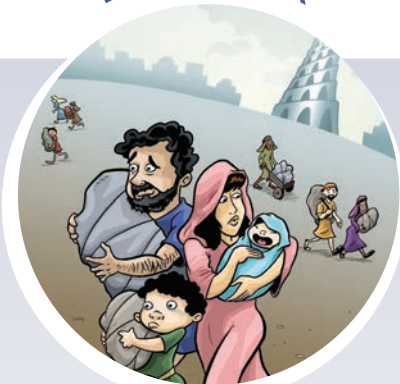
Lesson Summary

At the tower of Babel, the people were divided into many nations. Out of all these nations God chose one man, Abram, to be the father of a nation special to God. These people were chosen by God to be a blessing to all nations. But for this blessing to come, Abram had to believe God, leave his home and family, and go to an unknown place that God would show him. Abram did believe and obey, so in response to his faith, God confirmed his covenant and added the additional blessing of a promised land.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The tower of Babel shows that people continued to sin after the days of Noah. The flood could not wash away the stain of sin. However, God's promise to crush the power of Satan by the seed of the woman also continued (Gen 3:15) after the flood. Through Abram's descendant, Jesus, God has blessed all nations. But to receive this blessing, we must trust God just as Abram did.

LAST WEEK



**God judges the nations
at Babel**

Genesis 11:1–9

THIS WEEK



**God makes a promise
to Abram**

Genesis 11:27–12:9

NEXT WEEK



**Abraham and Sarah
doubt God**

*Genesis 16:1–6;
17:15–21; 18:1–15*

FALL

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God blesses the world through Abram.

As a result of the tragedy of Genesis 3 (the fall of Adam and Eve), man's perfect relationship with God was lost. Sin now separated God and man. Man's only hope was that his relationship with God might be restored through the removal of sin (something he could not accomplish himself). But God had a plan. This plan began in the Garden after man's first sin with God's promise of a seed who would defeat Satan (3:15). This plan continued with God's promise to Abram. God chose Abram's offspring as a people for himself, through whom He would also bring salvation to all nations.

Abram belonged to a specially chosen family (11:27–32)

A new story begins in Genesis 11:27: "Now these are the records of the generations of Terah." This new story is about Terah's descendants, specifically about Abram, Terah's son. But before talking about Abram, Moses tells us about Abram's family. It is important to know that Abram was a son of Terah for two reasons. First, Terah was from the line of Shem, and Shem received Noah's blessing in Genesis 9:26: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem." God had chosen to call a special people from the line of Shem, and Jesus would one day be born to the line of Shem.

Second, Abram's father is important because of what Terah failed to do. Terah lived in Ur, then in Haran, two cities that were centers of moon worship. Terah himself was an idol worshiper (Josh 24:2). So even though there were already signs of God's blessing to the line of Shem, there were also obstacles preventing that blessing. God was the God of Shem, but He was not the God of Terah.

Terah's idolatry was not the only obstacle to God's blessing. Sarai was **barren**, or unable to have children (Gen 11:30). This statement is a major problem: how

can a great nation and a blessing come from Abram if he has no children? God focuses on this problem to prove the faith of Abram and Sarai and to demonstrate His power. So Moses introduces the call of Abram by connecting back to the line of Adam, Noah, and Shem, the line of the Messiah. But he also sets up problems that only a great God can resolve.

God called Abram to begin a specially chosen people (12:1–3)

The call begins by saying, "The LORD said," not "God said."

It uses the name LORD, or Yahweh, the name God uses especially with His covenant people. This name reflects God's purpose to have a people for Himself, a people who dwell with Him as His own. The LORD is calling Abram to be His own, to begin a nation to be His own, and to call people from all nations to be His own (Exod 19:5).

The LORD promised blessing, but also demanded faith. He required Abram to leave his family and his country (Gen 12:1). In

the modern day, travel is much easier, but in those days it was difficult and dangerous. Security and stability were found only in the extended family living together. So asking Abram to give this up was asking Abram to trust not in any human resources, but in God alone. God did not even tell Him where to go. He just told Abram to leave and trust that God would guide him to the right place.

After commanding Abram to leave, God told him why: in order to receive great blessing. A **blessing** is a gift that is not earned. God promised to do seven good things, with the promises expanding outward from Abram to the whole world.

1. Despite Sarai's barrenness, **God would make Abram a great nation (12:2a)**. Through the

THINK ABOUT IT
God calls man
before man ever
comes to God.



THINK ABOUT IT
Abram had to
walk by faith, not
by sight.



THINK ABOUT IT
Genuine faith is
proven and purified
through problems
(Jas 1:2–4).

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God makes a promise to Abram • Genesis 11:27–12:9



people of Israel God would reveal His Word, and through Israel God would send the Savior.

2. God promised to **bless Abram (12:2b)**.
3. God promised to **make Abram's name great (12:2c)**. Adam and Eve tried to make themselves great by eating the forbidden fruit. The people at Babel tried to make a name for themselves by building a tower to heaven. In contrast, God is telling Abram not to honor his own name, but to trust God to give him an honored name. What name? God named him Abraham, which means "father of many" (Gen 17:5).
4. God promised that Abram **would be a blessing (12:2d)**.
5. God promised to **bless those who bless Abram (12:3a)**.
6. God promised to **curse those who curse Abram (12:3b)**.
7. God promised to **bless all the families of the earth through Abram (12:3c)**. This is the climax of God's blessing. God's curse in Genesis 3 had affected all mankind, but now God speaks a blessing that will one day do away with the curse completely. Through Abram God would grow a nation to proclaim Him, and all the world can now benefit from the Word of God delivered through the people of Israel (Rom 3:2). Also, through the people of Israel would one day come a Savior for the whole world, even for Gentiles (Acts 10). The call of Abram thus carries forward the story of God's redemptive plan that He first promised in Genesis 3:15 with the promise of a seed who would crush Satan. Truly God is good. He pours out blessing simply because He is so good.

Abram obeyed God and God led him to a specially promised land (12:4–9)

God's blessings sound incredible, but Abram had to prove that he believed what God said by obeying God's difficult command. And he did, just "as the LORD had spoken to him." Even though he was already 75, he left his land and his relatives, packed up all his possessions, and left, without even knowing his final destination (Heb 11:8).

His journey was a journey by **faith**: he was trusting God. The pattern was prayer, then progress, then prayer, then progress. Twice he stopped to build an altar to the LORD and worship Him. The word for altar is "a place of slaughter." Like Abel and Noah before him, Abram communed with God by means of a blood sacrifice. The first altar happened to be at Shechem (Gen 12:6–7), which was right in the center of the territory God was going to give him. In response to Abram's faith, God revealed the land that would belong to Abram and to his descendants, adding the land as one more promise to the ones already given (12:7).

Abram exemplifies the man who believes God is **good**. He believed that God loves to help and bless. Abram walked by faith, not by sight. When Moses wrote Genesis, this record of Abram and the names of places Israel was about to return to (Shechem, Bethel, Ai, and the oak of Moreh) would have been a great encouragement to them to trust that God is good. And God is good—to all people. God promised that through Abram "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (12:3). How would they be blessed? Through the salvation offered through Jesus, the son of Abraham (Matt 1:1). But to receive this blessing, we must trust God just as Abram did.

THINK ABOUT IT
The rich man who lived in Haran became a nomad living in tents.



Lesson Outline

God blesses the world through Abram.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God blessed Abram by promising many children (12:2).
2. God blessed Abram by blessing the whole world through him (12:3).
3. To receive God's blessing, Abram obeyed God and left his home (12:1, 4–9).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Abram belonged to a specially chosen family (11:27–32).
 - Abram's father Terah was from the blessed family of Shem (11:27; 9:26).
 - The blessing seemed to have a problem: Abram's wife Sarai was barren (11:29–30).
 - Terah moved with his family from Ur to Haran but failed to reach Canaan (11:31).
2. God called Abram to begin a specially chosen people (12:1–3).
 - God told Abram to leave his family's land and go to a land He would show him (12:1).
 - God promised to make Abram into a great nation (12:2a).
 - God promised to bless Abram and make his name famous (12:2b).
 - God promised to make Abram a blessing to others, to all the families of the earth (12:2c–3).
3. Abram obeyed God and God led him to a specially promised land (12:4–9).
 - Abram left Haran with Sarai, Lot, and all their possessions (12:4–5).
 - When Abram came into Canaan at Shechem, God promised Abram all that land (12:6–7).
 - Abram built an altar to worship God at Shechem and again at Bethel (12:7–8).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Where did Abram live?**
Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldeans and in Haran.
2. **What did God tell Abram to do?**
God told Abram to leave the place where people worshiped idols.
3. **How would God bless Abram?**
God would make Abram into a great nation.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Where did Abram live?**
Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldeans and in Haran.
2. **What did God tell Abram to do?**
God told Abram to get out of his country, away from his family and from his father's house.
3. **Why did God tell Abram to leave the city of Ur?**
The people of Ur worshiped false gods called idols. God did not want Abram to be like those people.
4. **What did God call that place where Abram was to go?**
God called it "the land which I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). This was going to be a special land for Abram and his family.
5. **What happened when Abram arrived in the land of Canaan?**
God promised Abram that Canaan would belong to his children.
6. **What did God promise Abram?**
God promised to make Abram a great nation; to bless Abram, to make Abram's name great; to make Abram a blessing; to bless those who blessed Abram; to curse those who cursed Abram; and to bless all the families of the earth through Abram.
7. **What did Abram do after God promised him the land of Canaan?**
Abram built an altar and thanked God.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



GOING ON A TRIP

Have the children sit in a circle. Have each child say what he would take on a trip. Tell the children that in today's lesson they will learn about a man who took a trip to his new home.

FAMILIES

Let each child tell the class how many people are in their family (you could include pets, too!). Explain that in today's lesson we will learn about a man God promised to make a great nation (Gen 12:2).



PACKED SUITCASE

Bring a suitcase filled with bags of pennies (wealth); stuffed sheep or cows (herds or flocks); and blankets, a pot and pan, and clothes (possessions). Start the lesson by asking the children what they would bring if they were moving to a foreign country. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about a man named Abram and how God called him to live in a new land. Open the suitcase and describe the various things Abram took with him when he moved.

COUNTING THE STARS

Bring in a telescope. Explain how it is used and how it allows us to see many more stars than we could see just using our eyes. Tell the children that even with a telescope there are more stars than we can count. Explain to the children that God told Abram that he would make his descendants great like the number of stars in the sky.



GOD IS MY SHIELD

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, cardstock, crayons.

Directions: Genesis 15:1 tells us that God comforted Abram by reminding him that He was his shield. Discuss why Abram would need God as a shield (possibly to protect him from his enemies after freeing Lot). Copy the shield (in craft book) onto cardstock for each child. Have children cut out the shield and color the cross red and the stars blue. Cut strips of cardstock (2 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches) for each child to attach to the back for a handle. Read Ephesians 6:10–18. Discuss what the shield of faith can do. How might the flaming arrows of Satan be put out by using our shield of faith?



God Is My Shield
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God makes a promise to Abram • Genesis 11:27–12:9



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

INTRODUCE A FRIEND

Ask each child to introduce another child by giving his name and telling the class one thing he knows about the child. When every child has had a turn, open your Bible and tell the children you are going to introduce them to a new person in the Bible lesson today. His name is Abram, and they can read about him in the book of Genesis.

PROMISES, PROMISES

Explain to the class that a covenant is: 1) an unchanging agreement between two people or groups of people, 2) designed to establish friendship or peace, 3) accompanied by clear conditions, an oath, witnesses, and ratified by a written contract and sacrifice, and 4) identified by salt, shaking hands, feasts, gifts, or pillars.

Make a covenant with the class. Choose two children to swear by it, designate the rest of the class as witnesses, and ratify by having two children sign a contract. Have them shake hands at the end. Give each child a little bag of salt, with a tag highlighting the meaning of a covenant, to take home as a reminder.



ILLUSTRATE

TRAVEL AND TENTS

Set up a small tent, or throw blankets over a table to make a tent. When you talk about setting up and taking down tents, have another teacher set up or take down the tent. This will need to be done quickly as you talk about how the people set up the tents and took them down day after day.

JOURNEY BY FAITH

Ask for 2 volunteers. Place a blindfold over the eyes of the first volunteer. Tell the second volunteer to guide the blindfolded child safely to the other side of the room. Explain that in today's lesson we will learn about a man who trusted God by moving to a new country even though he didn't know where he was going (Heb 11:8).



APPLY

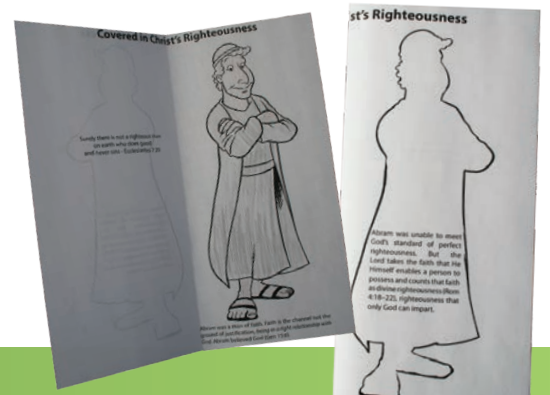
COVERED IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Crayons, paper with outline of person, larger cutout of person, tissue paper, glue.

Directions: Print the two sheets in the Year 1 Craft Book double-sided onto one sheet of paper. Give each child a copy. Encourage the children to color the person completely (or clothe the person with glued-on tissue paper). Explain that this is a picture of a sinner covered with sin. Fold the piece of paper so that the outline of the man covers the colored picture. Explain that Christ lived a perfectly righteous life and that He imputes (credits) that righteousness to those who believe in Him and confess Him as Lord and Savior.

Covered in Christ's Righteousness
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



AGES 9–11

**FUTURES, PART ONE**

Use with “Futures, Part Two”. Cut three slips of paper. On the first write, “God will make me very fruitful.” On the second write, “God will make many nations come from me.” On the third write, “God will make kings come from me.” Give the slips to three different children. Have the children read their slips to the class. Tell them that their futures will come true within the hour. Explain that Abram’s future held the same promises. How would those promises be fulfilled? How will the future promises to the three children be accomplished?

FUN FACTS: STARS

On a moonless night with no clouds, you can see about 2,000 stars. It has been estimated that there could be 1,000 billion stars in the Milky Way. If you counted one every second for your whole lifetime (without any sleep), you wouldn’t get past three billion! In today’s lesson we will see that God promised Abram descendants as numerous as the stars.

**FUTURES, PART TWO**

Have three baskets filled for the completion of “Futures, Part One”.

Fruitful: Fill with enough grapes or fruit slices for each child.

Nations: Fill with flags from the nation of Israel.

Kings: Fill with an assortment of objects signifying kings.

Call the three children whose futures were foretold up to the front of the classroom. Have them read their slip of paper again. Give these children their “fulfilled promises” by giving them the correct baskets and instructing them to distribute their contents to the class. We will see in future lessons how these promises to Abram do get fulfilled, even if our promises did not turn out exactly as we thought.

AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH

Bring in a glass jar filled with jelly beans. Ask the children to guess how many jelly beans are in the jar. Explain that in today’s lesson we will learn about Abram, a man God promised to bless with descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth (Gen 13:16).

**SIGNIFICANT REPETITIONS**

To demonstrate Abram’s pattern of obedience, have the students read through Genesis 12:7–9; 13:4; and 18 to see how many times Abram built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.



LESSON 9

Abraham and Sarah doubt God

GENESIS 16:1-6; 17:15-21; 18:1-15



Those who doubt God experience great pain.



"Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son"
(Gen 18:14).

Supporting Truths

1. Doubt is thinking that God might not be able to do what He says He will do.
2. Doubting God causes suffering.
3. God patiently strengthens those who are weak in faith.
4. Trusting God means trusting God's methods and God's timing.
5. Trusting God means trusting God's Messiah.

Objectives

1. Describe how Abram and Sarai showed that they doubted God's promise.
2. Describe some of the pain Abram and Sarai caused by doubting God.
3. Explain how God patiently strengthened Abraham and Sarah's faith.
4. Show how Abraham and Sarah believed the promise but not the method or timing.
5. Explain that the Messiah was a descendant of Isaac.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Abraham and Sarah doubt God • Genesis 16:1–6; 17:15–21; 18:1–15



Lesson Summary

God strengthened the faith of Abraham and Sarah by promising something that seemed impossible to them. He promised a son, but He required them to wait twenty-five years before the child was born. They thought they were too old, so they tried to make God's promise happen in their own way. Sarah persuaded Abraham to have a child with her maid Hagar, and Abraham asked God to let this child, Ishmael, be the promised son. But their doubt only caused pain. In response, God was patient and faithful. He strengthened their faith and reminded them that nothing is too hard for God.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God promised to make a great nation through Abraham, but how could this happen when Sarah was barren and very old? Abraham and Sarah doubted, causing pain by doing things their own way. But God confirmed His promise that Sarah would have a son, and through that son would come Jesus. Now we are faced with the same choice as Abraham: will we come to Jesus and be saved in the way God promises, or will we cause great pain by trying to find salvation our own way?

LAST WEEK



**God makes a promise
to Abram**

Genesis 11:27–12:9

THIS WEEK



**Abraham and Sarah
doubt God**

*Genesis 16:1–6;
17:15–21; 18:1–15*

NEXT WEEK



**God judges Sodom and
Gomorrah**

Genesis 18:16–19:29

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

Those who doubt God experience great pain.

God chose to call Abram to be the father of His chosen nation, even though Abram's wife was **barren** and could not have children (Gen 11:30). God would have to overcome this obstacle, because the salvation of all humanity depended on God's promise to Abram (12:2). Through Abram all the families of the earth would be blessed (12:3). So why did God choose a man with a barren wife? God chose Abram so that he might learn to fully trust in God and not in his own strength or resourcefulness. God's choice of Abram teaches us, too. It teaches us about the painful consequences of doubting God and reveals the faithfulness of God, giving us hope that God will also be faithful and patient with us as we, like Abram, learn to fully trust God.



THINK ABOUT IT
Abraham was declared righteous by God through faith alone.

Abram and Sarai caused pain through impatience (16:1–6)

As time went by and Abram had no son, he began to wonder how God would keep His promise. So Abram asked God if his servant

would be his heir, since he had no son of his own (15:2–3). God answered that Abram would have a son of his own to be the heir. Abram believed God, and God counted Abram's faith as righteousness (15:6).

But time passed, and ten years after the first promise of many descendants (16:3), Abram still had no son. This time Sarai took matters into her own hands. She assumed she would never have children, since she was about seventy-five years old (16:2). So she offered her maid, Hagar, to Abram to have a child for her (16:2). This was not unusual in that time; ancient legal codes allowed a maid to have children for her mistress. Even so, it was not what God had planned. Just as Adam followed Eve into sin, so Abram followed Sarai. He

failed to take initiative to lead in faith as husbands ought to do (Eph 5:22–33). Without seeking God's counsel, he had a child with Hagar.

This action was not so much an act of unbelief as it was of impatience, for Abram "did not waver in unbelief" (Rom 4:19–21). He knew God would give him a son, but God had not yet specified that the son would come through Sarai. So the lack of faith was a failure to wait for God to act (Ps 27:14). That is why these chapters in Genesis so often mention the timing. God is faithful, but He acts in His own timing (2 Pet 3:8–9).

When we trust human efforts instead of God's plan, we cause much pain (Jer 17:5).

Abram and Sarai's sin made their home miserable. Hagar despised Sarai (Gen 16:4), Abram shirked responsibility (16:5–6), and Sarai treated Hagar harshly (16:6). But the pain caused by their sin was not limited to their immediate family. Ishmael's descendants would cause great pain to Isaac's descendants (16:12), and this conflict continues even today in the Middle East.

Abraham doubted, but God strengthened his faith (17:15–21)

Abram was impatient with God, but God was patient with him. He did not cancel His promise to Abram (Gen 12:2–3). Instead, He was faithful, and He patiently gave Abram reasons to strengthen Abram's faith. God did this by making a covenant with Abram (17:2). A **covenant** is an agreement between two or more people, like a promise. This time God changed his name to Abraham, which means "father of many" (17:5). God also clarified exactly how these descendants would come: they would come through Sarah's own son (17:16). That is why God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah, which means "princess," because through Isaac she would become the mother of nations, and kings would come from

THINK ABOUT IT

What devastation could have been avoided if Abram and Sarai had left the matter in God's hands?



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Abraham and Sarah doubt God • Genesis 16:1–6; 17:15–21; 18:1–15



THINK ABOUT IT

It was 25 years before Abraham and Sarah received the son of the promise.

at first. Abraham had been 86 years old when Ishmael was born (16:16), and now he was 100 and Sarah was 90 (17:17). God required him to wait for many years, teaching him to wait for God's timing and not his own (Ps 27:14). So Abraham again suggested what he thought was a better plan: he asked if Ishmael could be the one to fulfill the covenant (Gen 17:18).

Fortunately, Abraham asked God about his plan this time instead of acting on his own. God rejected Abraham's plan, but He graciously chose to bless Ishmael too for Abraham's sake (17:19–21). God proved that He was **faithful**. He was trustworthy, doing exactly what He said He would when He promised to bless Abraham and his descendants (12:2). At first Abraham had **doubted**: he thought God might not be able to do what He said He would do. But in the end Abraham responded in faith by obeying God's command for circumcision (17:23). God was causing Abraham's faith to grow, little by little.

Sarah doubted, but God strengthened her faith (18:1–15)

Abraham and Sarah had grown in faith. They realized that their plans with Hagar and Ishmael were not good, and they no longer argued when God rejected Ishmael as the covenant son (17:21–22). Also, when God and two angels appeared in the form of three men, Abraham and Sarah demonstrated their godliness by being exemplary hosts, hurrying to offer a feast without even knowing who the strangers were (18:1–8). Hospitality

her (17:16). This has come true, for the greatest king, Jesus Christ, came from her, and through Jesus all nations are blessed.

This promise was difficult for Abraham to believe

in that culture, even among the pagans, was viewed as a great virtue.

This hospitality took place at the oaks of Mamre (18:1), where Abraham had settled after Lot took the well-watered lowlands (13:18). The mention of this place is a reminder that despite his errors, Abraham was consistently a man of faith. As a result of his faith, one of his descendants, King David, would be crowned king at the same location, which by then had been named Hebron. While many modern readers skip past the names of places, Moses wrote the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) to people about to enter this very land. The places were reminders of God's faithfulness.

To continue strengthening their growing faith, God now revealed the time frame: the child would come within one year (18:10). Just as He did with Abraham and Sarah, God often tests His people by waiting to act until they have learned to trust Him. Thankfully, God does not wait for us to be perfect. Sarah laughed; she still did not understand how she could have a child now that she was so old (Gen 18:12). She still needed to grow in faith. God's response to Sarah is the lesson He had been teaching from the time He first chose a man with a barren wife: "Is anything too difficult for the LORD?" (18:14). Nothing is. God is **omnipotent**: He is able to do just as He pleases (Ps 115:3).

The story ends without resolution: the son is yet to be born. But God was teaching Abraham and Sarah to believe even when the promise was a long time coming. God was patient with Abraham and Sarah, and this gives us hope that He will be patient with us, too. We all face the same choice as Abraham: will we come to Jesus and be saved in the way God promises, or will we cause great pain by trying to find salvation our own way?

Lesson Outline

Those who doubt God experience great pain.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Abraham and Sarah thought Sarah was too old to have a son (16:1–2; 18:11–13).
2. Abraham didn't wait for God; he chose to have a son with Sarah's maid, Hagar (16:3–6; 17:18).
3. When Sarah laughed, God reminded her that He can do anything (18:10–14).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **Abram and Sarah caused pain through impatience (16:1–6).**
 - God had promised Abram a son ten years before (12:2; 16:3).
 - Sarah did not believe she could have a son, so she asked Abram to go in to Hagar (16:1–2).
 - Abram listened to Sarah instead of waiting for God (16: 2).
 - Abram had a son named Ishmael through Sarah's maid Hagar (16: 2–4).
 - Hagar despised Sarah, and Sarah treated Hagar harshly (16: 4–6).
2. **Abraham doubted, but God strengthened his faith (17:15–21).**
 - God renamed Abram to Abraham, in order to remind him that he would be "father of many" (17:5).
 - Thirteen years after Ishmael's birth, God promised that Sarah would have a son (17:15–16).
- Abraham doubted and asked God to fulfill His covenant through Ishmael (17:17–19).
- God again promised His plan and covenant would be through Sarah's son, Isaac (17:20–21).
3. **Sarah doubted, but God strengthened her faith (18:1–15).**
 - Three men appeared to Abraham and one of them was the LORD (18:1–3).
 - Abraham and Sarah showed them hospitality (18: 4–8).
 - The LORD confirmed God's promise of a son, even though they were very old (18: 9–11).
 - Sarah laughed to herself, but God heard and said nothing is too difficult for Him (18: 12–15).

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Abraham and Sarah doubt God • Genesis 16:1–6; 17:15–21; 18:1–15



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What was the promise that God gave to Abram?**
God promised Abram many descendants. They would number more than the stars in the sky.
- 2. How did Abram and Sarah try to help God with His promise?**
Sarah suggested that Abram marry Hagar and have a son with her.
- 3. What happened in Abram's family when Hagar became his wife and found out that she was going to have a baby?**
Hagar was rude to Sarah, and Sarah was mean to Hagar.
- 4. What did Sarah do when the angel promised her a son?**
Sarah laughed because she and Abraham were too old to have a baby.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What does the Bible say Sarah did to solve the problem of having no children?**
Sarah told Abraham to have a child with her servant, Hagar.
- 2. What should Sarah have done to solve the problem of having no children?**
Sarah should have trusted God's promise.
- 3. Why were Sarah and Abraham wrong to have Hagar have the baby?**
When God says that He will do something, we should trust Him that He will do it. Abraham and Sarah were not patient.
- 4. Who did God promise would bear Abraham a son?**
God promised that Sarah would have a son (Gen 17:16).
- 5. How did Abraham feel about God's promise of a son?**
Abraham doubted that God could keep His promise because he thought it was physically impossible to have children.
- 6. How did God respond?**
God strengthened his faith by promising him that Sarah would give birth to a son that he was to name, Isaac.
- 7. How did Sarah feel about God's promise of a son?**
Sarah doubted God and laughed at the promise.
- 8. How did God respond?**
God strengthened her faith by reminding her that nothing is too difficult for the LORD.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

THE WAITING GAME

Have the children stand in a circle an arm's length apart from one another. Tell them that you will be playing some music. When the music starts playing, they should start dancing. When the music stops, they must freeze and wait until the music starts again before they dance. Explain to them that in today's lesson, they will learn the importance of being patient.

MAKING LUNCH

Let the children make different food items from Play-Doh. Pretend to prepare lunch for three guests. Ask the children whether they wait patiently at home when their mothers prepare lunch. Make long tubes of Play-Doh by rolling it with your hands. Make a round face and add eyes and a mouth. Talk about waiting with a happy face or a sad face. Knowing that God keeps His promises gives us a happy face.



ILLUSTRATE

TRUSTING

Set an empty chair before the children. Ask whether they believe that the chair will hold them if they sit in it. Ask for a volunteer to come sit in the chair. While the child is sitting, talk about how we can know God and believe in Him, but we must act on that belief by putting our trust and faith in Him. God promised Abraham and Sarah a son, and they should have trusted God to provide them with a child. Their action should have been to remain dedicated to each other in their marriage and wait for God to produce the child.

PATIENT BAKING

During the Bible lesson, bring out a snack and show it to the children. Promise them that they will get to eat this snack at the end of class. They will have to wait for the snack just as Abraham had to wait for God's promise of a son. Ask the children whether they will wait patiently or will be impatient like Abraham and Sarah.



APPLY

HAPPY HEART

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, red or pink colored paper, yarn, hole punch, scissors, cotton balls.

Directions: Make two copies of the Happy Heart craft page on colored paper. Cut out the two heart shapes for children. Pass out two heart shapes to each child and help children punch holes on the black dots. Place heart shapes over each other and help children thread the yarn through the holes tying the two shapes together. After about two thirds of the holes are threaded fill the heart with cotton balls. Finish threading the holes, tie off yarn, and trim off extra yarn.



*Happy Heart
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Abraham and Sarah doubt God • Genesis 16:1–6; 17:15–21; 18:1–15



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

LEARNING TO WAIT

Set a kitchen timer or an alarm clock for 30 seconds. Tell the children to sit quietly in their seats until the timer goes off. See how many are able to do this. After the timer or alarm goes off ask the children what it was like to wait. Did they feel impatient? Explain that in today's lesson they will learn how hard it was for Abraham and Sarah to wait for a baby, and how they made mistakes when they became impatient.

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH

Divide the class into groups of 8–10 children. Direct each group to sit in a circle. Give each group index cards containing goofy statements designed to make the hearer laugh. The object of the game is for each child to make the child on his right laugh while saying the statement on his card. However, he has only three chances to make the other child laugh. After all children have participated, children may vote on the “best laugh” from their group. Use this game to emphasize Abraham and Sarah's response to God's promise that they would have a child in their old age.



ILLUSTRATE

EGG CHALLENGE

Bring in a few hard boiled eggs and one regular egg. Begin the challenge by cracking open the regular egg over a bowl while the children watch. Then ask for a volunteer to crack open the next egg over his head. Give the child a hard boiled egg and ask him to trust you that this egg will be different. Explain that Abram had to trust God that He would give him a son even though it looked like he couldn't have children.

WAITING FOR A TREAT

Give each child a candy or small snack at the beginning of the lesson. Tell the children to put the treat under their chair and to leave it there for the entire lesson. During the lesson ask the children if it is hard to be patient. Explain that Abraham and Sarah had to wait 25 years for a son. After the lesson is finished allow the children to eat their treat.



APPLY

ABRAHAM AND SARAH PUPPETS

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: 2 craft pages, 2 brown paper bags, wiggly eyes, yarn, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Tell the children that they will be making two puppets, one of Sarah and one of Abraham. Give each child two brown paper lunch bags and four wiggly eyes. Have the children glue two wiggly eyes to each lunch bag and then color in a nose, mouth, and clothes. (The mouth should be on the overlap of the bag.) Next, have the children glue clumps of black yarn, about three to four inches long, on the Sarah puppet. This will be her hair. For Abraham, have them glue clumps of brown yarn, about two inches long, around the mouth. This will be his beard. Glue more brown hair on the top and sides of the upper part of the bag. This will be Abraham's hair. Finally, glue a strip of ribbon across each puppet's “hair” to serve as a headband.



*Abraham and Sarah Puppets
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*

AGES 9–11

**HOW OLD?**

Survey parents as they drop off their children for class. Have them tell you how old they were when their child was born. Graph the results of this survey on the board. Discuss your results. What was the average age of mothers and fathers when these children were born? How old were the youngest parents? How old were the oldest parents? When is a person too old to have children? In today's lesson we will learn that Abraham and Sarah thought they were too old to have a baby.

SIGN LANGUAGE FOR "WAIT"

Learn how to say the word "wait" in sign language. Teach this sign to the children and talk to them about waiting. Abraham and Sarah waited almost 25 years to have a baby. Tell them that Abraham and Sarah were very, very old. In today's lesson, we will learn that God said Abraham and Sarah would have only a little longer to wait.

**AGING ABRAHAM**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

To help the children understand the time that elapsed between the original Abrahamic Covenant and the birth of Isaac, fill out the "Aging Abraham" chart as you teach through the lesson. Ask the children how many years passed between the original covenant and Isaac's birth.

BABY BOY

Have someone bring his baby son to class. Have this person tell the children that this is his baby son. Ask the children whether any of them are sons. All the boys in the class once were baby sons who grew to be bigger boys. We are all children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Explain to the class that God's promise to Abraham involved a baby boy.

**PROMISES, PROMISES**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Use the "Promises, Promises" work sheet to take an inventory of all God's promises to Abram. Label each promise by circling the letter for one of three categories:

- L**—Land;
- D**—Descendants;
- O**—Other.

You may wish to do this as a group activity. Then put a check mark by the promises that could not be fulfilled unless Abram had a son.



LESSON 10

God judges Sodom and Gomorrah

GENESIS 18:16-19:29



God is a just judge.



"Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

(Gen 18:25).

Supporting Truths

1. Because God is just, He hates sin and destroys the unrepentant.
2. Because God is just, He shows mercy for the sake of the righteous.
3. Because God is just, He wants His people to be just.
4. Sin deserves punishment because it perverts God's standard.
5. Sin turns even the righteous away from wisdom, integrity, and faith.

Objectives

1. Describe how God justly punished the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. Explain why God rescued Lot.
3. Show how the story begins and ends by teaching Abraham about justice.
4. Explain how the Sodomites perverted God's design for hospitality and marriage.
5. Evaluate Lot's poor choices and their just consequences.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges Sodom and Gomorrah • Genesis 18:16–19:29



Lesson Summary

Sodom and Gomorrah demonstrates God's justice. By letting Abraham question Him and by rescuing Lot, God showed that justice is full of mercy. But by destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, God showed that justice severely punishes the wicked. Abraham was to teach these lessons to his children so that they would live in righteousness before a just God (Gen 18:17–19).

Spotlight on the Gospel

God's severe judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah is a clear warning that God punishes sin. God's wrath is coming against sin, but all who turn from sin and trust in Jesus will be saved for His sake, just as Lot was spared for Abraham's sake.

LAST WEEK



**Abraham and Sarah
doubt God**

*Genesis 16:1–6;
17:15–21; 18:1–15*

THIS WEEK



**God judges Sodom
and Gomorrah**

Genesis 18:16–19:29

NEXT WEEK



God sends baby Isaac
Genesis 21:1–14

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God is a just judge.

When Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, the LORD appeared to him and said: “I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless” (Gen 17:1). Through Abraham, God was calling a people to dwell with Him in holiness. But God did not just tell Abraham to be blameless, He taught him about His own justice so that Abraham could teach justice to his children. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is a real-life demonstration of God’s justice.



THINK ABOUT IT
In His justice God is merciful.

God taught Abraham justice (18:16–33)

Genesis 18:18–19 reveals that God chose to include Sodom and Gomorrah in

Abraham’s story so that Abraham could teach his children to be **just**, or blameless, as God is just. Justice begins with gathering the correct facts. Even though God already knows all, He says in Genesis 18:21, “I will go down now and see,” in order to teach that a good judge investigates and does not judge carelessly. He even illustrates the principle of requiring two witnesses by sending the two angels (Gen 18:22; cf. Deut 19:15).

As the two angels left for Sodom, the Lord stayed with Abraham in order to continue teaching him. He did this by allowing Abraham to question Him. God let Abraham be the cross-examiner, allowing Him to investigate God. Abraham questioned God to confirm that God is indeed the “judge of all the earth” who deals justly (18:25). Abraham assumed that justice is to punish the wicked but spare the righteous, and God confirms this.

The **wicked** are those who are evil and do not obey God’s law, while the **righteous** are those who are blameless and obey God’s law. But God goes further, teaching that justice includes mercy for the sake of the righteous. God will even spare the wicked for a time for the sake of the righteous. Even if only ten righteous men lived in the Sodom and Gomorrah, God would spare the cities (18:32).

Sodom and Gomorrah deserved punishment (19:1–11)

Unfortunately, when the angels traveled the 30 miles or so from Mamre to Sodom to investigate, they could not find even ten righteous men. Lot appears to be the only one.

Lot was sitting at the gate, the cultural and commercial hub of the city. When Lot first arrived in Genesis 13, he lived in a tent near Sodom. Then he moved into the city. Now he is thoroughly integrated into the life and leadership of the ungodly city.

Despite his poor choice to live in a wicked place, Lot still practiced righteousness by offering hospitality to the two strangers when no one else would. In a time when travel was difficult and dangerous and there were no hotels, hospitality was highly valued. Even idolaters often considered lack of hospitality a serious sin against the gods.

Instead of hospitably caring for the strangers, the Sodomites desired to abuse the strangers for their own wicked pleasure. The angels should have been safe to spend the night in the town square just inside the city gate. It was not unusual for visitors to a city at this time of year to sleep out in the open air at night. But the men of Sodom were thoroughly corrupt. Every male, whether young or old, participated in this evil (19:4). They violated not only hospitality, but also God’s design for relationships.

To protect his guests, Lot instead offered the mob his two daughters—daughters whose purity and lives he should have protected (19:8). Lot’s sense of righteousness was dull. Lot had lived too long in the middle of evil. He was a righteous man who had compromised too often, starting with his first decision to move near Sodom.

THINK ABOUT IT
The men of Sodom are an illustration of the depravity described in Romans 1:18–30.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges Sodom and Gomorrah • Genesis 18:16–19:29



The men of Sodom refused to listen to Lot. As wicked men often do when rebuked, they got angry with Lot and accused him of being judgmental (19:9). The mob physically attacked Lot, and even after the angels rescued Lot and blinded the mob, the wicked

men would not give up their desire to sin until they were thoroughly exhausted (19:9–11). The verdict was clear: Sodom and its neighboring cities deserved to be destroyed. Because they were full of unrighteousness and would not repent, God was just to destroy them with fire.

God rescued Lot but burned Sodom and Gomorrah (19:12–29)

Although there were not ten righteous men, God still proved his faithfulness to Abraham by rescuing Lot. In so doing, God again

showed Abraham what it means to be just. Justice is punishing the wicked and saving the righteous. In fact, this kind of justice is full of mercy, because even righteous men would perish unless God had compassion on them. **Compassion** is feeling bad for someone who is hurt.

Lot was a righteous man (2 Pet 2:7), but he was not the unwavering man of faith that Abraham was (Gen 19). Lot was willing to let his own daughters be abused and probably killed, and he was willing to let his

daughters marry men of Sodom. Also, when he tried to warn his sons-in-law, they thought he was joking (Gen 19:14). Apparently they were not used to Lot speaking so urgently about righteousness. Are our families and neighbors used to us speaking to them about righteousness?

Even after being warned, Lot delayed (19:16). He probably did not want to leave behind all the possessions and comforts he had accumulated in the city. He was saved only because God, in His compassion, sent the angels to force him to leave. After leaving, Lot still wavered, complaining that the escape was too difficult (19:19). Again God was merciful and allowed Lot to escape to Zoar, which God did not burn up along with the other cities of the plain. God is merciful in His justice, but His justice is still perfectly fair. The cities burned with fire from heaven.

Also, even though Lot survived, he felt the pain that comes from compromise. By choosing to live in such an evil place, Lot had allowed his wife to be too attached to the pleasures of the world (Luke 17:32–33), so she looked back and died. Finally, because of his compromises, Lot's story ends with him losing everything and being alone in a cave with two immoral daughters.

Genesis 19:27 pictures Abraham viewing the destruction, and verse 29 concludes with "God remembered Abraham." God had taught Abraham what it meant to be just. God exemplified justice as the compassionate judge of the world, and God showed the severe consequences that come upon those who fail to live just lives. This is the lesson Abraham was to teach to his children, and this is the lesson we must teach to our own.



THINK ABOUT IT
The cross of Christ provides the clearest picture of how divine justice and mercy meet in undeserved compassion.

Lesson Outline

God is a just judge.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God said He would save Sodom and Gomorrah if just 10 righteous people lived there (18:16–33).
2. The people in Sodom and Gomorrah kept sinning (19:1–11).
3. God burned up Sodom and Gomorrah but saved Lot (19:12–29).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **God taught Abraham justice (18:16–33).**
 - God commanded righteousness and justice to Abraham and his descendants (18:17–19).
 - God investigated the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah in order to judge justly (18:20–22).
 - God let Abraham question Him in order to show what it means to be a just judge (18:23–33).
 - As a just judge, God would spare the cities even if only 10 righteous people lived there (18:32).
2. **Sodom and Gomorrah deserved punishment (19:1–11).**
 - Lot was the only one who offered food and shelter to the angels (19:1–3).
 - All the men of Sodom wanted to use the angels for their own evil purposes (19:4–5).
 - When Lot protected the angels, the men of Sodom attacked Lot (19:6–9).
 - Even after the angels blinded them, the men still tried to commit their sin (19:10–11).
3. **God rescued Lot but burned Sodom and Gomorrah (19:12–29).**
 - The angels graciously warned Lot and his whole family to flee (19:12–13).
 - When Lot hesitated, the angels showed compassion by forcing him to flee (19:15–17).
 - When Lot complained, the angels showed compassion by letting him flee to Zoar (19:18–23).
 - God poured fire on Sodom and Gomorrah and turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (19:24–26).
 - Abraham saw that God was a just judge, destroying the cities but sparing Lot (19:27–29).

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges Sodom and Gomorrah • Genesis 18:16–19:29



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who did Abraham want to save in Sodom?**
Abraham's nephew, Lot, and his family living in Sodom.
- 2. What happened to the angels when they went to Sodom?**
The wicked men of Sodom wanted to hurt the angels, but the angels made their eyes blind so they couldn't find the door.
- 3. How did God punish Sodom?**
God sent fire from the sky and burned houses, crops, and people.
- 4. Did God answer Abraham's prayer for Lot?**
Yes.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. How did God feel about what the people in Sodom and Gomorrah were doing?**
God was very angry with them because they had greatly disobeyed Him.
- 2. Why did God allow Abraham to question Him?**
God let Abraham question Him in order to show what it means to be a just judge.
- 3. What did Lot say to the angels who came to visit him?**
Lot asked them to come into his house because he knew how sinful the people of Sodom were.
- 4. Did the people of Sodom act kindly or wickedly to the angels and Lot?**
Wickedly. They wanted the two angels who were inside Lot's house (Gen 19:5). The sinful Sodomites even tried to take Lot, but the angels protected Lot and his family.
- 5. What did the angels tell Lot they were going to do?**
The angels told Lot that they were going to destroy the city because of its sin.
- 6. What happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah?**
God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—nothing in them remained alive.
- 7. Why did God save Lot?**
God is merciful in His justice. God was merciful and allowed Lot to escape to Zoar.
- 8. What did Abraham learn about God?**
God remembered Abraham and taught him justice, and this is the lesson Abraham was to teach to his children.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



ESCAPE FROM SODOM

Lot had to leave Sodom in a hurry. In this game, children will pretend to escape from Sodom. Use masking tape to form a maze or path on the floor. Line children up on one side of the maze. Use a kitchen timer as a countdown timer. When you say “go,” the children must walk through the maze one at a time, without going outside the maze lines. They must do this before the timer goes off. Do this until everyone gets through the maze.

GOD'S PATIENCE

Before beginning the lesson, set a kitchen timer for 30 seconds. Ask the children whether they think that God is patient. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about how time ran out for sinful Sodom and Gomorrah.



MAGNIFYING GLASS

Bring in a magnifying glass. During the lesson show the children the magnifying glass and explain how a magnifying glass allows us to see things that are very small. Tell the children that God sent two angels to Sodom to see just how bad the sin was in Sodom. Before God punished Sodom, He wanted to make sure that He found all the righteous people.

TOTAL DESTRUCTION

Build a large city with blocks before the lesson. To illustrate the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, tell the children to imagine that your block city is Sodom and Gomorrah. Then dramatically sweep all the blocks off the table. Make sure the children are far enough away from the table that they don't get hit with any flying blocks.



CITY ON FIRE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft background page, Sodom and Gomorrah city outline cutout, orange tissue paper, red tissue paper, yellow tissue paper, glue, scissors, crayons.

Directions: Pass out a city outline cutout to each child and ask children to color the city with crayons. Pass out a background page to each child. Have children glue the colored city outline onto the background. Help children tear strips of colored tissue paper and glue them onto the background page. Roll up some pieces of tissue paper into marble size balls and glue them on the page as well.

City on Fire
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges Sodom and Gomorrah • Genesis 18:16–19:29



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

COUNTDOWN

Show the class a large container full of colored beads. (Take out all the yellow beads before class.) Let them look at it during class, but don't open it. After reading Abraham's conversation with God about finding righteous people in Sodom, ask the children whether they can find 50 yellow beads in the container. Then ask if they can find just 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, and finally 10. Then dump the beads out on the floor, and let the children look for yellow beads. After they see that there are no yellow beads, explain to them that God could not find 10 righteous people in Sodom.

FREEZE TAG GAME

Select one child to be Abraham and one to be "Disobedient Don" (or "Disobedient Dawn"). Bring two different hats to distinguish these children from the rest of the class. When Abraham touches a person, that person gets to stay in the game. If Disobedient Don touches a person, that person is out and has to sit in Sodom!



ILLUSTRATE

WHAT IS SIN?

During the lesson, ask the children to tell you what sin is. Explain to the children that there was a city where people were sinning in all those ways and more, and that there was only one man in the city who remembered God.

THAT'S NOT FAIR!

Give each child a piece of candy before the lesson begins. Tell them to pay special attention to your instructions. Explain that as each child receives their piece of candy they are to immediately put it under their chair. Once the candy is under the chair, the children may not touch, look at, or talk about the candy (their's or their neighbor's) until the lesson is over. Continue on with the lesson. As soon as one of the children breaks the rules, stop the lesson and take the candy away from all the children (including those who did nothing wrong). Ask the children if this is fair. Explain that God is perfectly fair, or just. He sent two angels to Sodom to see if there was anyone righteous in the city before He destroyed it.



APPLY

LOT FLEES WICKED SODOM

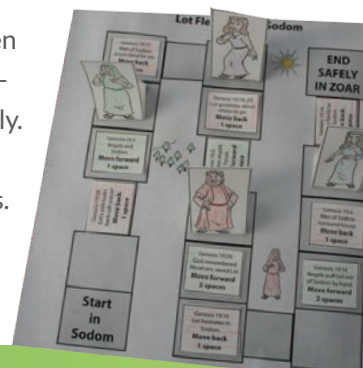
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft pages, scissors, glue, pennies, crayons

Directions: Ask children to color the game board, game board pieces, and game characters. Next, cut out the game board pieces and glue them onto the squares of your choosing on the game board (not all spaces on game board will be covered). Select a game character and assemble him/her by gluing the tops together and folding and gluing the bottoms together (creating a triangle shape that stands upright).

Play the game by flipping the penny on your turn to see how many spaces you may move forward (tails = 1 space and heads = 2 spaces). If you land on a square with additional instructions then move your character accordingly. First person to reach Zoar wins.

Lot Flees Wicked Sodom
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*



AGES 9–11

**WHAT'S FAIR?**

Discuss fairness with your class. Ask them the following questions: Have you ever been at school when the whole class got in trouble and you didn't do anything wrong? Have you been in trouble at home for something you didn't do? It seems unfair, doesn't it? Have you ever been punished for something when others were not? Sometimes we have a wrong view of fairness. If we really got what we deserved, God would send us to hell. In today's lesson Abraham is going to pray on behalf of a city and is going to plead with God to be, in a sense, fair. In the end we learn that God was just and, at the same time, more than fair.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Bring in different a set of crutches, a wheelchair, or bandages. Ask the children how they feel when they see someone using one of these items. Do they feel compassion for them? Explain that in today's lesson they will see how God had compassion on Lot and his family.

**FIRE FROM HEAVEN**

Bring in various items that keep us dry when it rains (umbrella, rain coat, boots, poncho, etc.). Explain that all these items help to protect us from getting wet when it rains. Tell the children that in today's lesson God rained down fire from Heaven on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Ask the children if they know what can protect us from God's wrath against sin. Explain that only God's grace, received through faith (Eph 2:8–9), is able to protect us from God's judgment.

SCALES OF JUSTICE

Bring in a balancing scale and 15-20 Starburst candies. Put different amounts of Starbursts on each side of the scale so that the scale is unbalanced. Ask the children if this is fair, or just. Place an even amount of Starbursts on both sides of the scale so that the scale is balanced. Ask the children if this is fair, or just. Give each child a candy. Explain that God is a fair, or just, judge.

Variation: This illustration still works without a scale. Just hold your hands out in front of you with the Starbursts in them.

**HOW MANY RIGHTEOUS?**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Play in groups of four. You will need one sheet of "How Many Righteous?" cards (see craft book) for each player. Cut the cards apart and shuffle them.

To begin, have the four players sit in a circle, and deal each player four cards. Place the remaining cards in the center of the circle; this is the draw pile. On his turn, a player may do two things. First, he may lay down a card. Cards must be laid down according to the order that Abraham mentioned in his prayers to God (50, 45, 40, 30, 20, and then 10). The "Lot" card should be laid down last. So a player may lay down a card on his first turn only if he has a 50. After laying down a card, he should take a card from the draw pile. (Each player must have four cards in his hands at all times.) Second, he may trade one unwanted card from his hand for one from another player's hand. (If play stalls, add one more card from the pile to each child's hand.) Then it is the next player's turn. The first player to lay down all his cards wins.



LESSON 11

God sends baby Isaac

GENESIS 21:1-14



God is faithful to keep His promises.



“And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him” (Gen 21:2).

Supporting Truths

1. God keeps His promises.
2. God is sovereign, able to keep His promises.
3. Because God is faithful, God's promises should be received by faith.
4. God is faithful to bless through His covenant with Abraham.
5. God is faithful to bless through the promised Messiah.

Objectives

1. Describe how God kept His promise to give Sarah a son.
2. Explain how God was able to give a baby when it seemed impossible.
3. Describe what Abraham and Sarah did that showed they received Isaac by faith.
4. Explain how Ishmael's rejection and prosperity were connected to the covenant.
5. Explain how Isaac's birth looked forward to the birth of his descendant, Jesus.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends baby Isaac • Genesis 21:1–14



Lesson Summary

God, faithful to His promise, gave Abraham and Sarah the son they had been expecting for 25 years. Abraham received Isaac by faith by naming him and circumcising him just as God had instructed him to do. Sarah received Isaac by faith. She rejoiced and declared in that God was the one who had caused him to be born. Unfortunately, their past sin caused pain when Ishmael mocked baby Isaac. Even so, Abraham and Sarah acted by faith by sending Ishmael away, proving that they trusted God and God alone.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The gospel began when God promised Eve that her seed would crush the serpent, and the gospel continued when God chose Abraham to be the ancestor of the promised seed. But the promise seemed like a failure for 25 years, until God proved His faithfulness and power by causing old and barren Sarah to have a son, Isaac. Abraham and Sarah had learned to trust God, and through their faith God provided a way for the promised seed to come. Jesus, the seed of Abraham, has come to save all who have faith like Abraham's.

LAST WEEK



**God judges Sodom
and Gomorrah**
Genesis 18:16–19:29

THIS WEEK



God sends baby Isaac
Genesis 21:1–14

NEXT WEEK



God tests Abraham
Genesis 22:1–19

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God is faithful to keep His promises.

When Abraham was 75 years old, God promised to make him the father of a great nation and a blessing to the whole world (Gen 12:2–3). Now, 25 years later, God finally gave Abraham the son who would make this all possible. During the long wait, Abraham and Sarah struggled to believe, but God’s timing is always best (2 Pet 3:8–9). God used the delay to correct Abraham and Sarah’s doubt until they stood strong in faith, ready to believe both God’s promise and His method.



THINK ABOUT IT

Because God is faithful believers have hope when all seems hopeless.

Abraham and Sarah received Isaac from God by faith (21:1–7)

The story first emphasizes God’s character. God is faithful (Deut 7:9). He does

what He promises. He promised Sarah a son, and now He gave her a son “as He had promised” (Gen 21:1). God’s faithfulness is personal, because He cares about individual people. Just as God remembered Noah (8:1), so God visited Sarah and did “for Sarah” what He had promised (21:1). It is good to know that God is not controlling life from a distance. He is intimately involved, faithfully doing good to those who trust Him (Lam 3:22–23).

God is also sovereign: He controls all things, including the timing of all things (Dan 2:21). He specified the time when the son would come (Gen 18:10), and He gave the son at the appointed time (21:2). As the one in control, He is also **omnipotent**, able to do whatever He pleases (Jer 32:27). He was able to give Abraham and Sarah a son even though Sarah had always been barren, and even though they had for a long time now been too old to have children (Gen 21:2, 5, 7). To reaffirm that God had done exactly as He said, Genesis 21:3 emphasizes that this was the son “whom Sarah bore him,” not the son of Hagar.

God makes good promises and keeps them according to His specific plan. It is wise to follow His plan.

Instead of doubting as at previous times, Abraham and Sarah responded with whole-hearted **faith**: they trusted, believed, and followed God. It

might seem that faith would be easy now that God had fulfilled His promise, but it is difficult, even when we receive blessings, to remember to worship God as the giver of all good. Abraham and Sarah did remember. Abraham acknowledged God as the giver by obediently naming his son Isaac (21:3; cf. 17:21). Abraham also obeyed by circumcising Isaac on the eighth day. **Circumcision** is performing a special surgery that was the sign of God’s covenant (21:4; cf. 17:12).

Sarah responded with thanks by crediting God as the source of her joy: “God has made laughter for me” (21:6; cf. Heb 11:11). In fact, the name Isaac means “he laughs.” Sarah’s laughter is meant to recall the time when she laughed in doubt (Gen 18:12), showing that Sarah joyfully acknowledged that she had been wrong to doubt. Also, when Sarah says that everyone will laugh with her (21:6), she shows that she believes in the whole of God’s promise to create a great nation and bless all nations through her child (12:2–3). We should rejoice with Sarah, for God is faithful. Through the nation that came from her God sent Jesus.

Abraham sent Ishmael away by faith (21:8–14)

Unfortunately, not everyone rejoiced with Sarah. Ishmael made fun of Isaac. This happened when Isaac was 2 or 3 years old and Ishmael about 16. Sarah responded by urging Abraham to drive Ishmael and Hagar away (21:10). This was not the first time Sarah had desired this. But before, Sarah had herself driven Hagar away by mistreating her (16:6). However, now

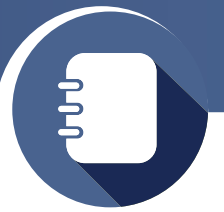
THINK ABOUT IT

Do we pause in the midst of blessing to thank God?



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends baby Isaac • Genesis 21:1–14



Abraham was the one responsible to make the decision and sent Ishmael away. Abraham wrestled with what to do (21:11), facing the painful consequences of his past sin. Ishmael was his son, and he loved him. But God gave Abraham the assurance he needed by reminding Abraham that God had chosen Isaac's **offspring**—Isaac's children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and on. Also, God promised that Ishmael would become great for Abraham's sake (21:12–13). The previous time Sarah had driven out Hagar, Abraham had let his wife take the lead and did not seek God's counsel (16:6). This time, although Abraham did as his wife said, he heard God's counsel and acted according to his responsibility to lead. Abraham provided Hagar and Ishmael with what water and food they could carry and sent them on their way (21:14).

This seems like a harsh reaction to teenage teasing, but there is a much bigger picture. First, Ishmael and Hagar represented human efforts to secure God's promise (Gal 4:22–31). When Abraham sent them away despite his love for

Ishmael, he demonstrated his trust in God, not in man, to fulfill the promise. Second, when Ishmael mocked Isaac, and when Hagar despised Sarah (Gen 16:4), they made themselves enemies of the covenant. There is no blessing apart from the blessing through Abraham, for those who curse the line of Abraham will be cursed (12:2–3). Hagar and Ishmael brought their own punishment upon themselves. Third, Abraham only sent Ishmael away once he knew God would care for his son. God promised to make Ishmael great for Abraham's sake (21:13), and God did just that by preserving Ishmael's life and making him strong (21:19–20).

God applies these same principles today. Blessing still comes by faith in God, not in man (Jer 17:5–8). There is still no blessing apart from the line of Abraham, for only those who come to God by faith in Jesus are saved from God's wrath (John 3:36). It is true that, like Ishmael, those who reject the **covenant**, God's promise, still enjoy many blessings on this earth because of those who do believe. But true, eternal blessing only comes to those who believe God's promise in God's way, just as Sarah and Abraham learned to do (Hab 2:4). May we become blessed children of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:29). Only those whose sins are forgiven in Jesus Christ will experience the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants.

THINK ABOUT IT
Ishmael, like his cousin Lot, was blessed by God for Abraham's sake.



THINK ABOUT IT
Contemplating the consequences of sin is a powerful guard against choosing sin.

Lesson Outline

God is faithful to keep His promises.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God gave baby Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, just as He had promised (21:1–7).
2. Abraham and Sarah believed that Isaac, not Ishmael, was the promised child (21:8–14).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Abraham and Sarah received Isaac from God by faith (21:1–7).
 - The LORD gave Sarah a son exactly as He had promised (21:1–2).
 - Abraham received him in faith by naming him Isaac and circumcising him (21:3–4).
 - Sarah received Isaac in faith by rejoicing in God (21:6).
 - They knew God had done the impossible (21:5, 7).
2. Abraham sent Ishmael away by faith (21:8–14).
 - Ishmael mocked Isaac at Isaac's party (21:8–9).
 - Sarah told Abraham to drive out Hagar and Ishmael because Isaac was the heir (21:10).
 - God encouraged Abraham to send them away by promising that He would make Isaac the heir and also make Ishmael great (21:12–13).
 - Abraham sent them away, but kindly gave them food and water (21:14).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Who was the special baby God promised to Abraham?**
Isaac.
2. **How old were Abraham and Sarah when God provided baby Isaac?**
Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90.
3. **How did Ishmael react?**
He treated Isaac badly.
4. **Where were Ishmael and Hagar sent?**
They were sent into the wilderness, but God still took care of them.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **When did God say that Abraham and Sarah would have Isaac?**
God told Abraham and Sarah that Isaac would be born within one year (Gen 17:21).
When Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90.
2. **Why was Isaac's birth a miracle?**
Sarah was too old to have a baby.
3. **Why did Abraham and Sarah name their son Isaac?**
God told Abraham to name his son Isaac (17:19).
4. **What did Abraham and Sarah do after Isaac was born?**
Abraham made a great feast for everyone (21:8). He rejoiced that he had a son from Sarah.
5. **What did Sarah tell Abraham to do?**
Sarah told Abraham to "cast out this bondwoman and her son" (21:10). Abraham did not like what Sarah said but God told Abraham to listen to what Sarah wanted.
6. **Why did God tell Abraham to listen to what Sarah had said?**
God told Abraham, "In Isaac your seed shall be called" (21:12). God wanted Abraham to know that Isaac, not Hagar's son, would receive God's covenant promise.
7. **Do you think that God took care of Hagar and her son?**
Yes, God took care of them because God is faithful and He promised to make Ishmael great for Abraham's sake (21:13).
8. **Why was God making His covenant promise to Isaac and not to Ishmael?**
God is sovereign and He chooses what to do. We can trust in God that He will make wise choices. Isaac, not Ishmael, was the answer to God's promise.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



FAMILY PORTRAIT

Let each child draw and color a picture of his family on a blank sheet of paper. Talk about the fact that our families all are different—some have lots of sisters and brothers, some don't have any, etc.—but that God gave each of us the family that is best for us, just as God gave Abraham and Sarah to Isaac to be his daddy and mommy.

TEACH A PUPPET BIBLE NAMES

Introduce a new puppet to the children. Help the puppet learn the names of the Bible characters that the children have been hearing about over the last few weeks. Let the children review with the puppet as they talk about Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah. Introduce them to Isaac and Ishmael in anticipation of today's lesson.



BABY TALK

Show a baby doll to the children. Ask if any of them were ever babies. Ask the children to tell you who gives babies to mommies and daddies. Explain that God gave Abraham and Sarah a baby even though Sarah was too old to have children.

WAITING...

Ask the children if any of them have a birthday coming up. Then ask them if it is hard to wait until their birthday actually arrives. Do they wait with a happy face or a grumpy face? Explain that Abraham and Sarah had to wait 25 years before God gave them baby Isaac. Tell them that God used this long wait to teach Abraham and Sarah to trust in Him.



REVIEW NECKLACE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Yarn, glue, scissors, crayons, masking tape, hole punch, craft page.

Directions: Provide pieces of yarn and sets of pictures from craft book with holes punched in the top of the pictures. Have the children color the pictures and then help them string them onto the yarn. Tie the yarn to make a necklace.



*Review Necklace
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends baby Isaac • Genesis 21:1–14



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

GUESS WHO

Bring a baby picture of yourself to class. Hold up the picture so the class can see it. Have the children guess who the baby is (you could also bring in baby pictures of other children or adults known by the children). Once the answer is given, explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about a promised baby, Isaac.

PROMISE KEEPER

At the beginning of class, promise the children a small gift or treat. Tell the children that you will give it to them at the end of class. Ask the children why they have faith that you will keep your promise. Explain that God always keeps his promises because He is good and cannot lie (Num 23:19). Tell the children that in today's lesson they will see God keep His promise to Abraham and Sarah by giving them a son, Isaac. Give the children the gift or treat at the end of class and remind them that God keeps His promises.



ILLUSTRATE

FAMILY PICTURE

Show the class a picture of your extended family. Point out aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, etc. Explain that all these people came from one family, and point out the patriarch and matriarch from which all these family members came. Tell the children that Abraham and Sarah were the first mommy and daddy that God chose to begin His special family, the Israelites. Explain that their son, Isaac, was God's choice to receive the blessings of God's promises to Abraham and his descendants.

FAVORITE DAY

Ask the children what their favorite day of the year is (answers might include their birthday, a holiday, a family vacation, last day of school, etc.). Figure out how long the children will have to wait until this special day arrives. Then ask the children if it is hard to wait for this day. Tell the children that Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years for their special day, the birth of their son, Isaac. Explain that God used this delay to teach them to trust in Him.



APPLY

GOD SENDS BABY ISAAC

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, card stock, tissue paper, scissors, tape, and crayons.

Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft page on card stock and a piece of tissue paper. Tell the children to color baby Isaac. After coloring, tell the children to cut out baby Isaac and his cradle. Make sure the children make cuts on all of the dotted lines. Have the children fold the cradle on each solid black line. Put the cradle together, using tape to secure the corners on the inside. Wrap baby Isaac in tissue paper and lay him in the cradle.

*God Sends Baby Isaac
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*



AGES 9–11

**WAITING**

Ask the children whether they have ever waited a long time for something. Were they happy when it finally arrived? Ask whether they are waiting for something now. Ask them what they would think if it would take 25 years to happen. Abraham and Sarah had been waiting for 25 years for the birth of their son, Isaac.

PROMISES

Ask children to explain what a promise is. Then ask the children if they have ever made a promise. Did they keep their promise? If not, why? Tell the children that God is not like us. He has made many promises in the Bible, and He always keeps His promises. God never lies (Num 23:19), and there is nothing or no one that can stop God from keeping His promise. Not even the age of Sarah was able to stop God from keeping His promise. In today's lesson, we will see how God allowed Sarah to become the mother of Isaac even though she was already too old to have children.

**FAMILY CHAIN**

Bring in a chain and show it to the class. Point out that a chain is made up of individual links connected one to another. Use this object to teach the children about baby Isaac's place in the family line of Jesus. Using Matthew 1, explain that Abraham is the first "link" in the chain and Jesus is the last. Point out that Isaac is the second "link" in the line of the Messiah. Using Matt 1, you might also point out other links in the line of Christ (Jacob, Boaz, David, Solomon, Joseph, etc.).

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD

Sarah was too old to have a baby when Isaac was born, but that was no problem for God. God is able to do whatever He desires. Ask the children if they can remember any other miracles recorded in the Bible (answers might include: creation of heavens and earth, 10 plagues, crossing of the Red Sea, water from a rock, manna and meat from heaven, battle of Jericho, birth of Jesus, etc.).

**REVIEW GAME**

Review the questions from the lesson time with a small group of children. Ask them about struggles they have with waiting and patience. Talk with them about being patient with their parents and doing what they said. Brainstorm four or five areas that your children struggle with regarding believing and trusting God's promises. Have the other children think of ways to put their trust in God.



LESSON 12

God tests Abraham

GENESIS 22:1-19



Faith is proven by obedience.



"Abraham said, 'God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' So they went both of them together" (Gen 22:8).

Supporting Truths

1. God tests faith by requiring obedience even when it is very hard.
2. Faith is proven by obedience.
3. God provides a substitute sacrifice to save those who truly trust Him.
4. God tests faith because He is jealous: we must love Him more than anything.
5. God gives Jesus as the final substitute sacrifice for all who believe.

Objectives

1. Describe how Abraham obeyed God's command.
2. Explain what Abraham believed as he chose to obey.
3. Describe how God provided a substitute sacrifice in the place of Isaac.
4. Explain how God's command tested what Abraham loved most.
5. Explain how the event and the location point toward Jesus as the final substitute sacrifice.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God tests Abraham • Genesis 22:1–19



Lesson Summary

God tested Abraham's faith by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son whom he loved. Abraham trusted God, and he proved this by obeying, until God stopped him at the last minute. In response to Abraham's faith, God provided a substitute sacrifice and confirmed His promise that Abraham's seed would bless all nations.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God tested Abraham's faith and obedience by commanding him to offer his beloved son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. God spared Isaac by providing a substitute ram, which is a symbol of Jesus, the Lamb of God who died for all nations. Through Abraham's greater Son, Jesus Christ, God has provided a substitute for all who follow Abraham's example of faithful obedience.

LAST WEEK



God sends baby Isaac
Genesis 21:1–14

THIS WEEK



God tests Abraham
Genesis 22:1–19

NEXT WEEK



**God chooses Jacob
over Esau**
*Genesis 25:21–24;
27:1–28:5*

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

Faith is proven by obedience.

The promised son, Isaac, had finally been born. For years Abraham and Sarah had waited. God had worked with them in their weakness, promising over and over that the great nation would come through Sarah's son Isaac, not through Ishmael or anyone else. In Genesis 21, Isaac was born, and Abraham and Sarah rejoiced and grew strong in their faith in God. Now, after God had strengthened Abraham's faith and given him time to mature, God brought the most difficult test to Abraham to prove that his faith was real.



THINK ABOUT IT
The testing of Abraham's faith produced endurance (Jas 1:3)

God commanded Abraham to give up what he loved most (22:1-2)

In Genesis 12:1 God commanded Abraham to "go". God told Abraham to leave his country, relatives,

and his father's home and move to the land that He would reveal to him. In Genesis 22:2 God again told Abraham to "go", using exactly the same wording found in Genesis 12:1. This time God told Abraham to go to the land of Moriah to offer his beloved son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. God tested Abraham to demonstrate his trust and prove that God is faithful.

The way Abraham responded to God's voice, even before God gave the command, shows that Abraham was ready. He responded, "Here I am," which shows that Abraham had a deep relationship, or friendship, with God (Jas 2:23). Abraham was walking with God just like God had commanded him (Gen 17:1). God tested Abraham by asking him to present his only son Isaac as a **burnt offering**, to kill him as a sacrifice burned up on the altar to please God. Later, God would reveal how much He hates human sacrifice (Lev 18:21; Deut 12:31), so God never desired Isaac to be killed. This was a test of Abraham's faith.

This test was very hard for two reasons.

First, Abraham loved Isaac very much, since Genesis 22:2 emphasizes "your son, your only son, whom you love." God is a **jealous** God: He does not share His glory with anyone or anything. God was testing him: did Abraham love Isaac more than God? Did Abraham love one of the blessings of the covenant more than the God who gave the blessing? Second, God had promised in Genesis 12 that Abraham would become a great nation, and that through this nation all the world would be blessed. Also, God repeatedly promised that this nation would come through Sarah's son, Isaac (Gen 17:19). How could this be if Isaac was dead? Abraham had to choose between holding on to Isaac and all that he loved or giving Isaac to God's control and trusting that God would do what was right.

Abraham obeyed God because he trusted God (22:3-10)

Abraham believed and **obeyed**, doing exactly what God told him to do. He did not doubt, argue, or delay, as he had at other times when he was still growing in his faith (Gen 17:18). Not only did he obey immediately, but he also obeyed persistently. He had time on the journey to think a lot about what God was asking. But he did not waver (Rom 4:20-21). Faith always produces this kind of obedience, and it is wrong for anyone to say that he has faith when he does not have a habit of obeying God (Jas 2:14-26).

Abraham grew strong in faith. He believed that both he and Isaac would return to the servants (Gen 22:5), he believed that God would provide the lamb (22:8), and he believed that if he killed Isaac God would raise him from the dead (Heb 11:17-19). Abraham had no doubt that God would find a way to make a great nation from Isaac.

THINK ABOUT IT
Is there anything in your life, good or evil, that you love more than God?



THINK ABOUT IT
Abraham's behavior before God was directed by his belief in God.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God tests Abraham • Genesis 22:1–19



Although this story is about Abraham, Isaac's role is important as a reminder of Jesus, who also carried the wood for His death up a hill in the same area. Isaac was at least in his teens, possibly over twenty at this time, because Isaac is capable of carrying enough firewood up a

mountain for a burnt offering, because of his age and his question in Genesis 22:7, he was aware of what was going on, and he could have resisted as Abraham began to prepare him for death. His submission is a reminder of the willing submission of Jesus (Isa 53:7), just as Abraham is a reminder of God's willing sacrifice of His only Son (John 3:16).

God provided the sacrifice and blessed Abraham (22:11–19)

After Abraham made all the preparations, he lifted his knife to kill his only son whom he loved. At that moment, his faith was fully proved. God already knew his faith, because God knows all things and knows the heart. So when God says, "now I know" (Gen 22:12), He does not mean that He has learned something new but that God has demonstrated this by actual experience. Also, Abraham, Isaac, and all who hear this story are now sure that Abraham's faith (which is also called "fear" of God) was real.

Once Abraham proved this, the angel of the LORD stopped him. In the first part of the story, God is called Elohim, but now God is called the LORD or the angel of

the LORD. LORD, or Yahweh, is the covenant, life-giving name of God used the people God has formed a special relationship with in the Old Testament. He spares Isaac and provides a substitute ram in order to keep His covenant and provide life.

This story is about God testing Abraham, but Genesis 22:14 makes it clear that this story is meant to be much bigger than that. Moses wrote, "It is said to this day, 'In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.'" This is Mount Moriah (22:2), the same place Solomon would later build the temple (2 Chr 3:1), where substitute sacrifices would be made every day. So this story is about God providing salvation to those who trust Him, and He provides salvation by means of a **substitute** sacrifice, killing an animal or person in the place of another. God provided substitute sacrifices during the Passover (Exod 12:12–13) and at Mt Sinai (13:12–13), and all of these substitute sacrifices look forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who is the perfect substitute sacrifice for all who have faith like Abraham's (1 Pet 1:18–19; 2 Cor 5:21). By His death the sins of those who believe are paid for and forgiven.

When God ordered Abraham to offer Isaac, God knew He would one day offer His own Son. That is why God confirms His promise that through Abraham's seed (Jesus) all the earth will be blessed (Gen 22:18). And God's promise is as strong as possible: "By Myself have I sworn" (22:16). God's promise is based on His own character, which does not change. Because of that, despite Israel's coming history of sin, God did provide a Savior for all who respond by faith (John 3:16).

THINK ABOUT IT
Jesus is the
"lamb of God
who takes away
the sin of the
world!" (John 1:29)



Lesson Outline

Faith is proven by obedience.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son (22:1–2).
2. Abraham obeyed God because he believed God would save Isaac (22:3–10; Heb 11:17–19).
3. God provided a ram and blessed Abraham (22:11–19).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God commanded Abraham to give up what he loved most (22:1–2).
 - God tested Abraham to see if he had learned to walk by faith (22:1).
 - Abraham was ready for this test because he lived close to God, saying “Here I am” (22:1, 11).
 - God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son whom he loved (22:2).
2. Abraham obeyed God because he trusted God (22:3–10; Heb 11:17–19).
 - Abraham obeyed quickly, early in the morning, and kept obeying during the journey (22:3–4).
 - Abraham believed that both he and Isaac would return (22:5).
 - Abraham believed that God would provide the lamb (22:8).
 - Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:17–19).
 - Abraham prepared to sacrifice his willing son (22:9–10).
3. God provided the sacrifice and blessed Abraham (22:11–19).
 - God stopped Abraham because God had now proved Abraham’s faith (22:10–11).
 - God provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice (22:12–13).
 - The ram is a picture of Jesus, whom God provided as a substitute sacrifice (22:14).
 - The LORD promised to bless Abraham’s descendants and send a seed to bless all nations (22:15–19).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Who was Isaac, and what was special about him?**
He was Abraham's promised son.
2. **Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering?**
To test Abraham.
3. **Did God really want Abraham to kill Isaac?**
No. He wanted to show whom Abraham loved more, Him or Isaac.
4. **Did Abraham trust God and pass the test? How?**
Yes. He was obedient to God.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **What was God's test for Abraham?**
God told Abraham to take his only son to Moriah and offer him up as a burnt offering.
2. **What is special about how God described Isaac?**
God described Abraham's son as "your son," "your only son," and the one "whom you love." Isaac was very precious to Abraham.
3. **If Isaac were no longer alive, how would God's promises be kept?**
God's promises to Abraham required that Isaac remain alive and so Abraham believed that both he and Isaac would return (Gen 22:5).
4. **How long did Abraham wait before he obeyed God's command?**
He did not wait a few days to think about whether or not he should obey. He obeyed God immediately—even though it was difficult.
5. **What did Abraham believe God could do if he killed Isaac?**
Abraham believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead.
6. **How did God provide for Abraham?**
He spared Isaac and provided a ram, a substitute, in order to keep His covenant and provide life.
7. **Why did God test Abraham as He did?**
God's test showed that God was more special to Abraham than even the promised son, Isaac, was. No matter how much Abraham loved Isaac, he loved God more.
8. **What did the angel of the LORD again guarantee to Abraham because he did not withhold Isaac from the LORD?**
The angel of the LORD reiterated the promise that the Lord had already made to Abraham. The angel of the LORD also told Abraham, "In your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

NAME GAME REVIEW

Begin describing a child in your class. Ask the children to guess what child you are describing. Then describe people from last week's Bible lesson. If the children don't guess the name, tell them who you are describing. Use pictures of the different Bible characters if available. Help the children say "Isaac" and "Abraham" and tell the children to listen for those names today.

HARD TO OBEY

Bring in a puppet and have it tell the children about times when it was hard to obey. Use examples from children's lives: sharing, arguing, making their beds, cleaning their rooms, etc. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about someone who had something very, very hard to obey. But in the end, his obedience showed that he loved God more than anything else. .



ILLUSTRATE

GOD HAS PROVIDED A LAMB

Before class cut out circles on dark construction paper (circles should be around 3 inches in diameter). Roll masking tape into a ball and stick it to the back of the circles so that the circles are able to be stuck to clothing. During the lesson, pass out one or more circles with tape to each child. Instruct children to stick the dark circle to their cloths. Explain that this dark circle represents our sin. After all the stickers have been passed out, pull out a stuffed lamb or cross (you may even draw a cross on the marker board). Tell the children that God has provided a lamb, Jesus Christ, to bear our sins in our place. Allow the children to walk up to the front of the room and stick their dark circle ("sin") on the lamb or cross.

PROPS

During the Bible lesson, bring in various props such as firewood, a lamb, and a puppet to represent Isaac. Use them as you tell the story.



APPLY

CLIMBING MOUNT MORIAH

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, brown or green construction paper, glue or stapler, tape, printed copies of Genesis 22:8, crayons.

Directions: Use a piece of brown or green construction paper to make Mount Moriah. Roll the construction paper along the long side into a cone for the mountain. Tape the cone so that it will not unroll. Cut out pictures of Abraham, Isaac, and the ram for children. Have children color the cut outs. Tape on a picture of Abraham and Isaac as if they are climbing the mountain.

*Climbing Mount Moriah
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God tests Abraham • Genesis 22:1–19



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

Ask children about their favorite things. Allow multiple children to answer. Then ask the children how they would feel if they were asked to give up their favorite things. In today's lesson, we will see how God asked Abraham to give up his favorite possession, his son.

SWORD DRILL: WHAT'S THIS "WE" STUFF?

Before Abraham continued up the mountain alone with Isaac, he told his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." If Abraham intended to obey God's command to sacrifice his son, how could he say they both would come back? Do a sword drill with the children, looking up Hebrews 11:17–19. Read this verse to the class in order to explain what Abraham was thinking.



ILLUSTRATE

TEST OF FAITH

Ask one of the children to come stand next to you. Explain that you are going to test his faith by asking him to fall backward and trust that you will catch him. Tell the children that in today's lesson, they will learn how God tested Abraham's faith.

REAL OR FAKE?

Bring in multiple items that look real but are fake. Some options include: fool's gold, counterfeit money, fake diamonds (earrings or ring), fake Rolex, and fake Oakley sunglasses. Explain that these items look real but, upon closer inspection, are actually fake. Tell the children that God examined Abraham's faith and that after closer inspection his faith was shown to be real.



APPLY

WHAT THEY TOOK

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, twigs, wood chips, aluminum foil, memory verse, crayons, and glue.

Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft page. Each circle will contain items representing what Abraham and Isaac carried to Mount Moriah. Give the children small twigs to represent fire, or have them draw fire in the first circle. In the second circle, have them glue wood chips. In the third circle, have them glue aluminum foil to represent the knife. Finally, give each child a copy of the memory verse to glue onto the bottom of the page.



What They Took
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1

AGES 9–11

**SOME GOOD STUFF**

On a sheet of paper, have children list 10 things that are most precious to them. Then have them cross out one item at a time until only one or two things remain. What if God asked you to give up even these? When you really get down to basics, what is absolutely essential? If we lost everything, would Jesus be enough? In our lesson today, we will see a man, Abraham, who valued God above all else, even his most favorite possession.

YAHWEH YIREH

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Write “Yahweh Yireh” on the board. Give each child a copy of the “Yahweh Yireh” work sheet (*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*). Have children write down, on line 1, what they think this Hebrew statement means. After reading Genesis 22:1–8, ask the children to write down a second guess on line 2. Next read Genesis 22:9–19. Once you get to verse 14, the answer should become clear (“provide”). Ask the children when they were able to figure out the answer.

**TEST OF STRENGTH**

Bring long pieces of three different kinds of thread, string, ribbon, cord, floss, twine, or fishing line. Have children guess which of these items is the strongest. Can we tell by looking? How can we find out for sure? Ask for volunteers to help you pull the different strings to determine their strength.

SUBSTITUTES

Genesis 22:13 introduces the important concept of substitutionary atonement. Lead the class in a discussion of things that are often “substituted” for others. Ideas may include: substitute teachers, substituting eggs instead of hash browns at breakfast, using artificial sweetener in iced tea instead of sugar, or a friend picking you up from school instead of your parents. Emphasize that Jesus Christ served as the ultimate substitute when he died for our sins on the cross. Explain that the Old Testament sacrificial system was temporarily established until Christ fulfilled the requirement for death once and for all by giving His life in place of ours at His crucifixion.

**SWORD DRILL: TESTING FAITH**

Race to find the verses listed below. Have all the children hold their closed Bibles in the air with one hand as each reference is read. Children must then wait for you to say “go” before finding the passage.

Genesis 22:1–2

Deuteronomy 8:2

Job 23:10

Psalms 17:3

Malachi 3:3

Luke 6:48

John 6:5–6

1 Corinthians 3:13

1 Corinthians 10:13

Hebrews 11:17

James 1:2–4; 1:12–13

1 Peter 1:7; 4:12



LESSON 13

God chooses Jacob over Esau

GENESIS 25:21-34; 27:1-28:5



God blesses those He has chosen to bless.



"The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb...the older shall serve the younger'" (Gen 25:23).

Supporting Truths

1. God blesses those He has chosen to bless.
2. Even though God chooses, God blesses those who receive His promise by faith.
3. Even though God blesses those He has chosen, sin still causes suffering.
4. God is able to use human sin in order to bring about His blessing.
5. It is better to trust God's promise than to try to make it happen the wrong way.

Objectives

1. State that God chose Jacob before he was born.
2. Describe how Esau despised the covenant but Jacob valued it
3. Match each person's sin to the consequences they suffered for their sin.
4. Explain how God used Jacob and Rebekah's sin to accomplish His plan.
5. Consider how Jacob and Rebekah should have handled the situation.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God chooses Jacob over Esau • Genesis 25:21–34; 27:1–28:5



Lesson Summary

Just as God chose Abraham's son Isaac to be the heir of the covenant, so God chose Isaac's son Jacob to receive the Abrahamic covenant. But the transition was difficult. Isaac wanted his oldest son, Esau, to be the heir, but Rebekah and Jacob tricked Esau into blessing Jacob. Even though each person suffered a lot because of their sin, God accomplished His plan to make Jacob the covenant heir. The covenant cannot be broken.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God's choice of Jacob is a picture of salvation. Salvation comes to those God has chosen even before their birth (Eph 1:4). It comes according to God's choice, not according to human preference, for God chose the younger son to replace the older son. So the only way to be saved is to entrust ourselves to God through Jesus Christ.

LAST WEEK



God tests Abraham
Genesis 22:1–19

THIS WEEK



**God chooses Jacob
over Esau**
*Genesis 25:21–34;
27:1–28:5*

NEXT WEEK



**Jacob wrestles
with God**
Genesis 32:1–33:20

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God blesses those He has chosen to bless.

The entire salvation plan is God's choice, and He does just as He plans. In the beginning, God chose to create mankind. After the fall, God chose to promise a Savior, and selected just one man, Abraham, through whom the promise would be fulfilled. God chose just one of Abraham's sons, Isaac. And it was God's choice to select just one of Isaac's sons, Jacob, to receive the blessings of the covenant.

God chose Jacob and not Esau before their birth (25:21–24)

Even before birth, there was an obstacle to God's plan. Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was barren (Gen 25:21), and this barrenness lasted twenty years (25:20, 26). Isaac seems to have learned from his father's mistake. Instead of seeking a human solution, Isaac prayed for his wife, and God answered (25:21).

Even though there were twins in Rebekah's womb, God chose only one of them to carry on the **covenant**, or **special promise**. He had made to Abraham (25:23). Even though the custom was for the older son to become the family leader,

God chose the younger son. God's choice of Jacob over Esau to continue the physical line was not based on personal merit or demerit as the boys had yet to do anything good or bad (Rom 9:11). Rather, God's choice of Jacob resides solely in His own sovereign perfect plan and purpose. This serves as a clear illustration of salvation where man is ultimately saved not by his works of the flesh or his own will (John 1:13) but by the gracious choice and calling of God (1 Cor 1:9). This **choice** is called **election** (Eph 1:4).

The family was divided over God's plan (25:25–34; 27:1–24)

Unfortunately, Isaac resisted God's plan. As the leader of the family, he should have led according to God's choice of Jacob. Instead, he liked Esau better and gave more attention to the food Esau hunted than to God's purpose (Gen 25:28). Rebekah clung to

the younger son through deceit and lack of submission to her husband.

Jacob and Esau were also divided over God's plan. God chooses His plan and accomplishes it, but salvation still depends on each individual's response (Rom 10:9–13). Earlier, Ishmael was rejected because God did not choose him, but also because Ishmael despised the covenant when he mocked Isaac. In the same way, Esau was rejected both by God's choice before his birth, but also by his own rejection of the covenant blessing. So he sold his **birthright**, his special role as the firstborn, for a bowl of stew (25:33). He despised the covenant (25:34), so he lost the favor that comes through the covenant (Heb 12:16–17).

Jacob received the covenant because God chose him before birth, but also because he valued the covenant. Even though he was immature and deceptive—even his name means deceiver—he pursued what was truly valuable (Gen 25:29–34). For his faith he would receive the covenant; for his lies he would suffer much pain.

Even after seeing how Esau despised the birthright, Isaac still planned to give the blessing to Esau. Isaac was about 137 years old (27:1). Isaac had had 77 years to see Esau's true character, including Esau's marriage to two ungodly women (26:34). For 77 years Isaac refused to let God control this one corner of his heart. Unlike Abraham, who sent Ishmael away even though it was hard (21:11–14), Isaac would not give up his personal plan for Esau.

Isaac's plan to bless Esau was heard by Rebekah (27:5) and instead of talking to Isaac, she purposely went behind his back, instructing Jacob to deceive his father (27:6–10). As a 77-year-old man, Jacob should have been mature enough to do what was right. Instead, all he cared about was getting caught (27:11–12). After Rebekah promised to take responsibility if they were caught, Jacob followed her orders (27:13–17). Not only did Jacob deceive by wearing goat skins and Esau's clothes, but he blatantly lied three times



THINK ABOUT IT
No man will ever choose God apart from God first choosing him (John 15:16).



THINK ABOUT IT
Esau lived by his senses and the need of the moment, not by God's promise (Gen 25:29–30)

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God chooses Jacob over Esau • Genesis 25:21–34; 27:1–28:5



to his father (27:18–24). A father leading in the wrong direction, a mother at odds with the father, a godless son, and a deceptive son—things did not look good for God's covenant.



THINK ABOUT IT
God's sovereignty over sin never removes man's responsibility for sin (Acts 2:23).

God overcame human sin to bless Jacob just as He planned (27:25–33; 28:4)

It is in times like these that we see how good it is that God chooses anyone at all.

Because He had chosen Jacob, God made sure that Jacob would receive the family blessing. Although God is faithful to fulfill His promises when we do what is right, He is even able to use sinful actions to accomplish His plan (Gen 50:20). So He used Jacob's lies to cause Isaac to give Jacob the blessing (27:25–29). The **blessing** was a prayer for good things, asking God to give Jacob prosperity and leadership over his brother. The final two lines of the blessing repeat God's promise to Abraham, showing that Jacob is the one to carry on the Abrahamic blessing (12:3).

At this point, Isaac thought he was blessing Esau. But then Esau came in just after Jacob left (27:30–32). Isaac did not just tremble. He trembled violently (27:33), and for good reason. He realized his own plan had been shattered, but he also realized what he had almost done: he had almost violated God's plan for the covenant. Only God's sovereign intervention had prevented him. At that moment, the faith which Isaac had repressed for 77 years began to revive, for he confidently proclaimed, "Yes, and he shall be blessed" (27:33).

Later Isaac confirmed his faith, when he blessed Jacob before Jacob left to go stay with Laban (28:3–4). With this blessing, Isaac now voluntarily affirmed God's plan to pass on the Abrahamic covenant through Jacob. That is why Hebrews 11:20 says, "By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau." After 77 years of resisting, Isaac finally accepted God's plan.

The family suffered because they twisted God's plan (27:34–28:5)

Even though God is able to use sin to accomplish His good plan, it is never wise to sin. Each member of the

family suffered in a way that fit their sin. Esau despised the birthright, so he lost the blessing (27:34–40). Isaac failed to lead his family, so he suffered a divided home. His own wife deceived him, Jacob deceived him, and now Esau was determined to kill Jacob (27:41). Rebekah secretly schemed for Jacob's sake, so she had to send Jacob away (27:42–45). Jacob only returned after 20 years (31:41). Rebekah never had a good relationship with Esau (27:46), and because of her sin she never saw her beloved son for the rest of her life, nor did she get to see and enjoy her many grandchildren.

Even though Jacob carried on the Abrahamic covenant, he suffered terribly for his lies. First, he had to flee far from his family because Esau wanted to kill him (28:1–5). But the pain did not stop there. Just as he was a deceiver, so he was deceived. Laban deceived him and gave him Leah instead of Rachel, producing a lifetime of conflict (31:41). Even Jacob's own sons deceived him, pretending that his beloved Joseph had been killed, so that Jacob considered his life short and bitter (37:33; 47:9). Jacob eventually learned his lesson, but the pain of deceit plagued him.

God blessed Jacob, just as He had chosen to do before Jacob's birth. The covenant continued, Jacob grew rich and had many children, and Jacob learned to walk by faith. Human sin could not stop God's plan. But the sin still caused lifetimes of pain, enough to serve as a strong warning that it is much better to accept God's plan by faith and obedience than to resist it or twist it (Gal 6:7). Like Jacob, we are all sinners. But if, like Jacob, we walk by faith in God, then Jesus' death pays for our sins and we are forgiven.

THINK ABOUT IT
Unrepentant sin will always deteriorate and divide the family from enjoying the blessings of God.



Lesson Outline

God blesses those He has chosen to bless.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God chose Jacob and not Esau before they were born (25:21–24).
2. Isaac and Esau did not accept God's choice (25:25–34; 27:1–4).
3. Jacob was blessed anyway (27:5–28:5).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God chose Jacob and not Esau before their birth (25:21–24).
 - Isaac prayed for Rebekah, and God gave her twins (25:20–22, 26).
 - God chose the younger son (25:23).
2. The family was divided over God's plan (25:25–34; 27:1–24).
 - Isaac loved Esau, who was a rough and hairy hunter (25:25–28).
 - Rebekah loved Jacob, who was a peaceful but deceptive man (25:25–28).
 - Jacob valued the birthright, but Esau despised it (25:29–34).
 - Isaac secretly planned to bless Esau instead of Jacob (27:1–4).
 - Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac (27:5–24).
3. God overcame human sin to bless Jacob just as He planned (27:25–33; 28:4).
 - Isaac blessed Jacob without knowing it (27:25–29).
 - Isaac knew the blessing now belonged to Jacob, not to Esau (27:30–33).
 - Isaac blessed Jacob with the covenant blessing (28:3–4).
4. The family suffered because they twisted God's plan (27:34–28:5).
 - Esau lost the blessing (27:34–40).
 - Isaac suffered a divided family (27:41).
 - Rebekah had to send Jacob away (27:42–45).
 - Jacob had to flee far from his family (28:1–5).

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God chooses Jacob over Esau • Genesis 25:21–34; 27:1–28:5



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What were the names of Isaac and Rebekah's twin boys, and what were they like?**
Esau had lots of red hair and loved to hunt. Jacob was quiet and liked to cook.
- 2. What did Esau trade Jacob?**
Esau traded his birthright to Jacob for some food.
- 3. Who did Isaac want to bless?**
Esau, even though Esau despised the birthright.
- 4. How did Jacob get the family blessing?**
Jacob wore Esau's clothes and put goat hair on his arms.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did God tell Rebekah about her sons?**
God told Rebekah that each son would be the father of a nation. One son would be stronger than the other, and the older son would serve the younger.
- 2. What did Esau sell to Jacob?**
Esau sold his birthright to Jacob in exchange for some food.
- 3. Who was supposed to receive the blessing and why?**
Jacob was to receive the blessing because God had chosen him over Esau.
- 4. What did Rebekah and Jacob do when they heard that Isaac was going to bless Esau?**
They tricked Isaac into thinking that Jacob was Esau.
- 5. Was it wrong for Rebekah and Jacob to deceive Isaac?**
Yes.
- 6. Did Isaac believe that Jacob was Esau?**
Yes. Isaac gave Jacob the blessing, thinking he was Esau.
- 7. How did Isaac confirm his faith?**
After Jacob deceived him, he blessed Jacob with the covenant blessing as God had chosen earlier.
- 8. Name two consequences of the family's sin?**
The family was divided both spiritually and physically. Esau hated Jacob and wanted to kill him. Jacob went to live with Laban, his mother's brother.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



ALL ABOUT TWINS

Read a children's book on twins, such as *About Twins* by Shelley Rotner, to the class. Ask the children whether any of them have friends who are twins. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about twins named Jacob and Esau.

GUESS WHO?

Seat the children in a large circle in the middle of the room. Have one of the teachers or helpers sit on a chair in the middle of the circle. Place a blindfold on the teacher. Have children say the teacher's name or answer a question to see if the teacher can guess who the child is by the sound of their voice. Take enough time to allow each child a turn. In today's lesson, we will see how Jacob tried to trick his blind father and steal his blessing. If you teach a large class, you may wish to select only four or five children to try tricking the teacher.



FREE GIFTS

Near the end of the lesson, have an awards ceremony. First, hand out awards to a few children who have achieved something (answered a question or participated in the lesson). Talk about how the children worked for the award, and ask them how they feel about receiving the award. Then hand out gifts to every child, giving no reason except that they are free gifts. Ask them how they feel about receiving free gifts. Now talk about God's free gift of grace, both to Jacob in the story and to us.

LIES

In our story today, Jacob lied to his father, Isaac. Ask different children to explain what lying is. After a few children have been able to answer, explain that lying is saying something that is not true. Then ask the children what God thinks about lying. After a few children have answered, tell them that God hates lying. Explain that God never lies (Num 23:19 and that lying is a sin (Ex 20:16).



SAVORY STEW

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, paper bowls, glue, scissors, beans, dried pasta, and crayons.

Directions: Print out craft pages before class and cut out one circle for each child. Pass a cutout circle to each child and tell them to color it. Next, help the children glue the circle to the bottom of the inside of the bowl. Then pass out beans and dried pasta to the children and let them glue these items on the inner sides of the bowl to create a savory stew.



Savory Stew

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God chooses Jacob over Esau • Genesis 25:21–34; 27:1–28:5



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

BUTCHER PAPER BROTHERS

Select two children to lie down on butcher paper and make poses (hands on hips or waving, for example). Trace around them with a black pen. Identify which is Jacob and which is Esau. Allow the children to take turns decorating Esau (with red skin, hairy arms, etc.) and Jacob (as a gardener, wearing a chef's hat, holding veggies, etc.). Cut out the shapes and hang them on the wall on either side of you as you teach the lesson. Point to them throughout the story or while discussing their differences.

TOUCH AND SMELL

Blindfold the children. Pass around several roughly spherical objects. Here are some ideas: orange, softball, tennis ball, apple, lemon, ball of yarn, ball of string, onion, or potato. Have children try to identify these items by touch and smell. It's not so easy, is it? In our Bible lesson, we will hear about how Isaac was fooled when he could only touch and smell.



ILLUSTRATE

BIRTHRIGHTS AND BLESSINGS

Bring in pictures of things that are part of an inheritance, such as houses, land, cars, and jewelry. Explain that when someone dies, all that he owned is called an inheritance. Usually these things eventually will go to the person's children. In those days, the older son had a birthright. That means that Esau was supposed to get a double portion of the things his father owned. Divide the pictures into two groups, one twice as large as the other. But as we will see, God chose the younger brother, Jacob, to receive the double blessing.

MYSTERY TOUCH/SMELLS

Bring paper bags or bowls filled with various items. Include some items that have distinct odors (popcorn, lemon, cut grass, etc). Have the children close their eyes and try to identify what is in each bag or bowl using only the senses of touch and smell. Explain that Isaac's eyesight was bad, so he had to rely on touch and smell. Rebekah and Jacob used this weakness to trick Isaac.



APPLY

JACOB'S DISGUISE

Materials: Paper lunch bags, scissors, glue, yarn, string, and crayons.

Directions: Cut off the bottom corner of the bag to create an opening for the thumb. Next, cut out an oval shape on the bottom of the bag to create an opening for the fingers. Then cut down the side of the bag beginning at the top and stopping a half inch from the bottom. Tighten the bag around the child's arm by sliding the extra material under the bag and secure with tape or staples. Leave enough space for children to slide the bag on and off their arms. Allow children to color the bag red like Esau's skin. Provide children with yarn and glue and let them decorate the bag with "hair".



AGES 9–11

**BICKERING BROTHERS***See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.*

This passage reveals yet another example of brothers quarreling against one another. Make a copy of the Venn Diagram for each student or draw it on the white board. Also give each child a copy to take notes on. Read Genesis 25:21–34 and 27:1–40. Ask children to write similarities between Esau and Jacob in the parts of the circles that overlap, and differences between the twin brothers on the parts of the circles that do not overlap.

TWIN TESTIMONY

Invite a twin (or set of twins) to come to class to briefly describe what it's like having a twin. You could also ask parents of twins to talk about what it's like raising twins. Have children write down questions they would like to ask, so they will be prepared for the visit. After the visit, read Genesis 25:21–26 to the class to introduce the lesson.

**LIFE'S STORY**

Show the class a current newspaper. What kinds of things are going on in the world? Does God know about all this? God has a plan for our world and our lives. What happens to His plan when people do bad things? Does anything take God by surprise? Why not? Because God is in control of the future.

GOD CHOOSES WHO HE WILL BLESS

Invite two children to stand in front of the class. Explain that neither child has done anything to earn a blessing. Give one child a blessing (small toy, candy, etc.), but give the other child nothing. Tell children that it was your choice to bless one child and not the other. Neither child deserved a blessing. It was your choice. Explain that in today's lesson, God chose to bless Jacob and not Esau. It had nothing to do with what the brothers had done; it was simply God's choice.

**LIE AFTER LIE***See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.*

Pass out the "Lie after Lie" worksheet to each child. Read the passages and answer the corresponding questions together. You may choose to divide the application questions among the children and then share answers as a group.



LESSON 14

Jacob wrestles with God

GENESIS 32:1-33:20



God's children depend fully upon Him.



"And he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then he said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.'" (Gen 32:27-28).

Supporting Truths

1. God blesses those who cling to Him.
2. By clinging to God, we make God our own God.
3. Those who are self sufficient, deceptive, and manipulative don't cling to God.
4. God fights against the self-reliant.
5. Those who cling to God will worship Him.

Objectives

1. Describe how God answered Jacob's prayer.
2. Identify when Jacob called God "his God".
3. Describe how Jacob trusted in himself before wrestling with God.
4. Explain how God brought trouble into Jacob's life and finally broke his power.
5. Describe how Jacob worshiped God after being driven to him.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Jacob wrestles with God • Genesis 32:1–33:20



Lesson Summary

Jacob was returning to Canaan when he heard that his brother Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. Jacob's fear drove him to pray, but even though he asked God for deliverance, Jacob continued to trust in his own strength and resources. The night before Jacob met Esau, God came and wrestled with Jacob, shattering Jacob's self sufficiency and driving him to dependence on Him. After Jacob admitted his deceitful nature, God blessed him, gave him a new name, saved him from Esau, and brought him into Canaan. There for the first time Jacob worshiped God as his own God.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Jacob, the proud, self sufficient, trickster, had to embrace humble dependence on God before returning to the land of Canaan. His wrestling match with God illustrates the way a person must cling to God in order to receive His blessing. God saves those who do not let go of Him (Deut 4:4), desperately holding fast to the promise of salvation through God's Son, Jesus. Jacob's clinging to God is a vivid expression of man's humility and his total dependence on God for everything.

LAST WEEK



**God chooses Jacob
over Esau**

*Genesis 25:21–24;
27:1–28:5*

THIS WEEK



**Jacob wrestles
with God**

Genesis 32:1–33:20

NEXT WEEK



God preserves Joseph
Genesis 37:1–36

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God's children depend fully upon Him.

God chose Jacob to be the one to carry on God's promise to make Abraham a great nation and bless all nations through Abraham (Gen 12:2–3; 25:23). However, even though Jacob valued the birthright and blessing, God was not his God. Jacob relied on himself. If any man could be self-reliant, Jacob could. By his cleverness he had gotten his way against Esau, Isaac, and even Laban. By his strength he had rolled away a stone that normally took several men to move, and even when almost 100 years old he could wrestle all night. But even after his fourteen year struggle with Laban (29:13–31:55), Jacob still had not learned that it is God, not man, who brings success. Jacob still would not call God “my God.” He referred to God only as the God of Abraham and Isaac (31:5, 42, 53). Jacob still trusted his own strength and cleverness instead of surrendering control of his life to God. But before returning to his father's land in Canaan, Jacob struggled with a man—God Himself—who used Jacob's desperation to drive him to depend upon God, not self.

Jacob continued to cling to himself (32:1–21)

With his struggle with Laban behind him, Jacob went on his way (32:1). He was first met by an angelic host, who must have reminded him of Bethel, which would have been a timely reminder of God's will being done on earth (28:11–15). But then Jacob remembered his brother, Esau, a frightening reminder of sin's consequences (32:3).

Jacob sought reconciliation with his brother (32:4–5), but the report of the messengers (32:6) only seemed to confirm his deepest fears—Esau's 20 year-old promised to kill Jacob had not been forgotten (27:41). Esau's coming with 400 men appeared to spell disaster for Jacob and his family (32:8, 11). So Jacob divided his people and his possessions, hoping that if one half was destroyed the other half could escape.

Frightened concerning his impending reunion with Esau, Jacob prayed for deliverance. First he prayed

by faith in God's character as Yahweh, the covenant God who proved His love and faithfulness by His past actions (32:9–10). Second, both at the beginning and end of his prayer, he repeated God's promises back to God, showing that he prayed by faith in God's word and with a desire for God's will to be done (32:9, 12). Third, he confessed that he deserved none of God's kindness (32:10). Fourth, he presented his request, asking to be saved from Esau and praying for his family as well (32:11).

However, even though Jacob's prayer is commendable, he was still not ready to call God his own God (32:9). Jacob had not

yet given God complete control of his life. He did not fully rely upon God. He tried to appease his brother with 550 animals (32:13–21), showing his failure to believe that God would actually change Esau's heart. Jacob believed that he would be the one to change his brother's heart, for he said, “I will appease him with the present that goes before me” (32:20). Jacob was back to his old tricks, relying on himself and his own resources.

Jacob finally clung to God (32:22–32)

But God met Jacob. While Jacob was alone, seemingly out of nowhere, a man began wrestling with Jacob, and Jacob kept wrestling him all night (33:24). Hosea 12:3–4 shows that this man was both God and the angel of the Lord, an Old Testament appearance of God the Son. Hosea also shows that this wrestling match was not just physical, but also verbal and spiritual, for Jacob “wept and sought His favor” (Hos 12:4). So the wrestling match showed the reality of Jacob's life. He thought his struggles with Esau, Isaac, and Laban were struggles against men. But in reality, he had been resisting God.

Finally, the man dislocated Jacob's hip (33:25), which is the center of power in wrestling. This illustrates that God

THINK ABOUT IT
Jacob's prayer is a pattern for us to follow.



THINK ABOUT IT
Jacob turned from sinful self-reliance to submissive God-reliance.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Jacob wrestles with God • Genesis 32:1–33:20



finally broke Jacob's self reliance. In response, Jacob did what he should have been doing his whole life: he clung to God to receive the blessing (33:26). Before blessing him, the man first asked Jacob his name (33:27). The last time Genesis records someone asking Jacob his name, Jacob had lied and said his name was Esau (27:19). But this time Jacob told the truth. He finally realized

and admitted that he really was what his name means—a deceiver.

After Jacob's confession, the man renamed him Israel, which means "he struggles with God" (32:28). By renaming him, the man declared Jacob to be a changed man. It is here, clinging to God, that Jacob finally humbled himself and surrendered control of his life. So this wrestling match illustrates that a person is to cling to God by faith to seek His favor (Deut 4:4), and that God will graciously fight against us until we cling to Him for salvation.

The man blessed Jacob, implying that He was God. Jacob recognized this when he named the place Peniel, which means "face of God" (32:29–30). Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face" (32:30), identifying his unusual, personal encounter with God. But, as it was not light yet, Jacob did not actually see God's face. A few others, like Manoah (Judg 13:22), had such an encounter, and Moses regularly encountered God in such a direct way (Exod 33:11), yet without literally seeing God (Exod 33:20).

Just as Jacob's wrestling match was a physical expression of spiritually clinging to God, so his limp as he went away was a physical illustration of his spiritual humbling

(Gen 32:31). He was not perfect, but he was no longer determined to rely on his own strength instead of on God. It was not until Jacob saw his need for God's blessing that he was ready to receive and enjoy God's blessing.

Jacob worshiped God as his own God (33:1–20)

God was true to His promise to bring Jacob safely back into the land. God had caused a change in Esau's heart, so that instead of killing Jacob, Esau ran to Jacob, embraced him, and wept with him (33:4). Jacob insisted that Esau take his generous gift (33:11), for by accepting it, Esau agreed that he had received payment for any wrong Jacob had done to him. He gave up his right to take vengeance on Jacob.

After Esau left, Jacob traveled slowly until he came to Shechem in Canaan, the land God had promised to Jacob and his descendants (33:17–19). Here Jacob built an altar called El-Elohe-Israel, "Mighty God is the God of Israel" (33:20). Since Jacob's new name was "Israel," he was now referring to God as his own God. God had promised to give him success and bring him back into the land. Jacob remembered God's promise and would not stop clinging to this promise, for now he was clinging to God. So now, after wrestling with God, Jacob **worshiped** God as his own God, giving God the honor He deserves.

When Moses wrote this story, the people were about to reenter Canaan, so God's promise about the land was very meaningful to them. Like Jacob, they too needed to cling to God and depend upon Him for all their needs. And as Jacob entered the land after triumphing over the Aramean in the north (Laban) and the Edomite in the south (Esau), so the Israelites could hope to triumph over all their enemies and enter the land. Followers of God today must also cling to God and His promises, not to their own cleverness or strength, for God has provided a way for them to enter their heavenly home through Jesus Christ (Heb 11:16; 13:14–15).

Lesson Outline

God's children depend fully upon Him.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jacob depended on himself (32:1–12).
2. Jacob depended on God (32:22–32).
3. Jacob worshiped God (33:1–20).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Jacob continued to cling to himself (32:1–21).**
 - As Jacob returned to Canaan, angels reminded him of God's presence (32:1–2).
 - Jacob was afraid when he heard that Esau was coming with 400 men (32:3–8).
 - Jacob prayed, but he was still not ready to call God his own God (32:9–12).
 - Jacob still depended on himself when he sent a gift to Esau (32:13–21).
2. **Jacob finally clung to God (32:22–32).**
 - When Jacob was alone, a man wrestled with him all night (32:22–24).
 - Because Jacob kept resisting, the man dislocated his hip (32:25).
 - Jacob would not let go until the man blessed him (32:25–26).
- Jacob admitted his name was Jacob, or “deceiver” (32:27).
- The man blessed Jacob and named him Israel, or “he struggles with God” (32:28).
- Jacob knew the man was actually God (32:28–30).
3. **Jacob worshiped God as his own God (33:1–20).**
 - Esau welcomed Jacob peacefully (33:1–16).
 - Jacob traveled to Shechem in Canaan, the land promised to him by God (33:17–19).
 - Jacob built an altar and named it “a Mighty God is the God of Israel” (33:20).



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why was Jacob afraid to see his brother Esau?**
Jacob was afraid Esau would kill him and his family.
- 2. When Jacob wrestled with God, did Jacob let go?**
No. Jacob kept holding on to God.
- 3. How did God teach Jacob to trust Him?**
God dislocated Jacob's hip so that Jacob limped.
- 4. What did Jacob do after God saved him from Esau?**
He built an altar and made God his own.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who did Jacob see before he sent messengers to Esau?**
Jacob saw angels of God, so Jacob remembered that God's will was being done on earth.
- 2. Why was Jacob so afraid of Esau?**
Esau had promised to kill him, and Jacob thought Esau would attack his family too.
- 3. How did Jacob pray?**
Jacob remembered God's loving and faithful character and actions, he prayed based on God's promises, he admitted he was unworthy, and he asked God a specific request.
- 4. What did Jacob do after he prayed?**
Jacob sent 550 animals to Esau and called Esau "my lord."
- 5. What did God do to Jacob before blessing him?**
God dislocated Jacob's hip so that Jacob limped. This is a reminder that we experience God's blessing only after we have become broken before God.
- 6. What did Jacob have to do before God blessed him?**
Jacob had to admit that his name was Jacob and that he was a deceiver. God blesses those who confess their sin and depend fully on Him.
- 7. What did God do for Jacob?**
God gave Jacob a new name, Israel. God blessed Jacob. God saved Jacob from Esau and brought him back into Canaan.
- 8. What did Jacob do after he got to Canaan?**
Jacob built an altar and worshiped God as his own God, not just as the God of his father.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



HAIRY-ARMED ESAU

Tape pieces of red yarn to your arms, neck, and face. As you are doing this, ask the children whether they remember the name of the hairy man in Genesis. When the children say, "Esau," ask whether they remember why Esau was mad at Jacob. Jacob put fur on his arms and pretended to be Esau. He stole the family blessing, and that made Esau very angry. Jacob was afraid to meet his brother, Esau, because Esau said he would kill Jacob.

DIVIDING YOUR POSSESSIONS

Use masking tape to make two large circles on the floor. At the beginning of the Bible lesson, read Genesis 32:6–8 to the class. Illustrate the idea of dividing the people and animals by dividing the children into two groups. Each group could sit in a separate circle for the rest of the lesson.



DEPENDING ON SELF OR GOD?

Tape pieces of red yarn to your arms. Tell the children that this is what Jacob did to trick his father. Ask the children if Jacob was depending on himself or God when he pretended to be Esau. Explain that Jacob was depending on himself, not God, when he tricked his father.

PRAYER: TALKING TO GOD

Show the children different ways we communicate with each other: Letters, emails (computers), phones, and walkie talkies. Ask the children if we need any of these things to talk to God. Tell the children that we don't need any of these things to talk to God. We can talk to God anytime. This is prayer: talking to God.



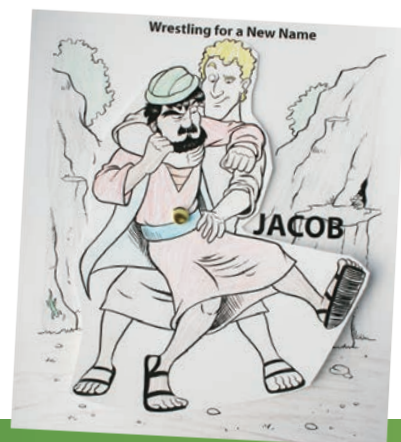
ISRAEL/JACOB SPINNER

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft pages, white cardstock, metal fasteners (brads), scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Cut out the picture of the men wrestling. Pass these out to children, along with one copy of the landscape on cardstock. Tell the children to color both the men and the landscape. After they have finished coloring, help the children fasten the wrestlers to the landscape by pushing the metal fastener (brad) through the wrestlers and landscape. Spin the wrestlers around in a circle to reveal Jacob's new name.

Israel/Jacob Spinner
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Jacob wrestles with God • Genesis 32:1–33:20



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

A NEW NAME

As children enter the classroom, give them each a name tag with a new name written on it. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn that Jacob received a new name after he wrestled with God.

DIVIDING YOUR POSSESSIONS

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 children, and ask each group to sit in a circle on the floor. Give each child 4 individually wrapped candies (like Starbursts). Tell the children to dump their possessions on the floor and divide them into two large piles in the center of their circle. Come around to each group, and select one of the two piles. Ask the children to pick up these possessions and take them away to the other side of the room, along with half of the group members. Use this activity to introduce the idea of Jacob dividing his family, servants, and possessions in Genesis 32:7 after hearing the news of Esau approaching with 400 men. Explain that Joseph divided his most precious belongings into two separate groups, in hopes that one would survive if Esau decided to attack them.



ILLUSTRATE

CROSSING THE RIVER

Place two ropes parallel on the floor, and ask the children to leap over the "river." Repeat, making the "river" a little wider each time. When the river is too wide to leap, place "stepping stones" (rugs or papers) between the two ropes, and have the children carefully step their way to the other side. In our story, Jacob took his family to safety across the river.

DO YOU DEPEND ON GOD OR YOURSELF?

Ask the children if the following actions demonstrate dependence on self or dependence on God: (1) lying (self), (2) telling truth (God), (3) stealing (self), (4) waiting your turn (God), (5) tricking someone (self), and (6) helping someone (God).



APPLY

JACOB'S GIFT

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Cardstock, glue or tape, scissors, crayons, and bows.

Directions: Copy both craft pages on cardstock. Tell the children to color the cube pattern and animals. Then have the children cut out the cube pattern and animals. Help the children construct the cube, using glue or tape to secure the sides and bottom. Leave the top open so the gift may be opened and closed. Place a small bow on top of the gift and place the animals inside the gift.



*Jacob's Gift
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*

AGES 9–11

**FEARS**

Talk about things that may cause us to be afraid, and discuss why each of these things causes fear. Have you ever been afraid of someone? Why? What happened when you confronted that person?

WHISPER A MESSAGE

Divide the class into two teams, the “Jacobs” and the “Esau.” They could be identified by different colored strips of fabric used as arm bands. To the first child on the Jacob team, whisper, “Your servant is coming back.” Whisper to the first Esau, “I am coming to meet you.” Those first two children should whisper their messages to the next people in line on their teams, who then pass the message along. It will be fun to hear the messages from the last children in both lines. You could begin the game with other messages and end with those just given. Other messages might be, “It is a great day to learn God’s Word” or “Hi. I am glad you came to Sunday School today.”

**RELYING ON SELF**

Before his wrestling match, Jacob relied upon his own strength and resources. Use the following examples from Jacob’s life to illustrate his dependence upon himself: (1) He used Esau’s hunger to obtain the birthright (Gen 25:29–34); (2) He stole the blessing (Gen 27:18–19, 24); He deceived Laban when he fled (Gen 31:20).

CLINGING TO GOD

Jacob persevered in prayer. That means that he didn’t give up. He wrestled all night, refusing to let go until he received a blessing. Ask for volunteers who think they can persevere the longest. After a few volunteers have come up to the front, ask them all to get into a push-up position using their arms to keep their bodies off the ground. See which child can persevere in this position the longest before giving up and lying on the ground.

**“A CHANGED MAN”**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Give each child a copy of the “A Changed Man” work sheet. Fill in the blanks to complete each statement. Write the first letter of each answer on the blanks in the bottom right corner, and unscramble the letters to discover Jacob’s new name. Read Jacob’s prayer from Genesis 32:9–12. Beside each verse, tell what it shows about Jacob’s changed heart.



LESSON 15

God preserves Joseph

GENESIS 37:1-36



God works everything for the salvation of His people.



“His brothers said to him, ‘Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?’ So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words” (Gen 37:8).

Supporting Truths

1. God cares for His people.
2. God uses evil for the good of His people.
3. God directs people’s actions according to His plan.
4. God directs “random” events according to His plan.
5. God directs all things according to His plan of salvation.

Objectives

1. Identify one way God cared for Joseph.
2. Explain how one evil thing that happened to Joseph turned out for good.
3. Tell how God used the actions of one of the characters in the story to fulfill His plan.
4. List four “random” events in the story of Joseph. Tell why they are not random.
5. Explain how Joseph’s suffering allowed God’s people to be saved.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God preserves Joseph • Genesis 37:1–36



Lesson Summary

This story appears to be a story about everything going wrong—Jacob showed favoritism, Joseph talked foolishly, the brothers were filled with jealousy and hatred, and Reuben failed to lead as the firstborn should—but God was at work, using every event to prepare for the salvation of His chosen people. Although the chapter ends with the family confused and grieving, we know that the story is not over yet.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Joseph suffered greatly, but God used his suffering to save his family—both from starving during seven years of famine and from the sins that were ruining the family. In the same way, when Christ came, He also experienced great suffering in order to bring about God’s good plan. As Joseph suffered and became ruler to save his family, so Jesus suffered and became King to save all who come to Him.

LAST WEEK



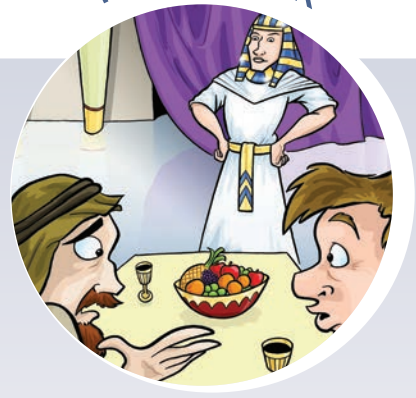
Jacob wrestles with God
Genesis 32:1–33:20

THIS WEEK



God preserves Joseph
Genesis 37:1–36

NEXT WEEK



God delivers Joseph
Genesis 39:1–50:26

PROMISE

DELIVERANCE

Lesson Commentary

God works everything for the salvation of His people.

Previously we saw how Jacob learned to trust God and chose to worship Him as His own God. However, Jacob still struggled to be a godly leader. His past sin of deception and brotherly strife continued, this time infecting his own sons. As sin always does, it caused great pain and threatened to utterly destroy the chosen family. But as God always does, He did not allow the line of Christ to perish or to be lost through ungodliness. Instead, God showed His control. Genesis 37 appears to be a story about everything going wrong, but God was at work, using every event to prepare for the salvation of His chosen people.

Joseph's brothers hated him (37:1–11)

God chose to use Joseph, Jacob's second youngest son, to accomplish His plans. Joseph was still young, and he showed the immaturity

of a young man in the way he tattled on his brothers (37:2). To make things worse, Jacob showed favoritism by giving Joseph a special robe, one that honored Joseph as if he were the firstborn (37:3). Just as favoritism had divided Jacob and Esau, so favoritism again divided Joseph and his brothers (37:4).

Jacob was wrong to express favoritism, but he was not wrong to identify Joseph as the firstborn. God confirmed this by two dreams, showing how certain His plan was (cf. 41:32). The dreams were easy to understand: God had selected Joseph to rule over his family. God often chooses the younger, the smaller, and the weaker in order to demonstrate that salvation is from God and not from man. God chose the nation of Israel even though it was one of the least of the nations (Deut 7:7), and today God still chooses the weak and despised of this world so that all people may glorify Him (1 Cor 1:26–31).

God is not mentioned in Joseph's dreams, but this does not mean God was not present; rather, God was showing His presence through **providence**, causing all the details

of the story to work together to accomplish His plan.

The same occurs in our lives today: we may not see anything miraculous in our lives and we may not hear a divine voice in our ears, yet we can be sure that God is at work in every detail (Matt 10:29).

What was God's plan? God had already declared that Abraham's descendants would spend 400 years in captivity in Egypt (Gen 15:13), so now God would work through the strife in Jacob's family to bring this about. God used Egypt as a place for Israel to become a nation, for Israel was isolated in Egypt rather than exposed to the vile wickedness of the Canaanites during those formative years. Then when God did bring Israel out of Egypt, He demonstrated His invincible power to redeem. Just as God would use difficult trials to shape His people Israel, so in Genesis 37 God would use difficult trials to shape Jacob, Joseph, and the brothers.

The brothers hated Joseph "for his dreams and for his words" (37:8). They hated the way Joseph spoke about his dreams, but they also hated the meaning of the dream itself. Many people continue to reject God's **election**, His right to choose some over others (Rom 9:14–19). God would use Joseph to cause his brothers to realize their error, give up their jealousy, and become patriarchs of Israel.

Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery (37:12–28)

Just as God did not appear in Joseph's dreams, so God continues to seem absent through the rest of the chapter. But God makes Himself known through His providence as He arranges many seemingly random events. Jacob just happened to send Joseph to check on his brothers at Shechem (Gen 37:12–14). But it just happened that the brothers

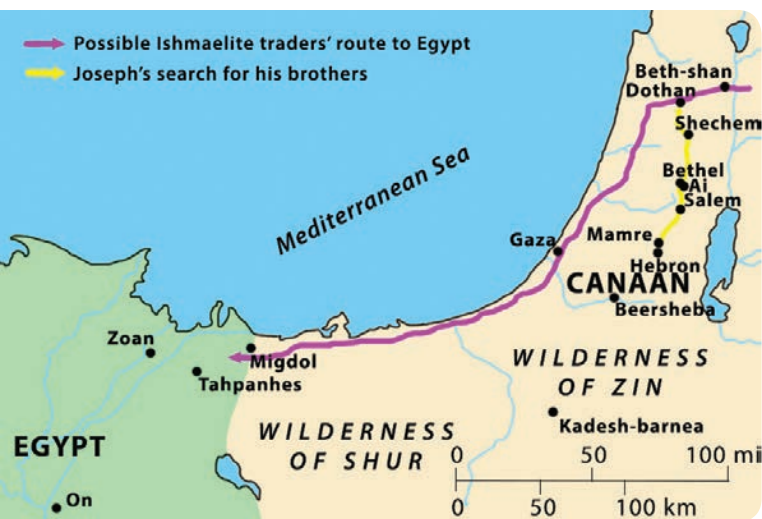
THINK ABOUT IT
Even the lives of sparrows are under God's watchful care.



THINK ABOUT IT
Partiality is a sin and can divide a family (Prov. 28:21).

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God preserves Joseph • Genesis 37:1–36



had traveled north to Dothan (37:15–17), a place that happened to be nearer the trading route. When Joseph arrived at Shechem, it happened that a man found him wandering in the field, and it happened that the man had overheard the brothers say they were going to Dothan. As Joseph traveled to Dothan, he happened to be wearing his fancy robe, which allowed his brothers to see him in the distance and provoked their hatred so that they decided to kill him (37:18–20).

Reuben, sensing his responsibility as the firstborn, sought to save Joseph by having him thrown into a pit and rescuing him later. But he failed, lacking the courage necessary to confront his brothers' sin (37:21–24). The pit was a dried up cistern anywhere from six to twenty feet deep, carved out of the rock in the shape of a bottle, with a narrow opening at the surface that could be covered with a stone lid. If not rescued, Joseph would have died of thirst. But it just happened that a caravan came by at a time when Reuben happened to be absent, and Judah happened to have the idea that they should sell Joseph, thus avoiding the guilt of bloodshed and also getting some money at the same time (37:26–28).

Of course, none of these numerous “coincidences” just happened. Joseph himself would later see the truth: God had planned it all in order to save many people

(50:20). God's providence means that He is intimately involved in His creation. He directs the course of nature (Ps 147:15–18), the actions of people (Prov 16:9), evil and sinful actions (Gen 50:20), and seemingly random coincidences (Prov 16:33). He does so in order to further His plan of salvation, which can never be thwarted (Mic 2:12; 1 Thess 5:24). And while God cares personally for all things (Matt 10:29), He shows special care for those who belong to Him, working everything for their greatest good—their salvation through Jesus Christ (Rom 8:28–29). By His providence God would use Joseph not just to save the lives of his family, but through that family God would also send the Messiah to save the world.

THINK ABOUT IT
Seeing God's personal providence over the lives of His people should provoke both praise and perseverance through the difficulties of life.



Joseph's family fell apart (37:29–36)

God's providential control does not free humans from the consequences of their actions. Reuben tore his clothes, but felt more sorrow for himself than for Joseph or his father (Gen 37:29–30). The brothers plunged deeper into sin by using goat's blood and Joseph's robe to deceive Jacob (37:31–33). Jacob would not stop grieving (37:34–35). As for Joseph, he became a slave, separated from his family for what appeared to be forever (37:36). But God was using all this to accomplish His plan. God's providence always works for our ultimate good, if we belong to Him. Just as He saved Jacob's family and the line of the Messiah by causing sin and “coincidences” to work together for good, we can trust that God will use all things to work together for the good of those who love Him.

Lesson Outline

God works everything for the salvation of His people.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Joseph's father gave him a fancy robe (37:1–3).
2. Joseph dreamed that he would be king over his family (37:4–11).
3. Joseph's brothers hated him and threw him into a pit (37:12–24).
4. Joseph's brothers sold him to be a slave in Egypt (37:25–36)

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Joseph's brothers hated him (37:1–11).
 - Joseph tattled on his brothers (37:2).
 - Jacob showed favoritism by giving Joseph a special robe (37:3–4).
 - Joseph announced his dreams about ruling over his family (37:5–11).
 - Therefore, Joseph's brothers were jealous and hated Joseph (37:4, 5, 11).
2. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery (37:12–28).
 - Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers at Shechem (37:12–14).
 - A man happened to find Joseph and told him his brothers went to Dothan (37:15–17).
 - Joseph's brothers saw him coming in his fancy robe and planned to kill him (37:18–20).
 - Reuben convinced the brothers to throw Joseph into a pit instead (37:21–24).
 - Judah convinced the brothers to sell Joseph to traders who happened to pass by (37:26–28).
3. Joseph's family fell apart (37:29–36)
 - Reuben felt sorry for himself after he failed to lead (37:29–30).
 - The brothers deceived their father using a goat's blood (37:31–33).
 - Jacob wept for a long time and would not be comforted (37:34–35).
 - Joseph was sold to Potiphar in Egypt, separated from his family (37:36).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did Jacob give Joseph?**
Jacob gave Joseph a fancy coat because he loved Joseph the most. His brothers were jealous and hated Joseph.
- 2. What did Joseph tell his brothers that made them hate him even more?**
Joseph told them two dreams about how he would be ruler over them.
- 3. What did Joseph's brothers do to him?**
First they threw him in a pit. Then they sold him to traders who took him to Egypt.
- 4. Was God with Joseph?**
Yes. God has a good plan, even when bad things happen.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did Joseph tell Jacob about his brothers?**
Joseph told Jacob that his brothers were doing a bad job with the sheep.
- 2. How do you know Jacob loved Joseph the most?**
Jacob gave Joseph a fancy coat. It showed that Jacob treated Joseph as the firstborn.
- 3. What did Joseph's brothers think about the coat?**
They were jealous and hated Joseph. They could not say even a single kind word to him.
- 4. How did Joseph add to their hatred?**
Joseph told them two dreams about how he would rule over them.
- 5. What did Joseph's brothers do to him?**
They threw him in a pit, then they sold him to traders who took him to Egypt.
- 6. How did Joseph's brothers deceive Jacob?**
They sent Joseph's coat to Jacob, all torn and stained with goat's blood.
- 7. What events in the story seem like they just happened by chance?**
The brothers went to Dothan, a man found Joseph in the field, the man heard what the brothers said, the traders came by at the right time, Reuben was away when the traders came by, the traders were going to Egypt.
- 8. Where is God in this story?**
God does not show Himself directly, but God has providence: He arranges everything, even bad things or things that seem to happen by chance. Joseph might not have felt like it right then, but God was working to save His people.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



FANCY ROBES

Bring brightly colored robes, coats, shawls, capes, or sweaters for the children to try on. Have a large mirror available for them to see how they look. The Bible lesson will tell us about a beautiful robe that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

LARGE BOX

Bring a box that one child can comfortably fit in. Have them crawl in and, if they agree, close the top so it will be dark inside. The Bible lesson tells of Joseph being thrown in a deep well, where he was alone in the dark. Ask the child how they feel about being inside the dark box.



TAUGHT BY JOSEPH

Wear a brightly colored robe while you teach the lesson.

RULE OVER YOU

Bring in a crown and use it to explain the meaning of Joseph's dreams: he was to rule over his family; like a king.



MY MULTICOLORED TUNIC

Materials: Large paper bags, scissors, crayons, construction paper, glue, and decorative edged scissors.

Directions: Before class, cut several large brown paper bags into vest shapes. Depending on how many children typically are in class, you can prepare one for each child or use one vest per table. Have the children cut various shapes and sizes of construction paper with decorative-edged scissors. Then glue the pieces all over the paper bag to make Joseph's coat.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God preserves Joseph • Genesis 37:1–36



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

ACT IT OUT: JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

Have some young men act out the story of Joseph and his brothers. They will need a multicolored robe or coat and a designated spot for the “pit.”

IT’S JUST NOT FAIR!

Hook the children’s attention by doing a short skit (before the Bible lesson) that highlights typical ways in which a child might experience unjust treatment or suffering.



ILLUSTRATE

GOD CARES FOR HIS CREATION

Bring a birdhouse to class and display it during the lesson. Use it to explain God’s care for His creation. Matthew 6:26 says that birds do not “sow, reap, nor gather into barns, yet [God] feeds them.” Ask the children if they’ve ever seen a bird planting tomatoes, or corn, or any other crop. Ask them if they’ve ever seen birds harvesting their crops. Finally, ask them if they’ve ever seen birds hauling their food to a barn to store it. They don’t do any of these things, yet God provides for their needs. If God faithfully provides for birds, we can be certain that He will provide for all of our needs (Mt. 10:31).

FOR OUR GOOD

Ask the children if anyone has ever gotten a shot (most will raise their hands). Then ask them how the shot felt. Did it hurt? Did you cry? Then ask the children why we get shots. Explain that we get shots to protect us from dangerous diseases. Shots may hurt, but they protect us from much greater pain and even death. In our story, Joseph felt pain, but God used it to protect Joseph and his family.



APPLY

INTO THE PIT

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft pages, card stock, tape, yarn, hole punch.

Directions: Copy both craft pages on card stock. Allow the children to color Joseph, his brothers, and the pit. Tell them to cut out Joseph and punch holes on the two black dots. Help the children string the yarn through the two holes. Tape the ends of the string to the “Into the Pit” background page on the two circles. Joseph will be able to move freely along the string into and out of the pit.

Into the Pit

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*



AGES 9–11

**JOSEPH ACROSTIC**

Before beginning the lesson, write Joseph's name vertically on the chalkboard. Then fill in the following acrostic to give the children a preview of today's lesson.

J—Jacob's Son
O—Only Seventeen
S—Sold as Slave
E—Envied by Brothers
P—Put in a Pit
H—Had Dreams

THAT'S NOT FAIR!

Discuss and make a list of times when the children have been treated unfairly. How did they react? We often complain when things don't go just right for us. Is God aware of our misfortunes? Today's Bible lesson tells of a man who, although obedient, went through great times of suffering. His obedience brought about unjust treatment worse than most of us ever will encounter. Where was God, and what was He doing while this man was suffering? You will learn how this man responded and see how God was blessing him during these times of trial.

**REVERSE SIDE OF CROSS STITCH**

Bring in a large cross stitch. Show the children the reverse side of the cross stitch without revealing the front. Ask the children if they can make sense of all the colors and dots. Then ask them if they can guess how all these different points of thread are related. What will we see on the other side? Flip the cross stitch around to reveal how all the seemingly random points work together to create a beautiful picture. Use this as an illustration of God's providence.

CAN BROWN EYES BE MADE BLUE?

Amy Carmichael served as a missionary to India for 55 years. When Amy was a little girl she had begged God to give her blue eyes. But, had God answered her prayer, Amy might never have been able to serve as a missionary to India where her brown eyes allowed her to fit in with the local population (see "Can Brown Eyes Be Made Blue" by Catherine MacKenzie). Though Amy, like Joseph, may not have understood what God was doing at that time, it is clear that God was causing all things to work together to accomplish His plan.

**TRIBAL WHEEL OF FORTUNE**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Write out spaces for all Jacob's sons on the board (Reuben, Judah, Simeon, Levi, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulum, Joseph, and Benjamin). Photocopy the wheel on cardstock, cut out around the circle, and use a brad to attach it to another piece of square cardstock.

Play game similarly to Wheel of Fortune. Select three children to be contestants. Allow the first contestant to spin the wheel to see how many points he will receive per letter. Ask the child to tell you a consonant he believes is found in at least one of Jacob's sons' names. For example, if the child chose R after spinning for 100 points, he would earn 300 points because there are three Rs in the list of names. The first child can spin again and continue naming consonants until he asks for one that is not in the names or until his spin lands on "Lose a Turn." In either case, play moves on to the second contestant. If a child would like to buy a vowel, he must subtract 250 points from his score. A child may "Solve a Name" on his turn before a spin. Each solved name is worth 2,000 points.



LESSON 16

God delivers Joseph

GENESIS 39:1-50:26



God uses evil for good.



"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen 50:20).

Supporting Truths

1. God causes evil to work for good.
2. God is with us in hard times.
3. We respond to God's providence by trusting Him even when it is hard.
4. All good things come from God.
5. Even during trouble, God is faithful to keep His covenant of salvation.

Objectives

1. Identify one bad thing that happened to Joseph that turned out for good.
2. List two times God was with Joseph when things were hard for him.
3. Explain three ways Joseph showed he believed God was in control.
4. Determine whether Joseph and Jacob gave God the credit He deserves.
5. List three promises (a Savior, a great nation, and promised return.) God was fulfilling by bringing Joseph's family to Egypt.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God delivers Joseph • Genesis 39:1–50:26



Lesson Summary

God was with Joseph even when life was full of trouble. After 13 years of bondage, God established him as second in command over all of Egypt. Through Joseph God brought repentance and peace to his family, and through Joseph God saved them from starving and gave them a place to grow into a nation. As a result, God preserved the line of the Messiah, turning all the evil Joseph endured into a blessing for the entire world.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God preserved the line of the Messiah through Joseph. Just as God saved His people through the suffering of one man, Joseph, so now God is saving His people through the suffering of the one Man, Jesus Christ. Just as Joseph became ruler to provide life to his brothers, so Jesus is exalted as King to provide life for those who become His brothers by faith.

LAST WEEK



God preserves Joseph
Genesis 37:1–36

THIS WEEK



God delivers Joseph
Genesis 39:1–50:26

NEXT WEEK



**God prepares Israel
for deliverance**
Exodus 1:1–2:25

PROMISE

DELIVERANCE

Lesson Commentary

God uses evil for good.

It appeared that God was absent when Joseph was thrown into a pit and sold into Egypt. But even though God is not mentioned in this portion of the story, it is clear that God was at work, using evil to accomplish good. God was quietly directing Jacob's family to Egypt just as He had foretold to Abraham (Gen 15:13). God planned to use Joseph to rescue his whole family (and many others) from starvation, to reconcile the divided family, to bring them to a safe place to grow into a nation, and through all this to preserve the line of the Messiah. As this story unfolds, it removes all doubt that God, in His providence and faithfulness to His promises, was directing all the events. Joseph responded to the changing circumstances by faith, proving to be a model of perseverance, integrity, diligence, forgiveness, and kindness.

God gave Joseph success through hardship in Egypt (39:1–41:57)

After Joseph was sold to Potiphar, we are told three times in a row that the LORD was with him and made him prosper (39:1–3). The name “LORD” (Yahweh) is used here to emphasize God's special love toward Joseph. Even Potiphar recognized the LORD's presence in Joseph's life, promoting him to authority over all except his most private matters (39:4–6). As a result, the LORD also blessed Potiphar, consistent with God's promise to Abraham to “bless those who bless you” (12:3).

But God had bigger plans for Joseph. This household slave would one day be a ruler in Egypt, and God used the evil of Potiphar's wife to prepare Joseph for his eventual promotion (cf. Rom 8:28). When she first approached Joseph, he refused, displaying integrity rooted in his faith in God (Gen 39:7–9). How could he sin against God when God had blessed him so much (cf. Mal 1:6)? When she tried again, he ran (Gen 39:10–12), rather than sin. Then he suffered for his obedience, as Potiphar's wife used his cloak to blame Joseph, and Potiphar threw him in prison

(Gen 39:13–20). At this point it might seem that obedience is not always worth it.

But again the LORD was with Joseph, and “LORD” is again repeated three times. The LORD showed him “steadfast love”, which is the special love and loyalty God shows on the basis of His covenant.

As a result, even though Joseph was in prison, he was again entrusted with everything, including two high ranking prisoners: the chief cupbearer and the chief baker (Gen 39:21–40:4). These two men had political influence and prestige because their jobs required being near the Pharaoh regularly. But now they were in jail and troubled by dreams (40:5–7). He interpreted their dreams accurately, but not before giving all the credit to God (40:8–22; cf. Ps 115:1).

In God's providence, Joseph had to wait another two years in prison because the cupbearer forgot to mention him to Pharaoh (Gen 40:23). By now Joseph had either been a slave or a prisoner for thirteen years (cf. 37:2; 41:46). Even though God shows kindness to His people, He often uses long periods of trouble and waiting to prepare those He intends to use, just as Abraham waited twenty-five years for Isaac, or Jacob struggled for twenty years with Laban. Such waiting seems pointless according to the human way of progress, but God is interested in shaping character. Though Joseph's wait was long, his transition to power was short. God promoted Joseph from a slave in prison to Egypt's second in command in one day. Though man plans his way, God is the One who gives success (Prov 16:9).

Joseph's promotion came when Pharaoh had a dream that none of his wise men could interpret, even though they had made an elaborate art of interpreting dreams (Gen 41:1–13). Joseph was called, interpreted the dreams, and boldly gave

THINK ABOUT IT
God tenderly cares for His people even in times of crises (Ps 23:4).



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God delivers Joseph • Genesis 39:1–50:26



Pharaoh advice about what to do (41:14–36). But as before, Joseph gave credit to God (41:16). He knew that God was in charge and that God is the One who reveals mysteries (Dan 2:28). God used Joseph, and later Daniel, to announce His plan to foreign kings, just as God would use the people of Israel to communicate His Scriptures to the world (Rom 3:2).



THINK ABOUT IT
God used the circumstances of Joseph's life to rescue countless nations from starvation (Gen 41:56–57).

By revealing to Pharaoh the years of plenty and the years of famine, and by placing Joseph over all of Egypt (Gen 41:37–45), God continued to work out His providential plan, using evil for good. When Joseph named his two sons, he confirmed God's hand at work: Manasseh meant that God had wiped away the memory of his suffering, and Ephraim meant that God had made him fruitful. Then, as one who trusted God's providence, Joseph proved himself faithful, skillfully gathering during the plentiful years and then selling when the famine began (41:46–57). Believing in God's providence does not cause us to do nothing; rather, it gives us courage to act, knowing that God will use our actions to further His kingdom.

God reconciled Joseph's broken family (42:1–45:15)

Joseph was now in a position to save his family from starvation, but first God would use him to save his family from the divisions that threatened to ruin them spiritually. Motivated by hunger, Joseph's brothers came to him in Egypt (42:1–5). They bowed before him, unknowingly fulfilling the dreams they had hated (42:6). Joseph recognized them, but since it had been twenty years since they had seen Joseph, and since he was now dressed like an Egyptian, they did not recognize him (42:7–8).

Joseph tested them by treating them as spies (42:9). When they denied it, Joseph eventually decided to let nine of his brothers go back with food, imprisoning Simeon until the others returned with Benjamin (42:10–20). The brothers interpreted this as punishment for their sin against Joseph, and they admitted to each other that they had done wrong to Joseph (42:21–22). Confession of guilt is the first step toward reconciliation (Prov 28:13). However, Joseph still needed to know if they had repented—if they had given up their old way of life. So even though Joseph overheard, he added to the test by putting their money back in the sacks to see if they would return it with integrity (Gen 42:25). When the brothers saw the money, for the first time they spoke of God; they were beginning to recognize that God was at work in punishing them for their sin (42:28).

Jacob was too afraid to let them take Benjamin with them, even though Benjamin was a man with sons of his own by this time (42:36; cf. 46:21). Reuben foolishly vowed that Jacob could kill his two sons (Jacob's own grandsons) if he did not bring Benjamin safely back, but Jacob still refused. Eventually, the food ran out (42:1–2). This time Judah successfully persuaded Jacob to send Benjamin, arguing that they would all die if he did not, and promising to be personally responsible for Benjamin with his own life (42:3–10). Where Reuben failed as the firstborn, Judah took over, and the tribe of Judah would take the lead for the rest of Israel's history.

The brothers returned with the money, proving their integrity (43:18–22), but it was the sight of his brother Benjamin that most moved Joseph (43:29–30). Joseph used Benjamin to test the brothers a second time. He showed obvious favoritism toward Benjamin, giving him five times as much food as his brothers (43:34). Rather

THINK ABOUT IT
Reconciliation happens when foes become friends, when that which was separated is brought back together.



than getting jealous, the brothers enjoyed Joseph's hospitality together without resentment.

They had integrity, and they were not jealous, but would they be loyal? Joseph tested them a third time by putting a silver cup in Benjamin's sack (44:1-2). He sent out his steward, who pretended that they had taken a special cup of divination and demanded that the one who took it must become Joseph's slave (44:3-10). But when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, Judah, acting as the leader, took responsibility instead of trying to hide sin as they had done before. He realized that God uncovers sin (44:16). Out of love for his father, Judah then offered himself in Benjamin's place (44:17-34).

When Joseph saw Judah's love—the complete opposite of what Judah had done to Joseph 22 years earlier—Joseph wept (45:1-2). He revealed himself to his brothers, who were terrified when they realized who he was (45:3). But because Joseph knew God was providentially in control, he

forgave them (45:4-8). He let go of the blame and did not hold their sin against them. He could have seen his life as a series of unfair offenses, but he chose to see it from God's perspective. God was using every event, even the painful ones, for good.

Those who believe that God is in control are quick to forgive and do not take offense (Matt 5:38-45). Because the brothers truly **repented**—they admitted their sin with sorrow and turned from sin toward righteousness—and because Joseph forgave, the family finally had peace after 22 years. Peace comes only through repentance and forgiveness. Also, those who have been forgiven ought to forgive others (Matt 18:23-35), so Joseph told his brothers not to quarrel on their return journey (Gen 45:24).

God blessed Jacob's family in Egypt but

promised their return to Canaan (45:16-50:26)

Joseph sent his brothers back to bring Jacob and the rest of the family to live in Egypt (45:16-28). On the way, Jacob stopped at Beersheba, offering a sacrifice at the place where Abraham and Isaac had built altars. God spoke to Jacob, encouraging him to go to Egypt and promising that he and his family would one day return to the land of Canaan (46:1-4). This was important because Abraham had acted poorly in Egypt (12:10-20), and Isaac had not even been allowed to go there (26:2). Looking to Egypt for help was a sign of unbelief (Isa 31:1), but this time God blessed Jacob's journey.

So Jacob came to Egypt, and Pharaoh let his family live in the land of Goshen (Gen 46:5-47:6). This was a perfect place for the nation of Israel to grow. It was a fruitful land, suitable for flocks and herds, to keep them alive during famine. Also, it was the northeast part of Egypt, allowing the Israelites to remain separate from the Egyptians. They were further isolated because the Egyptians despised foreigners. As a result, the Israelites were kept from intermarrying and losing their national identity, and they were protected from the wicked idolatry common among the Canaanites. So over the course of 400 years the nation of Israel was able to grow strong—from 68 men to over 600,000 men (46:8-27; Num 1:46).

After spending 17 years in Egypt, Jacob concluded his life by looking to the future. First he made sure that he would be buried in the land God had promised him (Gen 47:30). He then blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, including them in God's covenant to Israel (48:3-20). In this blessing, Jacob recognized that God had been his shepherd, caring for him all his days (48:15). This is the first time God is called a shepherd, and it shows that Jacob has become mature in faith. He saw that despite his short and pain-filled life (47:9), he lacked nothing, for God was caring for him (cf. Ps 23:1). So by **faith**, by confident

THINK ABOUT IT
Repentance is the only doorway to true reconciliation.



THINK ABOUT IT

Judah is the first human substitute in Scripture,

illustrating the sacrificial love the Messiah would one day display for the whole world (1 Pet 3:18)

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God delivers Joseph • Genesis 39:1–50:26



trust in God, his shepherd, Jacob then blessed his own sons (Gen 49:1–28; Heb 11:21). He divided the firstborn privileges between Judah and Joseph. Judah received the firstborn's position as leader, the tribe from whom Israel's Messiah would come (Gen 49:10). Joseph received the firstborn's double portion through his two sons, so Jacob gave him the longest blessing (Gen 49:22–26).



THINK ABOUT IT

When Jacob trusted in himself he lived with strife but when Jacob trusted in God he lived with peace.

After Jacob died and was buried with Abraham and Isaac in Canaan, Joseph's brothers wondered if Joseph might now take his revenge. But Joseph trusted God's providence and would not usurp God's place (50:19). God had used man's evil to

accomplish His good plan, to save many people (50:20). Not only did God use Joseph to save many people in Joseph's time, but through Joseph God preserved the line of the Messiah, eternally saving all who turn to Him. Like Jacob, Joseph also finished his life looking forward by faith to Israel's return to Canaan (50:24; Heb 11:22).

So even though Genesis began with new life and ended with death (Gen 50:26), there is yet bright hope because of God's promise. The patriarchs lived and died, but God continues. God is the main character, and the story is about His plan to restore His image in mankind. The story of Joseph is just a part of that story, and both Jacob and Joseph knew that the greatest blessings were yet to come.

Lesson Outline

God uses evil for good.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God helped Joseph do a good job as a slave and a prisoner (39:1–23).
2. God showed Joseph the meaning of dreams and put him in charge of all Egypt (40:1–41:57).
3. God used Joseph to help his brothers repent of their sin against him (42:1–45:15).
4. God used Joseph to save his whole family from starving so that they could become a great nation (45:15–50:26).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. God gave Joseph success through hardship in Egypt (39:1–41:57).
 - The LORD caused Potiphar to trust Joseph because of Joseph's successful work (39:1–20).
 - The LORD caused the prison warden to trust Joseph because of Joseph's trustworthy conduct (39:21–40:23).
 - The LORD caused Pharaoh to trust Joseph by showing Joseph the meaning of dreams (41:1–57).
2. God reconciled Joseph's broken family (42:1–45:15).
 - Joseph tested his brothers' integrity by treating them harshly (42:1–38).
 - Joseph tested his brothers' contentment by showing favoritism to Benjamin (43:1–34).
 - Joseph tested his brothers' loyalty by threatening Benjamin (44:1–17).
 - Joseph and his brothers were reconciled (44:18–45:15).
3. God blessed Jacob's family in Egypt but promised their return to Canaan (45:16–50:26).
 - Jacob and his whole family reunited with Joseph in Egypt (45:16–47:12).
 - Joseph successfully led Egypt through the famine (47:13–26).
 - Jacob blessed Ephraim, Manasseh, and all his sons (47:27–49:32).
 - Jacob died and was buried in the promised land (49:33–50:14).
 - Joseph believed God would bring them back to the promised land (50:15–26).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Was God with Joseph when he was a slave and a prisoner?**
Yes. God was with him even when bad things were happening.
2. **Who showed Joseph the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams?**
God did.
3. **Who came to buy grain from Joseph in Egypt?**
Joseph's brothers came to him.
4. **How did Joseph save his family?**
Joseph showed them their sin which led them to repent. He saved them from starving by giving them food.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Why did Potiphar trust Joseph with all that he owned?**
God was with Joseph and caused everything Joseph did to succeed.
2. **Did Joseph deserve to be thrown into prison?**
No. He was thrown into prison because he did the right thing and made Potiphar's wife angry.
3. **How did Joseph go from being a slave in prison to 2nd in command over Egypt?**
God showed Joseph the meaning of three dreams: the cupbearer's, the baker's, and two years later, Pharaoh's.
4. **How did Joseph test his brothers?**
Joseph tested them by treating them harshly and putting money back in their sacks. Then he tested them by showing favoritism to Benjamin. Finally, he tested them by threatening Benjamin.
5. **How did Joseph's brothers respond?**
With Judah leading the way, the brothers admitted their sin, and proved their integrity, contentment, and loyalty—the opposite of the deceit, jealousy, and betrayal they had shown to Joseph 20 years before.
6. **Why did Joseph forgive his brothers?**
Joseph believed in God's providence. He knew that God was in charge and had used his brothers' evil plans in order to save his family and many more people from starving. God saved the line of the Messiah, allowing salvation to come to the whole world through Jesus.
7. **What did Jacob do before he died?**
Jacob blessed Ephraim, Manasseh, and his own sons and made sure he would be buried in Canaan. Jacob believed God's promise to make a great nation out of his family and to give them the promised land.
8. **What was special about Judah's blessing?**
Although Jacob gave Joseph the double portion of the firstborn, he gave Judah the leadership role of the firstborn. The kings of Israel would come from Judah, especially the one great King, the Messiah.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

STAMPS AND TEMPERA PAINT

Pharaoh had a very special ring that could make a stamped design on paper. His stamp would mean the same thing as if he had written his name. Let the children experiment with one or two stamps, overlapping them or using one or two colors to come up with a design to represent their names. Let them try several different ideas and choose their favorite one. Tell the children that in today's Bible lesson, the Pharaoh gives his special ring to Joseph, and this gives Joseph power over the whole land of Egypt.

TAPE THE CEREAL IN THE MOUTH

Draw a face with an open mouth on a large piece of butcher paper on the wall. Let blindfolded children tape pieces of cereal onto the mouth. Talk about what a famine is like and the fact that there can't be any cereal if the grain doesn't grow.



ILLUSTRATE

DRESS LIKE JOSEPH

Put on a beautiful robe, a gold necklace, and a ring when you come to the part of the story where Joseph is elevated to second in command of all Egypt.

FEAST AND FAMINE

Bring two burlap sacks, one empty and one full of grain or rice. Show the full sack when you talk about Joseph selling grain to the people. Show the empty sack when you talk about the famine.



APPLY

BEE HUMBLE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, scissors, large and small marshmallows, glue, yellow markers, black markers, pipe cleaners, and construction paper.

Directions: Why was Joseph able to forgive his brothers? One reason is that he was humble. God gave him a powerful position, but he was humble before his brothers. Construct Mr. Bee Humble using one large marshmallow for the body and one mini marshmallow for the head. Glue these two body parts together, and use a yellow marker or poster paint to color the entire shape yellow. Draw black stripes around the bee's body, and draw a face on his head. Attach short pieces of black pipe cleaners for the legs and brown pipe cleaners for the antennae. Glue the completed bee on the "Bee Humble" half sheet copied on construction paper.

Bee Humble
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God delivers Joseph • Genesis 39:1–50:26



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITIES

Have each child draw a picture of his favorite activity. Talk about how God gives us our abilities and energy. When we score the winning point, play the perfect piece at the recital, or hike to our favorite lake, who gets the credit for our efforts? In this morning's Bible lesson, we will see how Joseph went from prison to the palace and gave all the credit to God.

INTERPRETATION

Have two teachers demonstrate what it means to speak through an interpreter. One teacher should speak (or pretend to speak) in a different language. Have him introduce himself and ask the children what they have been learning in Sunday School. Then the other teacher will interpret. Have the children talk to the "foreign" guest through the interpreter. Have fun with this! (E.g., if a child asks a question, have the guest give a very long answer, but then have the interpreter give a two-word interpretation.) In our Bible lesson today, Joseph will speak through an interpreter even though he really knows both languages. Why does he do this?



ILLUSTRATE

TWO DREAMS

Bring three baskets full of grapes, muffins, and plastic glasses to class. Describe the butler and baker's dreams to the children, and illustrate the dreams using the props. For fun at snack time, let the children eat the muffins and drink white grape juice from the plastic glasses.

FORGIVENESS

Joseph forgave his brothers. Ask the children if they know what it means to forgive. Explain that forgiveness is not holding someone's sin against them. Joseph's brothers had threatened to kill him and then sold him into slavery, but Joseph didn't punish his brothers for their sin. Instead, he chose to forgive them and treat them as if they never sinned against him. Joseph did this because he believed that God was in control, using his brothers' sin to accomplish His perfect plan.



APPLY

JOSEPH'S STORY MOBILE

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheets, yarn, scissors, crayons, tape, and glue.

Directions: Have students cut out the triangle template. Help students to form a pyramid from the template and tape the edges together. Students should then color the three triangle pictures of Joseph. Have the students cut out the triangle shaped pictures and glue them to the sides of the pyramid. Attach yarn to the top of the pyramid with tape and make a knotted loop in the top of the yarn so that it is able to hang.



Joseph's Story Mobile
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*

AGES 9–11



“GIRL REUNITED WITH FAMILY”

The Huffington Post, 8/08/2014

Jannah was just 4 years old when she and her brother were swept from their parents in the massive Indian Ocean tsunami...In June of this year (2014), however, Jamaliah’s brother encountered a girl in a nearby village who bore a strong resemblance to Jannnah.... On Wednesday, nearly a decade after they were ripped apart, Jannnah (now 14) was finally back in her mother’s arms (See complete article: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/08/girl-reunited-parents-tsunami-ten-years_n_5659530.html)

RINGS

Show the children a wedding ring and a class ring. Explain that rings often tell us something about the person wearing them (wedding ring = married; class ring = school and graduation year). Today we will learn about a signet ring given to Joseph by Pharaoh. This ring told all of Egypt that Joseph had the authority to rule.



SIGNIFICANT REPETITIONS

Ask the children to listen for repeated phrases in Genesis 39 that show how God was with Joseph in Egypt. List the phrases (with references) on the board. Explain to the children that they need to pay careful attention when phrases are repeated throughout the Bible because God usually is making an important point to the reader. Repeated phrases:

The Lord was with Joseph (Gen 39:2, 21, 23)

Lord made all he did to prosper (Genesis 39:3, 23)

Found favor (Genesis 39:4, 21)

FAMINE IN THE LAND

Ask the children if they have ever missed a meal? What about two? What’s the longest anyone has gone without eating? Experts believe that it’s possible to survive for around 60 days without food. The 7 year famine experienced by Jacob and his family was a severe trial that threatened their lives and the lives of their animals. However, God used the circumstances of Joseph’s life to rescue his family (and countless others) from starvation.



“THREE TRIPS TO EGYPT”

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Joseph’s brothers made three trips to Egypt. As a class, use the “Three Trips to Egypt” work sheet to briefly review how these trips fit into the story. Which trip is being described? Indicate this with the numbers 1, 2, or 3.

Answers: 1, 2, 3, 3, 1, 2, 2, 1, 2, 3, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2.