

**CHRONOLOGICAL
BIBLE
STORYING:

LEADERSHIP
GUIDE**

**42 Stories and Lessons
to match Bible Storying cloth**
(includes a possible thirty story schedule)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

(* Stories recommended for the 30 week course instead of 42 weeks)

PICTURE	STORY (or TOPIC)	PAGE
	Introduction to Chronological Bible Storying	4
1	(*1) THE CREATION OF THE ANGELS	6
2	(*2) THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH	8
3-A	(*3) THE CREATION OF THE MAN AND THE WOMAN	11
3-B	(*4) THE WOMAN AND THE SERPENT	13
4	CAIN AND ABEL	17
5	(*5) NOAH AND THE FLOOD	20
6	(*6) THE CALL OF ABRAM	24
6-B	(*7) DRAMA AND SONG SESSION	30
7	(*8) ABRAHAM - BIRTH AND SACRIFICE OF ISAAC	31
8	ISAAC, JACOB, AND ESAU	34
9	(*9) JACOB'S DREAM	37
10	JACOB, LABAN, RACHEL, AND LEAH	39
11	JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD	41
12	(*10) JOSEPH	44
13	MOSES' BIRTH AND FLIGHT	48
14	(*11) GOD CALLS MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH	51
15	THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES ON EGYPT	54
16	(*12) THE PASSOVER	56
17	(*13) CROSSING THE RED SEA	60
18	(*14) MT. SINAI, TEN COMMANDMENTS	63
19	(*15) GOLDEN CALF	67
20	(*16) THE TABERNACLE / DAY OF ATONEMENT	70
20 B	(*17) CRAFTING BIBLE STORIES FOR TELLING	74
21	TWELVE SPIES, BRONZE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, PROMISED LAND	77
22	JUDGES	80
23	(*18) ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING; SAUL and the AMALEKITES	83
24	(*19) DAVID THE KING	87
25	ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL	90
26	(*20) PROPHETS FORETELL COMING OF SAVIOR; THE NEW COVENANT	93
27	(*21) THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND BIRTH OF JESUS	96
28	(*22) JOHN'S MINISTRY, JESUS' BAPTISM	100
28B (No pic)	SATAN TESTS JESUS	103
29	JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES	106

30	(*23) JESUS HEALS AND FORGIVES A PARALYZED MAN	110
31	(*24) JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN	112
32	JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND	115
33	(*25) JESUS CASTS DEMON OUT OF BOY, FORETELLS HIS DEATH, RESURRECTION	117
34	(*26) JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD	119
34-B	(*27) DRAMA AND SONG SESSION	121
35-A	THE RICH YOUNG RULER	122
36	A SINFUL WOMAN WASHES JESUS' FEET	126
37	(*28) THE LAST SUPPER	128
38	(*29) GETHSEMANE AND JESUS' ARREST; JESUS BEFORE PILATE	130
39	(*30) THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS	133
40	(*31) THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS	136
41	(*32) THE ROAD TO EMMAUS	139
42	(*33) APPEARANCES AND ASCENSION OF JESUS	141
	APPENDIX #1 CBS Overview: Tracing the Promise of a Savior	144
	APPENDIX #2 - Scheduling Suggestions for CBS Training Course	152
	APPENDIX #3 - Scheduling Suggestions for CBS Single Training Session	153
	APPENDIX # 3-B SIMPLIFIED EXAMPLE of CBS STORY TEACHING	155
	APPENDIX #4 - Repeatable Question Template for CBS Cloth Stories	156
	APPENDIX #5 - Creating Dialogue Questions for Other Teaching Goals	158
	Chart for Panga/Jembe/Miwani/Gunia Questions	160
	APPENDIX #6 - Teaching How to Craft Bible Stories for Telling	161
	APPENDIX #6-B <u>Steps for Crafting Your Own Stories Orally (in a group)</u>	162
	APPENDIX #7 - Useful Activities for Learning a Story in a Group Setting	163
	APPENDIX #8 - Additional Bible Storying Training Topics	163
	APPENDIX #9 Using Bible Storying in One-Off Evangelism Situations	165
	APPENDIX 9 - B Two Simple Question Sets for One-Off Evangelism Situations	169

Chronological Bible Storytelling (CBS)

Chronological Bible storytelling is an exciting tool being used in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and church leadership development throughout the world today. CBS teaching began to take root as a methodology in the 1980's with missionaries working among remote tribal groups. While CBS is new as an intentional method of evangelism and discipleship, it is as old as biblical history. These stories, starting with creation and extending all the way through the early church, have become a clear history of almighty God working out His plan to bring redemption to a sinful, broken world. Throughout time, God has been teaching us through stories about Himself, mankind's nature, and about how sinful men may be restored into relationship with a merciful God.

What is CBS?

- 1) **It is chronological.** CBS teaches the Gospel in a relational way that is particularly valuable in long-term evangelism and discipleship. CBS involves teaching through Bible stories in chronological order, beginning with creation and continuing through the early church. By teaching chronologically, we lay a firm foundation of who God is, who man is, and how sinful mankind can come before a holy God, a God who wants a relationship with all of mankind.
- 2) **It is Bible.** CBS is not simply using stories from our lives to illustrate the message of our sermons. It is not even using Bible stories for illustration only. It involves telling and learning Bible stories accurately and teaching the main principles of redemption found in these stories.
- 3) **It is storytelling.** Storytelling as a method of communicating biblical truth is valuable in an African setting because Africans are storytellers. Most wisdom that passes from generation to generation is communicated in an oral method – through community stories rather than through books and note taking. Stories help isolated truths make sense because they give context, are more engaging, and are easier for people to repeat to their friends and family than three point sermons!

What does an individual storying session look like?

I. INTRODUCTION:

- a. Review previous chronological stories to prepare listeners for the story; begin developing a theme.
- b. Ask one or two questions to make the listeners interested, aware, and engaged with the story theme.
Use suggested pre-story questions to encourage very brief discussion between participants, 2 or 3 together. Or create your own question!
- c. Refer to the Bible. (Make sure people know the story is from the Bible. At some point encourage the actual reading of the story from Scripture.) Tell them where it is found in the Bible. What chapter and verse.

II. LEARN THE STORY TOGETHER:

- a. Repeat the story multiple times.
- b. Give listening tasks before different repetitions to hold interest.
- c. Walk through the story, asking observation questions to highlight details.
- d. Have participants tell the story to one another or as group exercise.
- e. Finally, have individuals tell the story before the group.

- f. Repeat until you feel most participants have at least a rough mastery of the story by heart. It usually takes six to ten repetitions of the story.

III. **QUESTIONS: BASIC DIALOG AFTER LEARNING STORY — LEADING LISTENERS TO DISCOVER TRUTHS IN STORY:**

- a. Use questions that help participants see how story details lead to **INTERPRETATION**, i.e. understanding the meaning. (**SEE APPENDIX #3 for more details**)
 - a. What does the story teach about **GOD** - his power, knowledge, holiness, grace, & faithfulness?
 - b. What does the story teach us about **MAN** - his value to God, sinful nature, and helplessness?
 - c. What does the story teach us about the **RELATIONSHIP** between God and man, i.e. about God's saving work for us and our proper response to what he has done for us?
- b. Ask a few questions to discover **APPLICATION** to listeners' daily personal lives and situations. You may do this after all the interpretation questions or as you go along through the lesson.
- c. Handle incorrect answers in a gentle, patient, culturally sensitive manner.
- d. Interact with people's answers to your questions to lead to more questions and ultimately to understanding of key themes and ideas.
- e. Defer answering questions you don't know. Look for an answer and talk about it next time.
- f. Preview the next story or ask questions to pique curiosity about it.
- g. Challenge participants to make plans for sharing the story themselves right away in their own families and ministry situations.

STORIES and LESSONS

1. THE CREATION OF THE ANGELS

Before God created people, He made multitudes of angels who lived with Him in heaven. The angels were spirits and were created good, without sin. God made them to serve and worship Him. One of the angels created by God was more intelligent and more beautiful than all the others. His name was Lucifer. God gave Lucifer an important position in heaven.

At some point Lucifer became very proud and wanted to become as important as God and to take God's place. Many of the other angels also rebelled against God. But God knew what Lucifer and his followers were thinking. The rebellion failed because God knows everything and is more powerful than Lucifer, who was created by God.

Because of their sin, God cast the sinful angels out of heaven. God is righteous and cannot stay with those who rebel against Him. God also said that one day He would complete his punishment of the sinful angels and cast them into the Lake of Fire.

God changed the name of Lucifer to Satan. The name means "Deceiver". Satan and the bad angels became God's enemies. They oppose the plan of God whenever they can. Now, those angels who followed Satan are the evil spirits here on earth. They follow Satan and rebel against the truth. Satan does not want us to listen to God's Word. But those who trust in God do not need to fear Satan or his demons because God has power over them all.

Related Scriptures: Nehemiah 9:6; Job 38:4-7; Psalms 99:1-3, 103:19-21; Isaiah 14:12-15 and 45:12; Ezekiel 28:12-15; Nahum 1:2-3; Luke 10:18; John 8:44, 12:31; Ephesians 2:2, 6:11-12; Colossians 1:15-16; 1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 2:4; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9, 20:10

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or to discuss in pairs.

- Discuss a time in your life when someone has deceived you. How did this affect you?

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (in control, supreme and sovereign)**
 - He created the angels – all the spirit beings.
 - The angels serve Him and are under His authority.
 - He is more powerful than the angels. He was able to punish the evil angels and cast them out of heaven.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He knew how to make angels.
 - He knew what Lucifer and his followers were planning and how to stop them.

- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He made the angels good, without sin.
 - He could not allow the rebellious angels to stay with him.
 - He punished Lucifer and the angels that followed him because they sinned.
 - Nobody may be allowed to take the place of God. God will not exchange His glory with any being!
 - He deserves and receives praise and worship from the good angels.

What do we learn about Satan from this story?

- Satan is a liar and deceiver, leading others into sin and rebellion.
- Satan is proud and wants to be like God, to take God's place.
- Satan hates God and fights against him.
- Satan is not as powerful as God and can never deceive or defeat him.

General Application Questions:

- **If God has power over all the spirit world including all the good angels as well as Satan and his demons, what kind of authority does He have over our own lives? How should it affect how we think, believe, speak, and act?**
 - How could someone find out more about this God and what he demands of him?
- If God knew the thoughts and actions of Lucifer, what might he know about you? How does that make you feel?
- God hated Lucifer's sin and rebellion. He had to punish him, to send him away from his presence because of His own holiness. So how must God act toward your disobedience?
- In this story we see that Satan and his demons are real and active in our world. We see that they have a lot of power to influence people. **What have you learned from this story that can help you to resist the influence of Satan in your life?**

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What is one way that you should submit more to God's authority in your life today?**
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2. THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

Genesis 1:1-2:3

The Beginning

In the beginning of all things, when God was creating the heavens and the earth, the earth had no shape and was empty. Darkness covered the surface of the deep waters. And the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Six Days of Creating

And God said, "Let there be light." And it was so. And God separated the light from the darkness. He called the light, "Day," and he called the darkness, "Night." And God saw that it was good. The evening passed, the morning came, that was the first day.

Then God said, "Let there be an empty space to separate the waters above from the waters below." And it was so. And God named the empty space "sky." The evening passed and the morning came, that was the second day.

Then God said, "Let the waters below be gathered together into one place so that the dry ground may appear." And it was so. And God named the gathered waters the seas, and the dry ground he named the land. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the land be covered with all the beautiful trees and every kind of green plant that is good to eat." And God blessed them so that they would multiply after their kind. And God saw that it was good. The evening passed and the morning came, that was the third day.

Then God said, "Let the sky be filled with all the different lights: the greater light, the Sun, to rule the day, the lesser light, the moon, to rule the night, and all the stars." And it was so. And He said, "Let these lights mark the days and the seasons and the events." And God saw that it was good. The evening passed and the morning came, that was the fourth day.

Then God said, "Let the sky be filled with all the flying creatures, and let the seas be filled with all the swimming creatures." And God blessed them so that they would multiply after their kinds. And God saw that it was good. The evening passed and the morning came, that was the fifth day.

Then God said, "Let the land be filled with all the animals: the wild animals, the domestic animals, and all the creatures that creep along on the ground." And it was so. And God blessed them so that they would multiply after their kind. And God saw that it was good.

In God's Image

Then God said, "Let us make man in our own image, let them have dominion over all of creation." So God made man male and female and commanded them to rule over all creation. And God blessed them so that they would multiply and fill the earth. And God gave to them every green plant for food. And God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good. The evening passed and the morning came, that was the sixth day.

God's Rest

On the seventh day, God had already finished all His work of creation, so he rested. And that is why God set the seventh day apart because that is the day he rested from all his work of creation.

SHORTER SIMPLIFIED VERSION

In the beginning of all things, when God was creating the heavens and the earth, the earth had no shape and was empty. Darkness covered the surface of the waters, and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light." And it was so. And God separated the light from the darkness. He called the light, "Day," and he called the darkness, "Night." And God saw that it was good. That was the first day.

On the second day, he made the sky by dividing the waters above from the waters below.

On the third day, he divided the seas and the dry land and created all the beautiful plants and trees for food.

On the fourth day, He created the lights in the sky - the sun to rule the day, the moon to rule the night, and the stars. He made them to be signs for days, seasons, and events.

On the fifth day, he made the birds and the fish.

On the sixth day, he did two big things. First he created all the animals that move on the ground. And every time he created a living creature - plant, bird, fish, or animal - he blessed it to be able to reproduce according to its kind. And almost every day when he finished creating something he said, "It is good."

Then, also on the sixth day, He said, "Let us make man in our own image, let us give them dominion over all of creation." So God made man male and female and commanded them to rule over all creation. And God blessed them so that they would multiply and fill the earth. And God gave to them every green plant for food. And God saw that it was very good. That was the sixth day.

On the seventh day, God had already finished creating everything, so he rested. And that is why God set the seventh day apart because that is the day he rested from all his work of creation.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or to discuss in pairs.

- How are man and animals different? Why do you think man is special?

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- How does this story show that God is all powerful? (in control, supreme and sovereign)
 - God had no beginning. Was not created. Has always been.

- God created everything (light, sky, earth, oceans, sun, moon, stars, plants, trees, birds, fish, animals, man)
 - He created it from nothing. He had nothing to begin making things with.
 - God merely SPOKE and things were created. Created by power of his word.
 - God made everything so he has authority over everything.
 - God sustained his creation.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew how to make each and every thing.
 - God knew how to make a place suitable for all of man's needs.
 - God knew the best order in which to make things.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - Everything that God made was perfect. He said again and again, "It is good!" He made the perfect place for man to live.
 - God made everything in an orderly way.
 - God made Adam in His own image. He made him without sin.
 - Created order from chaos.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God created a correct companion for Adam. Made man male and female.
 - God prepared the earth for man to live in comfortably.
 - God gave man every plant for food. Gave him a great variety of food.
 - Gave beautiful world, variety of plants and other beautiful things.
 - God made man like himself, able to have a relationship with God.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - God made man last. He said this part of creation was VERY good, not just good.
 - He gave man a beautiful world to live in.
 - He gave him food to eat. Provided all he needed.
 - He gave him authority over the rest of creation.
 - Gave man his image of God, meaning he can know God, he can love God, he can obey God. Man has dignity.

General Application Questions:

- How do we see God's power displayed today? (See Psalm 19)
- What evidence do we still see in the world of God's holiness? Or that He does not change? Or that He is still a God of order? So if God really is holy, how should that make us feel and respond?
- **If you take time to look closely at Creation – how beautiful it is, how huge it is, how detailed it is - how does that make you feel about God and yourself?**

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **In what way do you see God's grace or kindness in your life today? What blessing have you received from God recently?** How should this affect your attitude toward God? How should this affect your attitude toward how you live day-by-day?
- God's Word, the Bible, tells us all about Him and how to know Him and live for Him. **What steps will you take in your life to know Him better?**

3-A. THE CREATION OF THE MAN AND THE WOMAN

Genesis 2:5-25

In the beginning when God was creating the heavens and the earth, God made the man and the woman on the sixth day. And this is how he did it!

God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living person. His name was Adam. God also planted a special garden called Eden. In it he planted all kinds of beautiful trees which were good for food. In the middle of the garden he planted two special trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Then he put the man into the garden to cultivate and care for it.

God said to him, "You may eat from every tree in the garden. But you may not eat from that tree in the middle, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The day you eat of that tree you will surely die."

Then God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." So God made all the animals to pass in front of the man, and the man gave a name to each animal. But for Adam, no suitable helper could be found.

Then God made a deep sleep to fall on the Man. And while he was sleeping, he took a rib and closed the place with flesh. And from the rib he made a woman. And when the man woke up, God brought the woman to the man. When the man saw the woman, he said, "At last! This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She will be called woman because she was taken from man."

Therefore, a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. And the man and the woman were naked in the garden but were not ashamed.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or to discuss in pairs.

- Think of a relationship in your life that is very important to you. Tell your neighbor about it and why this person is so special.

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (omnipotent, in control, supreme and sovereign)**
 - God created man from the dust of the ground and woman from man's rib.
 - God gave man life by breathing it into him.
 - He has authority over man because He created him.
 - God made animals pass in front of Adam to show him his need for a suitable helper.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew how to create man and woman.
 - He knew that man was lonely.

- He knew exactly what to create as a perfect companion for man.
- He knew what laws would help man to thrive.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, payment for sin is death)**
 - Everything that God made was perfect.
 - God made Adam like Himself, without sin.
 - God gave man a law about the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and promised punishment for disobedience. God is the one who decides what is good and what is bad.
 - The penalty for disobedience is death. God cannot stay with sin. Sinners cannot live with God.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God provided the solution for Adam's loneliness. He created one who was a perfect companion for Adam
 - He gave Adam and Eve every plant for food except one.
 - He warned Adam which tree would harm him.
 - He gave them a home, a beautiful place, to live.
 - He gave man an important job to do, to rule over and care for the earth.
 - He spoke to man.

What do we learn about MAN? (from both this story and Genesis 1)

- Genesis 1 tells us that God:
 - made man in his own image. Man is very special to God.
 - i.e. Man has a spirit like God. He is able to know, love, and obey God.
 - blessed man with a companion, with authority over the rest of creation, with food.
- God has authority over man.
- God spoke to man. Relationship is important to God.
- God gave man a valuable job to do. (Fill the earth and have dominion over creation.)
- Man is to live in relationship with his wife. Marriage is important to God.
- Man and woman were made good, without sin. They were naked and not ashamed.

General Application Questions:

- How do you see God's power and love today in the way He made you or someone you love? How does that make you feel about Him and about yourself? How can his power help you in your life? How could his power hurt you?
- God has not changed, and He is still holy and hates sin, AND he knows your sin. How should knowing this affect your life?
- Who invented marriage? How can this story help us understand our own marriages better?
 - **If your marriage is built on the foundation of God's Word, how might it be different from other marriages in your own culture?**
 - When Adam received the woman, he was so pleased. Men, what do you appreciate about your wives? How do you show them your appreciation and love?
 - Ladies, how do you appreciate and respect your husband as your leader and caretaker?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Has God given any laws that He wants you to obey but you find it difficult?
- **How are you honoring God in your marriage? How are you failing to honor God in your marriage?**

3-B. THE WOMAN AND THE SERPENT

Genesis 3

The Tempter

The serpent was the cleverest of all the animals God had made. One day, the woman was in the garden, and the serpent came up to her. The serpent said, "Did God really tell you that you may not eat from any tree in the garden?"

The woman said, "No, God said we may eat from every tree in the garden, except one of those in the middle— the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. We may not even touch it or we will die."

The serpent said, "No! That is not true! God knows that when you eat of that tree, you will become wise like He is, knowing good and evil."

Then the woman looked at the tree. She saw it was beautiful, and it would be good to eat, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they saw that they were naked. So they sewed leaves together to cover their bodies.

Hiding

Just at that time, they heard God walking in the garden. So they ran into the forest to hide. God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Adam said, "I heard you and was afraid, so I hid because I am naked."

God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I told you not to eat from?"

Adam said, "This woman you gave to me – she gave me the fruit and I ate it!"

Then God said to the woman, "What have you done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate the fruit."

Curses, Mercy, and Separation

God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed! You will crawl on your belly all your days eating the dust of the ground. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he (the seed of the woman) will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Then God also cursed the woman, saying, "You will have terrible pain in child-bearing. Your desire will be against your husband but he will rule over you."

Then God said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife, and have eaten of the tree I told you not to eat from, the land is cursed because of you! Through painful work by the sweat of your brow you will get your food, but the land will produce thorns and thistles. Then you will die and return to the dust from which you were taken."

At that time, the man gave a new name to the woman. He called her Eve because she was the mother of all living people. And God made clothes for them from animal skins and clothed them. Then God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the Lord drove them out of the garden, and

at the entrance of the garden he set angels and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or to discuss in pairs.

- Think of a time when you tried to hide something from someone who had the power to punish you? What did that feel like?

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He had the power and authority to chase Adam and Eve from the garden.
 - He had the power to punish sin, through curses and driving them out.
 - He put his angel to prevent man from eating from the tree of life.
 - He had authority to make laws that man is obligated to obey.
 - He had power over Satan (serpent) to curse him.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew that they had eaten the forbidden fruit.
 - They were not able to hide from God.
 - He knew what would happen if they were able to eat the tree of life.
 - He knew the clothes from skins would provide better protection AND would be acceptable before Him.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - God makes laws. There is right and there is wrong.
 - God punishes those who disobey. The punishment for sin is death.
 - **What did God mean by “death” as result of disobedience?**
 - Spiritual separation from God.
 - Physical separation from God through eventual physical death. (And then you will die and return to the dust.)
 - Everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.
 - **God’s curses on them and on the earth and on the serpent.**
 - **How do we still today see evidence of the curses on the man and the woman?**
 - (Relational problems between man and wife (conflict, war, prejudice, jealousy, etc), pain in childbirth (sickness, pain, disease), toil and sweat (drought, hunger, economic problems), and every other problem which has entered the world.)
 - **Though Adam and Eve did not fall dead immediately, there was clear evidence that death had entered the world just as God promised. What evidence of death can you see?**
 - For the first time 1) they were ashamed, 2) they were hiding, 3) they were blaming each other and trying to hide their sins, 4) they were trying to meet their own needs, to solve their own problems (when they used leaves to hide their nakedness) instead of fully relying on God.

- Curses for man and woman as problems in the relationship between husband and wife, and pain in childbirth, and hard work and sweat and every problem that entered the world.
 - They were kicked out of the garden. And the fellowship between them and God was broken.
 - They were cast out of the garden. Fellowship with God was broken. God could not allow sinful man to remain with him.
 - The clothes Adam and Eve made to cover their nakedness were not acceptable to God. No one can make himself acceptable to God. No one can cover up his own sin.
 - The only clothes that were acceptable were those made by God. These clothes were provided through the death of an animal as a substitute for the sinful human. Blood was shed to make these clothes.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God provided acceptable clothing though they did not deserve them. He sacrificed a substitute animal to die in their place.
 - God did not kill them immediately.
 - Through the curse on the serpent we see the first mysterious promise of a Savior who would come through the line of the woman. This Savior would eventually defeat Satan, the deceiver, the bringer of death, once and for all. He would reverse the curse on man.
 - God gave them a chance to repent. (He knew where they were before he asked, but was giving them time to repent and admit their sin.)
 - **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God said that eating the fruit would end in death, and it did. They were immediately separated from God spiritually, and they would eventually die physically.
 - God made promise of a Savior to come, the Seed of the woman who would crush the head of Satan, and would reverse the curses that came after man sinned.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - God was merciful to him through the animal skins, through further opportunity to repent, through the promise of a Savior to come.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - They were tempted by the chance to be like God. Man is prideful and self-centered and fails to acknowledge God's authority.
 - They felt shame and tried to hide from God.
 - They started shifting the blame for their own sin.
 - They start trying to save themselves through providing for their own needs (by making clothes from leaves) instead of depending on God as they did before.
 - Man brought death into the world through his sin. (Death of animals.)
 - There was evidence that death (separation from God) had entered the world, that things had gone wrong: Shame, hiding, blaming, trying to meet their own needs or fix their own problems (fig leaves). Before this they had depended totally on God.
- **How does this affect us today? Were Adam and Eve's children born inside or outside the garden? What about their children? What about your ancestors? What about you? **Where were you born, inside or outside?****
 - We were all born outside of the garden, outside of God's family, outside of fellowship with God. So we are all born in a condition of being lost in our sins.

- **How do you see evidence of God's curse on the man and woman today?** Do women still have pain in childbirth? Do people still struggle to earn their living by the sweat of their brow? Do we face many problems in this world? What kind?
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - God refuses to accept their own clothes. Only He himself is able to provide a way to be acceptable. God even puts the clothes on them!

What do we learn from this story about SALVATION? (How man comes to God?)

- Salvation only comes through God's way. Their efforts to cover their own problems failed. God provided suitable clothes. God even dressed them. Man must humble himself and accept God's help.
- God provided through a blood sacrifice, through a substitute death.
 - We are made acceptable only through the shedding of blood. The blood of the animal that was killed helped make them acceptable.
 - This pointed to the Savior who would come and shed his blood for man.
- Man's only part is to repent of his sins and trust that God's promises of a Savior are true.

What do we learn about Satan from the serpent?

- Satan hates God. He hates and wants to destroy man. He is a deceiver who disguises himself, tells half truths, tempts man to depend on himself, and brings doubt into man's mind. He set a trap for the woman and man, called God a liar, made good look bad, and changed the truth. It was the same temptation that Lucifer himself fell into.

General Application Questions:

- Even though we see that God knows everything, we still try to hide our sin from God and others. We "sew fig leaves" to try to cover up our shame or guilt or make ourselves more acceptable. What are some ways that we (even Christians) try to HIDE from God?
 - Blame shift, compare ourselves to others, lie, make excuses, gossip
 - How can this story help us to come out of hiding and confess our sins to God and others?
- What ways does Satan use today to deceive people? How about in your own culture or village?
- What are some specific ways we sometimes try to "take God's place" or rule our own lives?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal) (Choose just one or two questions to focus on.)

- **In what ways do you try to cover your shame with fig leaves and HIDE from God?** How can this story help you come out from hiding?
- **How has Satan deceived you sometimes? What lies about God or yourself are you even now tempted to believe?** How are you tempted to try to take God's place in some area of your life? How can you repent of it?

4. CAIN AND ABEL

Genesis 4

After God had cast Adam and Eve out of the garden, Eve became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. They named the boy Cain. Later, Eve gave birth to another son named Abel.

Cain grew up and became a farmer. Abel grew up and became a shepherd. One day they both brought sacrifices to God. Cain brought an offering from his garden, some fruits and vegetables. Abel brought fat portions from the first born from his sheep. He sacrificed them, and the blood poured out.

God accepted the sacrifice of Abel but he did not accept the sacrifice of Cain. And Cain became very angry. God said to Cain, "Why are you angry? If you do the right thing, I will accept you. But if you do the wrong thing, sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is to have you, but you must defeat it."

Later Cain said to his brother, Abel, "Let's go into the fields."

While they were walking in the fields, Cain killed Abel and left.

After that, God said to Cain, "Where is your brother, Abel?"

Cain said, "I do not know. Am I the one who takes care of him?"

Then God said, "The blood of your brother cries out to me from the ground! You are cursed! The ground will not produce for you. You must leave this place and wander over the earth."

Cain said, "Oh, this is too hard for me! You have cast me away from the land. You have cast me away from your presence, and if anyone sees me, he will kill me!"

Then God put a mark on Cain and said, "If anyone hurts you, I will repay him seven times." Then Cain went out and wandered from place to place.

And Adam and Eve had another son named Seth to replace Abel who was dead. Cain had children; they were wicked, and did not worship God. But many of Seth's descendants did worship God.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you think of a time when you were very envious of someone else and it led to your doing something bad? Discuss it with your neighbor.

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - God has authority to expect obedience because He created us. God had power and authority to drive Cain away.

- He had the authority to demand a right sacrifice in order to approach him in worship.
- He had the power to give Seth to Adam and Eve to replace Abel.
- Was able to put the mark of protection on Cain.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew the evil thoughts of Cain's heart. His anger and jealousy.
 - Knew Abel's heart and his right sacrifice that came from his heart.
 - God knew what Cain had done. He said, "The blood of your brother cries out to me."
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - God punished Cain's sin by driving him away and cursing the ground for him.
 - God may only be approached in the way He says. He demands an acceptable sacrifice – a firstborn lamb whose blood is shed – a substitute. He may only be approached through faith.
 - The fact that there is a right sacrifice and a wrong sacrifice shows His holiness.
 - God honoured and accepted Abel's sacrifice, which came by faith. (Heb 11:6)
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God gave Cain a chance to repent when he asked him where his brother was. Also warned him of sin crouching at his door.
 - He provided a way for man to come back into relationship with Him through a right sacrifice.
 - God communicates with man to instruct how to approach Him in worship.
 - God put a mark on Cain to protect him, though he did not deserve it.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God was faithful to Adam and Eve by giving them Seth to replace Abel.
 - He was also faithful to continue his promise to send a Savior who would be the seed of the woman. The Savior would later come through Seth's family.
 - He kept his promise to protect Cain.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - God wanted relationship with Cain and Abel. Had made a way for them to come to Him.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - **Where were Cain and Abel born?**
 - Outside the garden. They were born sinners because of their parents. Born outside of fellowship with God. Their hearts were already inclined to evil
 - All mankind if born in sin, outside the garden. Outside of a relationship with God.
 - A mango tree produces mangoes, not bananas. If you are born from the tree of sinful man, what type of fruit will you naturally produce?
 - Note: Even Abel was a sinner! He needed to come to God in God's way.
 - Cain tried to approach God in his own way. Did not bring the best. Did not come in faith, agreeing that he was a sinner dependent on God to save him.
 - Cain became angry and jealous and became a murderer, just like Satan, his spiritual father.
 - **How does God describe sin to Cain? What does this tell us about our battle against sin?**

- Sin was crouching at his door ready to devour him.
- Fighting sin is a battle. It wants to rule over us.
- **How can we be more watchful for sin sneaking up on us and creeping into our lives? What are ways that this happens to us?**
- **How could Cain have responded differently when the Lord confronted him about his wrong sacrifice?**
 - He could have repented and trusted in God's promise of a Savior?
-
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - When Cain tries to approach God in his own way, he is rejected.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (about how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - Abel likely had been instructed by his parents on how to approach God, which God had told them. Because he came to God in God's way (through faith displayed in blood sacrifice, agreeing he was a sinner and needed God's salvation) and was accepted.
 - Cain came to God in his own way and was not accepted.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - Abel was acceptable to God because of his faith, which was displayed in the type of sacrifice he brought (a blood sacrifice, firstborn and best). He came humbly, admitting his own sin and helplessness and displaying his faith in the Savior who would come by bringing a RIGHT sacrifice. (Hebrews 11:4, 6)

General Application Questions:

- What are some ways that we allow sin to sneak up on us?
- In what ways does sin devour people today?
 - **What can we learn from this story about how to resist sin's pull on our lives?**

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What is a specific way that sin sometimes sneaks up on you and creeps into your life?**
 - Can you think of a recent time when sin has crept into your heart and mastered it for a time?
 - **Is there a particular recurring sin in your life that you struggle with? How does it deceive you and master you? How can faith and repentance help you to defeat it?**
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5. NOAH AND THE FLOOD

Genesis 6-9

Man's Wickedness / God's Plan to Punish

After God cursed Cain, Cain found a wife, and they had children. Seth, whom God gave to Adam and Eve in the place of Abel, also found a wife, and they had children. The people on the earth became many. Some of the people loved God, but most of them rebelled against God. They were always fighting. "God saw that every intention of the thoughts of the heart of man were always evil." When God saw how wicked the works of man were, He said, "I will destroy everything I have created, man and animal."

Noah's Job

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. He was a righteous man who walked with God. God said to Noah, "I am sorry that I ever made man. I am going to destroy all that has been created because the people are evil, but I will establish my covenant with you. Only you, your wife, your three sons, and their wives will live."

"I want you to build a big boat, called an ark, because I will cause a great flood to destroy the earth. You should also take with you male and female of every kind of animal and bird. Also, for animals that are good for sacrifice, you must put seven males and seven females. Bring all kinds of food also."

God told Noah exactly how to build the boat. And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him. It took Noah many years to build the boat. Then one day God told Noah that he and his family should take all of the animals and birds and enter the boat. Then God himself shut the one door.

Rains and Waiting

For forty days and forty nights, the waters above rained down and the waters below broke out onto the earth. Everything was covered with water, even the highest mountain, and there was no way for the people to escape, so they all drowned. But Noah and his family and the animals on the ark were safe, floating on top of the water.

At the end of the forty days, God remembered Noah and stopped the waters. For many months Noah was in the boat. After one year, the flood had gone down, and the ark came to rest on a mountain.

God's Blessing

Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark." And Noah and his family, and the animals, came out of the boat. Noah built an altar and made an offering, worshiping God. God was pleased with his offering. God said, "I will never again destroy the earth with a great flood. I am putting my rainbow in the sky as a sign of my promise."

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."

And God said to Noah, "I now give to you the animals for food. But do not eat the blood, which is its life. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man."

Noah's sons had many children and as time passed there were many people on the earth again.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you think of a time when someone gave you long, difficult instructions on how to do something? Were the instructions hard to follow? Were you tempted to give up?

THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show us God's POWER (Authority, Sovereignty, Needs No One Else)?**
 - He was able to destroy the world, and to control the floodwaters.
 - He had authority to destroy the world because He created it.
 - He started and stopped the rain and springs below.
 - He told Noah when to enter and when to come out. He shut the door.
 - He blessed Noah and his sons to multiply.
- **How does this story show us God's KNOWLEDGE (Omni-presence)?**
 - He knew man's wickedness, even ALL his thoughts.
 - He knew how to build the ark. (Noah had probably never had seen an ocean or such heavy rain.)
 - God knew the correct animals for sacrifice.
- **How does this story show us God's HOLINESS (Righteousness, Hates Sin, Must Judge or Punish Sin)?**
 - He destroyed people as punishment for sin.
 - He gave the law regarding the shedding of human blood.
 - He gave exact commands about how to build the boat. Noah could not have built it another way and pleased God.
 - God shut the door. No one could open it again. His grace of repentance is available only for a limited time for each person.
- **How does this story show us Gods' GRACE (Mercy, Communicates with Man, Kindness, Goodness)?**
 - He waited patiently for many years, and gave people an opportunity to repent.
 - He communicated with Noah and warned him about the coming flood.
 - He showed Noah exactly how to build a safe and effective ark.
 - He provided all Noah needed on the ark for food and afterward for sacrifice.
 - He accepted Noah's offering even though Noah was a sinful man himself.
 - He blessed Noah's family and allowed them to multiply.
- **How does this story show us God's FAITHFULNESS (Unchanging)?**
 - He sent the rain to destroy the earth, just as He had promised.
 - He saved Noah and his family as He had promised.
 - He gave the rainbow as a sign of His promise to not destroy earth again by flood.

- He preserved the seed or line of the woman (Gen 3:15). He was continuing to work toward fulfilling His promise to bring the Savior through the line of the woman Eve!
- **In what ways does God still keep his promises? Has he kept the promise of the rainbow?**

What does this story teach us about MAN?

- **What can we learn about man from this story? What were men like in the day of Noah?**
 - Men were not in unity with God because of the sin of Adam, their ancestor. They were born outside the Garden, away from God. And they added there own sins and rebellion.
 - Man loves his own way. He often ignores God and his commands and selfishly seek his own desires.
 - Man is violent toward one another, unkind, harmful, selfish.
 - Man is does not want to listen to truth. For 120 years, Noah's neighbors saw his work and probably asked what he was doing, but they ignored the warnings to repent of their sins.
- **Was Noah also a sinner? Did he deserve to die?**
 - Yes, Noah also was a sinner. He was a descendant of Adam. Later he became drunk and cursed his son. He also deserved death like all other sinners.
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- **How do we see evidence today that man is still sinful today? That people today are born separate from God?**
 - How are people in our world today like those in the time of Noah? Violence? Corruption? Immorality? How about in our own hearts?

What do we learn about HOW MAN COMES TO GOD?

- **Why did Noah find favor in God's eyes?**
 - Because he was righteous and blameless among the people of his time. He walked with God. I.e. he lived by faith, trusting God, following God's plan, obeying God.
 - God responded in mercy to Noah's faith and obedience and saved him even though he was a sinner.
 - Noah listened to God, so he knew what God wanted him to believe and to do.
- **Why did it take a lot of faith for Noah to obey God?**
 - Noah had probably never seen rain or a big boat. He had lived with evil for a long time. He could have been discouraged by the wickedness of his neighbors. It was a very hard and costly job to build the ark. Other people likely ridiculed him for building the ark.
- **Why do you think Noah obeyed God? How does FAITH relate to OBEDIENCE?**
 - He loved God. He had faith that God would do what He said He would do.
- **What do we learn from the fact there was only one boat and only one door in the boat?**
 - There is only ONE WAY to God! We must come to God in God's way. Remember Abel vs. Cain. God only accepts those who come His way.
 - God's way is this: You must agree that you are a sinner with no hope to save yourself, and then put your faith in the one Savior that God provides.
- **What was so significant about the blood in the covenant with Noah?**

- He could not eat it, for it belongs to God, since the life is in the blood, and it is God Himself who gives life.
- When God made skins for Adam and Eve, an animal's blood was shed in order that they might be shown grace. When Noah came out of the ark he offered sacrifices to God presumably as a way of thanking God for showing him grace.

General Application Questions:

- **In this story God especially condemns the sinful thoughts and intentions that we have in our hearts. What kinds of sinful intentions or thoughts do we tend to hide the most?**
- What doors other than Jesus do people try to walk through in order to please God or just to feel happy with themselves and their lives?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- God knows your every thought! What sin have you recently been hiding from God and need to confess?
 - **What situation are you in that is like Noah's? What is God wanting you personally to do by faith that seems hard?** Is it to love someone who is hard to love? To forgive someone who has wronged you? To sacrifice your time or money to help others or honor God? Or even to walk through the ONE DOOR that God gives us to come to Him, i.e. trusting Jesus? How can this story help you take a step of faith?
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6. THE CALL OF ABRAM

Genesis 12, 13, and 15

Commands and Promises

Many years after the time of Noah, and after God confused the languages at Babel, there was a man named Abram. He was 75 years old. His wife, Sarai, was also old. And they had no children. One day, God appeared to Abram and said, "Abram, you must leave your country. You must leave your family. And you must leave your father and go to a place that I will show to you. And I will make you a great nation. I will make your name great. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. And I will bless all the nations of the world through you."

Canaan and Egypt

So Abram took his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, and he traveled for a long time until he reached Canaan. God told him this was the land of promise for him and his descendants. At that time a famine came on the land, so Abram took his family to Egypt. There Abram feared the Egyptians and lied to the king saying that Sarai was his sister so that the king took her to be one of his wives. But God still protected him and delivered Sarai and even blessed Abram with great wealth from the Egyptians.

Conflict with Lot

When Abram and his family returned to Canaan from Egypt, they had many animals. Both Abram and Lot were very rich and the land was not strong enough to support all their flocks. Arguments broke out among their herdsmen. Abram said to Lot, "Let us not quarrel. Look over the land. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right." Lot looked at the whole land and saw that the valley was very beautiful. It was full of tall grass good for animals and water. So he moved his herds to the valley and left Abram on the rocky hills. He camped near Sodom, a city whose men were very wicked and sinned against the Lord.

Believing God

After some time, God appeared to Abram in a vision and said, "Do not be afraid. I am your shield, and your reward shall be great." But Abram said, "What can you give me when I still have no son to be my heir?" And God told Abram, "You will have a son from your own body." And God took Abram out and showed him the sky. He said, "If you can count the stars, then you will be able to count your descendants." And Abram believed God, and God counted it to him as righteousness. And God directed Abram to offer a special sacrifice in which God appeared to him during a deep sleep as a flame of fire and assured him by oath of His covenant. God also told Abram how his descendants would someday be enslaved for 400 years in a foreign land, but that God would then rescue them. Later God changed Abram's name to Abraham and his wife's name to Sarah.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Discuss a time someone made you a big promise that you had to wait for a long time? Was the promise fulfilled? How did this make you feel?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What does this story teach us about God?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (all authority, in control, is over all)**
 - He had authority over Abram to direct him where to go because He had created him.
 - He protected Abram, even though far from his own family, from famine and from Egyptians.
 - He afflicted Pharaoh with great plagues and protected Sarai from being defiled.
 - He began working out his promises. He led him to the land of promise, and made him rich, causing Pharaoh to bless him.
 - God chose Abram as his channel of blessing. Shows he is in control.
 - He appeared to Abram as a flame of fire.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew what would happen to Abram and had a plan for how He would bless him.
 - He promised to make him great, to bless him. He did begin blessing him in Egypt.
 - He made clear promises to Abram of what He would do for him in the future. A great nation. Great name. Blessings / curses. All the world to be blessed through him.
 - He knew Abram needed encouragement, and knew how to provide it through showing him the stars and making covenant.
 - He knew what would happen to Abram's family in the future. – 400 years of slavery (This later happened in Egypt).
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He gave commands for Abram to obey in order to live in blessing. He was beginning to separate Abram and his family into a separate, holy nation through whom God would show himself to the world.
 - He brought curses on king of Egypt for greedily taking Sarai to be his wife. By this God likely protected Sarai from being violated.
 - Sacrifices (like Abram's) always show God's holiness and man's sinfulness. Man can only come to God in God's way.
 - He displayed his holiness/righteousness in the sacrifice by appearing as a flame.
 - Sacrifice, the shedding of blood, always shows the need for a holy substitute for man's sin.
 - God separated Abram from Lot. Holiness means some kinds of separation of good from evil.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - Abram was a sinner who did not always act in faith. He deceived the Egyptians about his wife out of fear, instead of trusting God. Also he accepted gifts under false pretenses. Yet God cared for him anyway.
 - God made good out of evil, blessing Abram with gifts to make him rich and to begin making him a great nation.
 - God chose Abram, though he was a sinner, to be his covenant bearer.

- He protected Abram far from his home and gave him a new and better home.
 - He made him many wonderful promises and blessed him with riches.
 - He was being gracious to many generations of people. He blessed Abram so that he could be a blessing to others. God saves man and uses man to bring others to salvation.
 - He appeared to Abram and communicated directly with him.
 - He showed patience in the midst of Abram's doubt. He taught and encouraged him and told him, "Don't be afraid." He comforted him.
 - God responded to the faith of Abram by declaring him righteous, even though Abram was a sinner.
 - He renewed his promises to Abram and made a covenant with Abram and his descendants.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He made promises to Abram and began fulfilling them.
 - He made the promise of his being a blessing for all nations.
 - He was beginning to make Abram a great nation just as He had promised by giving him riches.
 - He protected Abram (and cursed those who cursed him – king of Egypt).
 - He guided him clearly.
 - He did not let Abram's sin in Egypt destroy His plan to bless him and the world through him.
 - In this story God is continuing to keep his promise first made in Genesis 3:15 to bring a Deliverer to defeat Satan, one who will come through the line of the woman. Has kept the promise despite Cain killing Abel, despite the wickedness of the world leading to the flood, despite man's pride and independence at Babel.
 - He renewed His promises. He promised to be Abram's shield and reward.
 - He promised to bring his descendants back out of 400 years of slavery to the land he gave Abram.
 - He was remaining faithful to the promise to send a Savior to the world through the woman's Seed, and through Abram.

What does this story teach us about how man comes to God?

- **What do we learn about faith from this story?**
 - Hebrews 11:1. *"Now faith is being sure (the assurance) of what we hope for and certain (the conviction) of what we do not see."*
- **How do we see this kind of faith demonstrated in this story about Abram? What did he do that showed his faith?**
 - Was required to give up normal sources of personal identity and security - family and country. Had to depend entirely on God while knowing few specifics of what the future held. Was only promised blessing as he walked in obedience.
 - Abram goes immediately, without questioning God, even though he doesn't know where he is going or how he will get a child at his old age. Having a child is essential to the promises being fulfilled.
- **How did Abram solve the conflict between him and Lot? How does that demonstrate faith?**
 - He let go of some good things (beautiful grassy valley), was centered on other people, and trusted God to bless him. He did not cling to his right to choose as the older man.
- **So how does faith relate to obedience? What do we learn from this story?**
 - Faith comes before obedience. Abraham trusted God enough to make hard steps. Faith produces obedience. Our faith is seen in our obedience. (Gal 5:6)
 - **READ Hebrews 11:8-12 - "By faith, Abram obeyed . . ."**
- **Is faith easy?**
 - No, there are many obstacles to faith. It is not easy.
- **What were some of Abram's obstacles?**
 - Old age of self and wife, being without child, going to unknown land

- o **Does God require perfect faith for him to respond to us in grace? How do we see this?**
 - No, Abram had doubts and failed to trust at times. For example, he lied to the king of Egypt out of fear.
 - Also, even after his faith was credited to him as righteousness, he asked God, “How can I really know?” But God responded mercifully by offering a sign to confirm His covenant with Abram.
- o **Is there an example of someone in Abram’s family NOT acting according to faith in God? How does Lot NOT demonstrate faith? How does he make his choice?**
 - Chooses where to live solely on worldly values.
- o **Why was offering the sacrifice an important way for Abram to show his faith? What do we learn from a blood sacrifice?**
 - The blood sacrifice tells us and reminded Abram that he was a sinner who needed a Savior – one who would be like a lamb whose blood is shed in a sinner’s place in order for him to meet a holy God.
 - For us the sacrifice points us to Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross.
- o **What was God’s response to Abram’s faith – especially after showing him the stars and renewing his promises?**
 - He COUNTED HIM as RIGHTEOUS
 - Read Romans 4:3,22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23
- o **What does this mean - that God credited or counted him as righteous? What does the story show us about what this means?**
 - He accepted him as His own. He forgave his sin and received him into relationship.
 - Before Abram proved himself righteous by deeds, God counted him as righteous because of his faith.

General Application Questions:

- **How can it help us in our daily lives to know that we cannot make ourselves acceptable but God is the one who justifies us from beginning to end?** In other words, what are some specific ways that it can help us as believers to know that He chose us, calls us, gives us faith, justifies us, adopts us, guides us, and works in our lives? **How can it begin transforming how a believer approaches their day-to-day life?**
 - o It gives us great freedom and joy to be assured that we are God's children.
 - o I can be honest about my sin because I'm already forgiven. I can repent openly and regularly. I can forgive others because He has forgiven me.
 - o I am more free to obey God in gratitude for His love. I live in peace and don't need to compare myself to others. I can battle against pride. Etc.
- Abraham's faith made him acceptable to God, counted righteous. But he displayed his faith through acts of obedience. **What are some specific acts of obedience that might be the fruit of our faith, of trusting in God's salvation and his care for us?**
- Lot was guided too much by what he saw with his eyes. He did not trust God enough to provide for him as his child, so he did not seek God's guidance before moving to Sodom. **What are some specific examples of how our unbelief can lead us to sin?**
 - o doing something wrong because we fear the disapproval of other people
 - o cheating or stealing because we don't believe God will provide
 - o lying or exaggerating or gossiping so that people will approve of us
 - o abusing others or getting overly angry because we don't trust God to take care of us in the midst of trial or mistreatment

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Think of a specific recent example in your life **when you, like Lot, did something wrong or made a poor decision because you were not trusting God** at that moment that you are truly justified or made right before God or that he would care for you? How can you repent of that unbelief?
- Mention a time when God called you to step out in faith to do something difficult when you could not yet see the end result? **Is he calling you to something now? What are possible obstacles to your faith, to moving ahead in trusting obedience?** How can Abram's story encourage you?
- God has been faithful to fulfill his covenant to Abraham of bringing a Savior. Have you trusted this Savior with your life? What would that look like?

6-B. CBS Lesson

Teaching Bible Stories through Song and Drama

Song:

Choose a Story that you have already learned in CBS and get into a group of five students to take 1 hour to try to craft and write a song that directly tells one of the stories. Then present the song to the entire class.

Drama:

Choose a Story that you have already learned in CBS and get into a group of 5 to 15 students (the number depending upon the story) and take one hour to prepare a drama. Make sure that you have all the roles clearly defined and have all the people involved. There should be one person who is the narrator to tell the parts of the story that are not spoken by the characters represented. Then present the drama to the entire class.

SONG WRITING PRINCIPLES:

- **REGARDING LYRICS/WORDS:**

- Biblical – accurate, true
- Clear Message, esp of Gospel
- Easily remembered
 - Either simple enough for all to remember
 - Or simple chorus for all with verses for song leader to tell story
- God-centered
- Has clear theme (esp in chorus)
- Good question: Ask a non-Christian to listen and see HOW they understand the words. TO make sure you are really communicating well.
- WORDS that touch the heart

- **REGARDING PRESENTATION:**

- Appealing melody
- Familiar enough in tune for people to like and learn
- Good rhythm, flow
- Fun, engaging
- Dancing – culturally acceptable, honoring to the Lord
- Gestures match words
- Motivational, stirs feelings. Inspiring. Done with confidence
- Good pronunciation
- Does the tone of singing match the tone of words (ex. Joyful, serious, sad, reverent, happy, peaceful)?
- NOT TOO LOUD. Don't let INSTRUMENTS drown out words
- Most important - WORDS and WORSHIPers (Instruments are just tools)

7. ABRAHAM - BIRTH AND SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Genesis 17,21- 22

Finally, twenty-five years after God promised Abraham to make him a great nation, Sarah gave birth to a son in her old age, just as the Lord had said. They named him Isaac, which means 'laughter', because Sarah had laughed when God said she would have a son. Isaac grew and became a young boy.

One day God spoke to Abraham and said, "Abraham, take your son, your only son, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on the mountain." So the next morning, Abraham chopped wood for the fire and put the wood on a donkey. He took fire and a knife. He called two servants and his son, Isaac, and they began to travel to the place God had told him about.

When they saw Mount Moriah in the distance, Abraham told the servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go to the mountain to worship and then we will return to you." Then Abraham put the wood onto Isaac, took the fire and the knife himself, and continued on with his son.

While they were walking, Isaac asked Abraham, "Father?" Abraham said, "Yes, my son." Isaac said, "The fire is here. The wood is here. but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb (ram) for the burnt offering."

When they reached Mount Moriah, Abraham built an altar from stones and placed the wood on it. Then he bound Isaac's hands and placed Isaac on the altar. Then he took the knife and was about to strike Isaac when the angel of the Lord called to him and said, "Abraham! Stop! Do not harm the boy. Now I know that you truly fear God since you have not held back from me your son, your only son."

Then Abraham turned around and saw a ram with its horns caught in the thicket. Abraham took Isaac off of the altar and sacrificed the ram in place of his son Isaac. That is why they called that place, "The Lord provides."

After Abraham sacrificed the ram, God spoke to him again through his angel. "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. And your seed shall defeat their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you think of a time has someone asked you to do something that did not make sense? What did you do?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He gave Sarah a son, Isaac, when she was very old.
 - He had authority to tell Abraham what to do and had the right to expect obedience, even if the command did not seem to make sense. He had power and authority to stop him from killing Isaac.
 - He provided the ram as a substitute for Isaac.

- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God was there to tell Abraham to take his son and was also on Mt. Moriah watching.
 - He knew he would provide a way and knew the condition of Abraham's heart.

- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - The need for a blood sacrifice, done God's way, points to man's sinfulness and God's holiness. There is no other way to come to God. A blood sacrifice had to be made. A substitute. If not Isaac, had to be something else – a ram.
 - God gave commands and expected obedience.
 - The ram was caught by its horns, not by its leg. It had to be perfect, without blemish. An imperfect sacrifice would not work.
 - Only God himself was holy enough to provide a suitable substitute.
 - Abraham could only come to God the way God said to come.

- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He spoke to Abraham
 - He provided a way out for Isaac. He loved him.
 - He provided a way for Abraham to obey and yet for God to keep his promise
 - He provided the sacrifice – a way for sinful Abraham and Isaac to worship God.

- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He had promised He would make of him a great nation to bless all the nations. Had specifically promised to do it through Isaac, rather than through some other desperate means (Ishmael). God provided for Isaac to live.
 - God gave Abraham faith that He would provide a lamb. And He did.

What does this story teach us about MAN?

- Man cannot save himself. Isaac was helpless, bound up, with no means to save self. Abraham had to obey God, and could not see clearly how God would keep his promises.
- Man needs a Savior. He needs a worthy substitute to pay his penalty.

What does this story teach us about how man comes to God?

- **How do we see Abraham's faith?**
 - His obedience, and his statement to servants that he AND the boy would return. He knew that God would either provide a substitute or raise Isaac from the dead.
 - His faith was expressed in obedience, even to a difficult command from God.

- Abraham had a close relationship with God. He listened to God's commands.
- **How did it not make sense in this story for Abraham to believe and obey God? In other words, what obstacles were there to Abraham's faith?**
 - Abraham loved Isaac so much. He was his treasured and only son, the son of his old age. Offering his son could not have made sense. It did not seem consistent with command not to murder. He did not know why God had told him to do this. Or why he had sent him to sacrifice without taking a sheep along. God had promised that He would make Abraham a great nation and through him bless other nations. Also He had said the promise was to be worked out specifically through Isaac, for whom they had waited for 25 years. Abraham could have thought, "How could the promise be fulfilled if he is dead?"
- **Why do you think Abraham obeyed God?**
 - He loved God. He had faith that God would do what He said He would do.
- **In the Bible, a TYPE is like a picture that represents something much bigger that comes later. How is the ram in the thicket a TYPE of Christ? In other words, how does it point to Jesus Christ?**
 - Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, the only suitable substitute for sinful man. He died in the place of others.
 - The lamb was provided by God just as God provided His Son.
 - The lamb was caught by his horns. Therefore his body and bones would be unblemished, a perfect, holy sacrifice. Jesus' bones were not broken. He was completely sinless, the only one who could die in our place.
 - Isaac, like Jesus, submitted to his father's will for him to become a sacrifice.
 - Isaac carried the wood, just as Jesus carried the cross.

General Application Questions:

- Abraham could have refused to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. He could have claimed that it just made no sense! What kind of things do people hold back from God? What are some **examples of obstacles that hinder people from trusting God fully?** How can this story help us overcome such obstacles and grow our faith?
- What promises of God was Abraham believing that helped him to obey him in this story? What are some of the **promises of God to us that can help us to believe and obey in difficult situations?**

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What thing, person or issue in life are you holding back from him, unwilling to submit to what you know is right?** What are some obstacles in your life that block you from trusting Him? How can today's lesson help you overcome these obstacles and trust God more?
 - **Is there some action or change in attitude that God is calling you personally to that is hard to understand, that just does not make sense?** How can this story encourage you?
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8. ISAAC, JACOB, AND ESAU Genesis 24-33

A Wife for Isaac

When Abraham was 137 years old, Sarah died at Hebron, and Abraham buried her there. Now Isaac was almost forty and still not married, so Abraham sent his servant up north to their relatives in Syria to find him a wife because he did not want him to marry the daughter of a Canaanite. When he got to Syria, the servant prayed for God to show him the right girl, and God led him directly to Rebekah. She was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother who had stayed in Syria. Rebekah and her father agreed to the marriage so she went back to Canaan with the servant, and she became Isaac's wife. After this Abraham died, and Isaac buried him at Hebron beside Sarah.

Birth of Isaac and Rebekah's Boys

For a long time Rebekah did not get pregnant. So Isaac prayed to God for her and after twenty years she finally had twin boys. While she was pregnant, Rebekah felt the two boys struggling with each other. God told her, "There are two nations in your womb. . . One people will be stronger than the other. The older will serve the younger." They named the first boy Esau. The second son was born grasping the firstborn's heel. Therefore he was named Jacob, which means deceiver.

Despising the Birthright

Because he was the oldest, Esau was supposed to receive the birthright which is a double portion of the inheritance. Also he was supposed to receive God's promise to bless Abraham's descendants through him. As the boys grew up, Esau was a hunter, and he loved being out in the country. Isaac liked the taste of the animals he hunted, and he loved Esau best. But Jacob was a quiet man and stayed around the tents, and was the favorite of his mother, Rebekah.

One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came home from hunting feeling very hungry. He said, "Jacob, give me something to eat."

"I won't give it to you, but I'll sell it to you for your birthright."

"Look, Jacob, I'm about to starve to death. What good is the birthright to a dead man?" And he swore to Jacob to sell him his birthright for a bowl of stew. So Esau despised his birthright.

Stealing the Blessing

Time passed, and Isaac called Esau, "I'm old and I don't know how much longer I'm going to live. Go hunt some game and cook it just the way I like. I want to give you my blessing before I die."

But Rebekah was listening, and while Esau was away hunting, she helped Jacob trick his father, who was blind, into thinking he was Esau coming with some tasty meat. So Isaac blessed Jacob with the blessing that belonged to his firstborn, Esau. When Esau

realized Jacob had tricked him out of both the birthright and the blessing, he was furious, and he swore to kill his brother. So Rebekah told Jacob, "Listen to me. You should go stay with my brother up in Syria until Esau calms down. I'll let you know when it's safe to come back."

But to Isaac she said, "I'm fed up with these foreign wives of Esau. If Jacob marries one of them, my life won't be worth living!"

So Isaac said, "Jacob, don't marry a Canaanite girl. Go to Syria now and take one of your uncle Laban's daughters instead." So Jacob went to Syria.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you think of a time recently when you made a decision without really considering what God would want? How did it turn out?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He provided Isaac a wife. He led the servant to a wife for Isaac after he prayed for guidance.
 - He caused Jacob, the second born, to receive the rights of the first-born.
 - He protected Jacob from his brother.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He knew that Isaac needed a wife from his own people to keep them from idolatry.
 - He knew and told Rebekah what was going on in her womb.
 - He knew Esau, the first born, would be faithless.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He would not pass His promise of a Savior through a faithless man who married foreign women.
 - He did not allow Jacob to marry Canaanite women who would have led him into idolatry. God wanted to separate a holy people for Himself.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He gave children to Rebekah after twenty years without children.
 - He preserved Jacob from his brother's wrath.
 - He continued keeping his promise to bring a Savior through the Seed of the Woman and of Abraham.
 - He chose to bless and work through Jacob despite his sinfulness.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He predicted the older would serve the younger, and it began in this story.
 - He continued His promise to bless the world through Abraham's seed even though Esau, the rightful heir, was faithless. God preserved Jacob.

- He preserved the promise of a Savior to bless all nations.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - He cared graciously for Jacob and continued His promise.
 - He punished Esau's lack of faith by denying him the birthright and blessing.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - Esau was focused only on his stomach, not mindful of spiritual things or God's promises.
 - Even Jacob, though he did want God's promises and blessings, was a sinner, as shown by his lying and stealing Esau's blessing. We also see sinfulness in Rebekah's lies.
 - Even Isaac showed poor judgment of the hearts of his sons by favouring Esau despite his worldliness.
 - Rebekah was sinful as well. She knew God's promise, but felt she had to manipulate the matter to make it happen.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - Only God could have preserved Jacob through all his trials, and blessed him in the process.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - Only the child who had faith in God and his promises was blessed, even though he sinned in trying to get that blessing.
 - God did graciously respond to Jacob's small, weak faith.
 - God did not bless or respond to such a faithless man as Esau.

General Application Questions:

- How can people today be like Esau, caring more about their stomach than God's promises?
- Jacob sometimes cheated and lied in order to force things to happen the way he wanted. You might say he was trying to manipulate God's plan. How do we sometimes try to manipulate God?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **How are you like Esau sometimes?** I.e. In what specific way are you too controlled by your appetites or personal desires?
 - Think of a recent incident when you, **like Jacob, tried to overly control a situation or manipulate God?** What would be a better way to approach this situation that shows you are trusting God?
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9. JACOB'S DREAM

Genesis 28:10-22

When Jacob's brother, Esau, realized he had been tricked out of both his birthright and his blessing by Jacob, he was furious and swore to kill his brother. So, at the urging of his parents, Jacob fled to Syria to go to Laban, his mother's brother. On his way north, Jacob spent the night at a certain place. There, after taking a stone and using it as a pillow to help him sleep, he had a vivid dream. In his dream he saw a ladder reaching from the earth up to heaven, and angels of the Lord were going up and down. At the top of the ladder stood the Lord, who said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants this land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread east and west, north and south, and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land."

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he was afraid and thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it. How awesome is this place! It is the house of God, and the gate of heaven!" So he took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it, calling that place Bethel. Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey and bring me back to my father's house in peace, ... then the Lord will be my God and this stone will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth." So God repeated to Jacob the same promises that he had given to Abraham and Isaac before him. Then he led him on to his uncle's house in Syria.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Discuss with your neighbor a time in your life when God provided you with clear encouragement when you were right in the middle of something very difficult, a time when you were afraid of what might happen next?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He protected Jacob and directed him. He appeared to Jacob in a dream.
 - He chose Jacob to receive the rights of the firstborn, including the blessing of Abraham.
 - He declared, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac."
 - He was able to give Jacob the land, to make him a great nation despite his having nothing, to bless all the people of the world through him.
 - He protected Jacob and brought him back to the Promised Land.

- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He told Jacob in a dream all of the blessings he would receive – land, children, become a great nation.
 - He knew that all the nations of the world would be blessed through him.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He continued keeping his promise to bring a Savior through the Seed of the Woman and of Abraham.
 - He communicated with Jacob in a dream.
 - He chose to bless and work through Jacob despite his sinfulness.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God repeated to Jacob all the same promises that he had made to his grandfather, Abraham, and father, Isaac.
 - He preserved the promise of a Savior to bless all nations.
 - God promised him protection, a return to the land, many descendants, and to bless the whole world through his Seed. God kept all these promises.

What do we learn about MAN?

- Jacob was helpless to care for himself. He had to depend on God's grace alone for blessing.
- Jacob and his offspring were deeply loved by God.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (How man comes to God?)

- Salvation comes only from the Lord. He is our only hope. We must trust in Him and His promises, in the Savior he has sent. We must listen to God.

General Application Questions:

- Jacob was in a desperate situation, alone with no one caring for him. When God spoke to him in a dream, he recognized His voice, listened to His promises, and was encouraged to move forward. What are some of the **promises that God makes** to us today when we follow Him even into places we've never been or do not know?
- How can we know more about what His promises to us are?
- How can this story help us believe that God can work good out of whatever circumstances we are in?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What promise of God do you need to trust in today?** What are you facing?
 - What will you do in the coming week in order to know and believe in His promises more?
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10. JACOB, LABAN, RACHEL, AND LEAH Genesis 29:15-35

After his dream about the ladder, Jacob went on his way to the land of his uncle Laban. After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, Laban said to him, “Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.”

Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form and beautiful. Jacob was in love with Rachel and said to Laban, “I’ll work for you for seven years in return for your younger daughter, Rachel.”

Laban said, “It’s better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.” So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her.” So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her. . . When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?”

Laban replied, “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also in return for another seven years of work.”

And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. . . Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

There was lots of jealousy between Leah and Rachel. Leah was jealous because Rachel was the favorite. Rachel was jealous because Leah had lots of sons before she had even one. Finally she did have Joseph and Benjamin. Leah had many sons, including Judah, who became the ancestor of many important Jews such as King David and eventually Jesus Christ. Eventually God blessed Jacob with twelve sons, and despite Laban trying to cheat Jacob again and again, God blessed him with great wealth.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What kind of things do people do when they want something too much?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)

- o He cared for Jacob and led him to the home of his uncle Laban
- o He provided wives and children for him.
- o He made Jacob wealth despite Laban's efforts to deceive him.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - o The deceiver was deceived. Sin does not go without consequences.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - o He blessed Jacob even though he had been a deceiver.
 - o He protected him from his uncle's tricks. Made him wealthy. He gave him many sons.
 - o He humbled Jacob, the deceiver, by allowing him to be deceived himself.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - o He continued to bless Jacob, to make him great and extend his family, all part of the promise God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - o He continued to preserve Jacob's family which preserved the promise of the Savior who would come through the line of the woman.
 - o He gave Leah, Jacob's less favored wife, many sons, including Judah, who was the ancestor of Jesus.

What do we learn about MAN?

- o Laban was a self-centered sinner who took advantage of Jacob.
- o The deceiver, Jacob, experienced the fruit of deception. Sin always has consequences for man.
- o Jacob could not make himself wealthy or a great nation.

General Application Questions:

- How can this story encourage us in dealing with someone who is cheating or mistreating us?
- Jacob was a deceiver, but later was the one being deceived. Can you think of an example where someone's sin turns around and bites them? What does this teach us about sin? How does this further prove that we need a Savior?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Can you think of a time **when your sin ever turned around and bit you?** In other words, have you personally ever experienced someone sinning against you in the same way you have sinned against someone else? Through gossip? Backbiting? Jealousy? Stealing? Lying? How did that feel? How can this story encourage you?
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11. JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

Genesis 32,33

After Jacob had stayed many years with his uncle Laban, he was blessed with large herds of animals and many children and servants. He decided that it was time for him to go back to Canaan, though he still feared his brother, Esau, whom he had cheated out of his father's blessing.

As they neared Canaan, Jacob sent many gifts of livestock ahead to Esau to try to gain his favor before they arrived. His messengers returned telling him that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was afraid, and prayed to God, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may bless you,' I am not worthy of all the deeds of steadfast love and faithfulness you have shown me. Please deliver me from the hand of Esau. I am trusting in your promise to make my descendants as many as the sand of the seashore."

When they reached the Jordan River, Jacob sent his wives and children across the river, and he stayed there for the night alone. While he was there, a man wrestled with Jacob throughout the night. At daybreak, when the man did not defeat Jacob he touched his hip so that it was out of joint, and he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Then the man said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed. Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."

As soon as the angel left, Jacob saw Esau. He bowed humbly before him, and Esau received him with mercy and forgiveness, amazed at the way God had blessed Jacob. Jacob acknowledged God's grace toward him in blessing him with children. And Jacob gave Esau him a gift of animals, saying, "To see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably. Please accept this for God has been gracious to me." After this, Jacob and Esau lived peacefully as neighbors for many years.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Talk with your neighbor about a time when you were facing a situation which was very uncertain and you felt fearful and helpless? What did you do?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He blessed Jacob with children and herds of livestock.
 - He worked to change Jacob's heart, to build his faith.

- He appeared to Jacob as a man, then made him lame.
 - He changed Esau's heart toward Jacob and protected him.
 - He established Jacob again in Canaan, the Promised Land.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God had told Jacob that He would bring him back to the Promised Land.
 - God knew where Jacob was and met with him as a man.
 - God knew Jacob's fears and distress.
 - **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - Jacob is amazed to see that he has lived despite seeing God's face. He realized his unworthiness.
 - **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - Jacob prayed, recognizing all the deeds of steadfast love and faithfulness God showed him.
 - God protected Jacob, brought him back though he did not deserve it.
 - God changed Jacob's heart. He saw his own sin, was humbled by it, and depended on God..
 - God injured Jacob's hip to remind him from that time on that he could not depend on his own personal strength, but on God alone.
 - God allowed Jacob to see him and live despite his sinfulness.
 - God changed Esau's heart so that he forgave his brother.
 - When Jacob saw God's face and his life was spared, he was able to look at Esau's face and see forgiveness and love. This was a picture of God's grace toward his chosen people through Christ.
 - **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God fulfilled Jacob's dream by bringing him back to the land, protecting him, and blessing him.
 - He preserved the chosen heir of the promise of Abraham, the one through whose family the promised Savior would come some day.

What do we learn about MAN?

- Jacob realized that he deserved Esau's wrath because he had sinned against him long before.
- Jacob saw how helpless he himself was, how he needed God

What do we learn about how man comes to God?

- God responds to humility and dependence. Jacob saw God's grace was humble before him.
- Jacob trusted God and was able to approach Esau with humility.
- God initiates with man, comes to meet with him, and works in his life to change his heart, as he did by touching Jacob's hip and speaking to him.

General Application Questions:

- **Jacob was weakened by God touching His hip.** What are some specific ways God might "touch someone's hip"? In other words, what are some ways God might weaken us in order to make us cling to him more tightly in trust?
- Jacob understood that he had done wrong against Esau and thus stood humbly before him. What is the risk for us if we take this humble approach before someone we have hurt? How can this story encourage us?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **How has God “touched your hip”?** I.e. **In what ways do you feel weak?** How might God be working in your life to increase your trust in him?
- **What people in your life have you sinned against? From whom do you need to seek forgiveness?** How can the Gospel help make you ready to confess your sin and seek forgiveness from them as well as God?

12. JOSEPH

Genesis 37, 39-50

Loved by His Father, Hated by His Brothers

Jacob, after returning to Canaan, had twelve sons. His youngest-but-one was named Joseph. Jacob loved Joseph more than the other sons. He even gave Joseph a beautiful coat of many colors. When the other sons saw that their father Jacob loved Joseph more than them, they hated Joseph. And when he told them of his dreams that suggested they would some day bow down to him, they hated him even more.

One day Joseph went to the place where his brothers were taking care of the sheep and goats. At first the brothers planned to kill him, but they ended up selling him to some merchants on their way to Egypt. After that they slaughtered a goat and covered the coat with blood, and then took it home to Jacob, who mourned Joseph's death, thinking a wild animal had killed his son.

Enslaved in Egypt

In Egypt Joseph was made a slave owned by a man named Potiphar. Even though Joseph served his master well and brought blessing to his home, he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife of trying to rape her and was thrown into jail. Even in jail God blessed him. He became known as one who could tell the meaning of dreams. When Pharaoh had a troubling dream, God showed Joseph the meaning to give Pharaoh. There would be seven years of good harvest followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh was so pleased that he made Joseph governor over all Egypt so that he could oversee the preparation for the famine. After seven years of plenty there was indeed a famine in Egypt.

Reunited with his Brothers

At that time there was also a famine in Canaan, where Jacob and his sons lived. But there was still grain in Egypt because Joseph had stored grain during the seven years of good harvest. Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, so he sent ten of his sons to get grain. When Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt, Joseph recognized them, but they did not recognize Joseph. They came to Joseph and bowed down before him, because Joseph was the governor of Egypt. After some time for Joseph to secretly test his brothers in several ways, he saw that they were truly sorry for selling him into slavery. Then Joseph tearfully revealed himself to them. He said, "I am Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here. There will be seven years of famine. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve your family and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me lord of Pharaoh's household and ruler of all Egypt."

After this, Joseph sent for his father, Jacob, and all his family. Jacob lived there in Egypt seventeen years before he died and was taken back to Canaan to be buried. After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were afraid Joseph would punish them for what they had

done to him, so they begged him again to forgive them. But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- When have you had a hard time forgiving people who have wronged you? Why should we forgive others?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has authority, in control)**
 - He protected Joseph.
 - He controlled the hearts of Joseph's brothers. What man intended for evil, God intended for good, and he worked it according to his plan.
 - He saved Israel from famine.
 - He fulfilled Joseph's dreams. For example, his brothers did bow down to him.
 - He gave Joseph the power to interpret the dreams of others.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything?**
 - He knew the plans of Joseph's brothers.
 - He knew Joseph would have authority over his father and brothers. He showed him this in the dream of the sun, moon, and eleven stars.
 - He knew the drought would kill the family of Jacob so He provided a way of escape.
 - He knew the meaning of dreams and showed Joseph.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful)**
 - To Jacob's family – saved them from drought.
 - To Joseph's brothers – helped Joseph show them mercy in Egypt.
 - To Joseph himself - protected him from harm in slavery and prison.
 - To us – saved the Israelites, therefore continued to keep his promise of sending a Savior through them, the descendants of Abraham.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises)**
 - He was still keeping His promise to Abraham to bless all the nations through him. He did not allow Abraham's family to die out.
 - He made Joseph's dreams come true and Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams come true.
- **What do we learn about MAN?**
- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - He watched over and protected Joseph in a special way.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment?**
 - Joseph's brothers and Potiphar's wife sinned against him.

- Joseph was boastful as a young man.
- **How does this story show that man is helpless to save himself?**
 - Joseph was helpless to save himself – from his brothers, slavery, jail.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance to please God and be saved?**
 - Joseph entrusted his life to God over and over again. He showed his trust by being obedient. Resisted temptation to adultery, risking self to keep God’s law. Trusted God to judge his brothers. Did not try to avenge them.
- **Do we learn anything else about what faith should look like in our lives, especially when someone sins against us?**
 - See in Joseph’s words to his brothers.
 - **Avoid taking GOD’s PLACE** (“Am I in the place of God?”)
 - He did not hold a grudge and take vengeance into his own hands. He did not assume that he knew what was right and wrong but entrusted it to God.
 - He knew that he himself was a sinner, deserving God’s wrath. Had no right to judge.
 - **Take GOD’S VIEW** (“You intended for evil, God intended for good, the saving of . . .”)
 - He trusted that God is good even though life was hard. That God was working things out that he could not see.
 - Came to see that no one, even his brothers, could ruin his life, because of God.
 - **Show GOD’s LOVE** – loving enemies,
 - Only possible because 1) Joseph was not trying to be in God’s place (humble), 2) was taking God’s view (confident in God) . Humility makes us realize we are not better or more deserving than other sinners. Confidence that God is working for good helps us see things differently and patiently. Joseph knew God loved him thought he did not deserve it. He knew he had been prideful.
 - We are able to love our enemies because of what Jesus did for us. He took ultimate suffering willingly, refused to stay in God’s chair (though He WAS God), took God’s view of working good, did it all for me.
- **What are some ways we try to put ourselves in the place of God?**
 - By trying to be our own moral authority, deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong.
 - By looking to other people to meet our deepest needs.
 - Through deep worry (doubting that God really has your best in mind).
 - Through holding a grudge (Must remember that vengeance is God’s. If we don’t forgive, we become evil ourselves.)
 - “Fastest way to become like Satan is to try to be God.”
 - “Fastest way to become like God is to refuse to be God.”

MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS about FORGIVENESS:

- **Where did Joseph’s problem start with his brothers? Why?**
 - Jealousy. He was his father’s favorite. His dreams revealed Joseph’s pride. He had the beautiful coat showing he was more loved because he was from the favorite wife, Rachel.
- **How did the brothers hurt Joseph?**
 - Plotted against him
 - Sold into slavery
 - Lied to father about his death. Robbed him of relationship with father for many years
 - Suffered slavery under Potiphar, false treatment by Potiphar’s wife; time in jail for years

- **What reasons would there be for Joseph to NOT forgive his brothers? Did they deserve forgiveness?**
 - They had planned to kill him.
 - They had robbed him of his family.
 - They stole the gifts he was given. Were jealous of him.
 - He had not deserved such ill treatment.
 - He was even coming to help them out at the time they captured him.
- **How was Joseph able to forgive his brothers?**
 - He saw their remorse and responded with mercy.
 - He knew that God had orchestrated everything. Was confident in God's sovereignty and his plan to save lives, including his own. But he knew he was under God's mercy.
 - He was able to keep trusting in God through all the ups and downs of life.
 - God had used many trials to grow his faith.
 - By God's grace he did not become more proud, but was humbled by God's hand in his life. He remembered how God had saved him..
 - Instead of being bitter over his brothers' offenses, he rejoiced in all God's mercies.
 - Joseph, (unlike Jonah (Jonah 4)), remembers all of God's mercies for him. This helps him to really love his brothers and truly forgive them.
- **Was Joseph's forgiveness sincere?**
 - Yes, even forgave his brother after his father was gone.
 - Why would brothers' doubt after father died?
 - Respect for father might have been their protection.
 - Forgiveness is not built on a person, but on God.
- **How did Joseph forgive his brothers? Did it cost him anything to forgive them?**
 - He refused to count their sins against them. He refused to punish them as he could have. It cost him because he took the impact of their sin on himself alone.
- **How did Joseph's willingness to forgive become a blessing to all of his family and even to the world?**
 - Through it God preserved the family of promise, Abraham's seed, the family through whom the whole world would be blessed by the Promised Savior.

General Application Questions:

- Joseph refused to put himself in the place of God. What are some practical ways that we tend to try to **put ourselves in the place of God instead of truly forgiving?**
- Joseph was able to "take God's view." Can someone briefly tell us of a hard time in your life where you can look back and see that God is in control and has worked some of your hardships out for obvious good?
- Why is it so hard to take God's view or trust God for the long term instead of reacting out of anger or bitterness in the moment of being hurt?
- What sins has God forgiven us of? How can remembering that help us to forgive?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **Share a time when someone hurt you and you were tempted to put yourself in the place of God?**
- **What is a specific challenge in your life now where it is hard to believe God is working,** where things don't seem fair or make sense? How can taking God's view (i.e. trusting that He is in control and working things out for good) help you meet these challenges?
- Have you been living through a **long, painful hurt caused by someone else?** How has God been merciful to you? How should this help you to forgive? How can a deeper faith in God's sovereignty and his love for you help you to let go of bitterness and **forgive?**

13. MOSES' BIRTH AND FLIGHT

Exodus 1 & 2

Joseph died and over the next 400 years Jacob's family grew tremendously and were called the people of Israel. They were also called Hebrews. Now there rose up a new king in Egypt who never knew Joseph. When he saw that the people of Israel were so many, he became afraid, and he made them into slaves. He feared they would turn on the Egyptians and defeat them so he even ordered that every baby boy born in Israel be killed at birth. But the Hebrew midwives refused to obey Pharaoh's command. God protected them, and the Hebrews continued to increase in number.

Now there was a family of Israel from the clan of Levi who had a beautiful baby boy. They hid him for three months, but finally they put the baby in a tiny boat and put the boat in the Nile River. Miriam, the older sister of the baby boy, stayed hidden nearby to watch what might happen to her little brother.

Then the daughter of the king of Egypt came to the Nile River with her friends, and she saw the baby and took him as her own son and named him Moses. Miriam came to the daughter of the king and asked, "Do you want me to find an Israelite woman to nurse the baby for you?" She replied, "Yes, find me a woman and I will pay her to nurse the child for me." So Moses was given back to his own mother to nurse him. When the child grew older, his mother took him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So Moses grew up in the house of the king of Egypt.

When Moses became a man, one day he went out among his people, Israel. There he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite man. Moses looked this way and that way and saw no one. So he killed the Egyptian and hid his body. But the thing became known and Moses ran away into the desert.

But God saw the suffering of His people, Israel, and He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you tell of a time when you were helpless to fix a problem and God helped you out?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He protected baby Moses from the murdering king and from drowning, mosquitoes, or wild beasts.
 - He planned to redeem his people from slavery. The plan began with choosing Moses from the clan of Levi.

- He led the daughter of Pharaoh to bathe in Nile at very time baby Moses was there in order to save him.
 - Though Pharaoh's daughter knew the child was Israelite, God led her to care for him and not kill him.
 - He placed Moses in the palace of Pharaoh which could help him later in dealing with Pharaoh.
 - He prepared Moses' background so he had a good education, yet he allowed him to be raised in early years by his mother so that he was still an Israelite.
 - Sent Moses to the desert for more preparation to lead God's people.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He knew that the way to redeem his people was through Moses, and he knew how to save him.
 - He knew plans of Pharaoh's daughter to bathe at a certain time.
 - He knew the baby was special and needed protection as well as good education.
 - God knew Moses needed time in the desert to prepare him to lead His people.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He separated Moses from pagan Egyptians at the right time.
 - He was working to separate His people from the Egyptians.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He helped Moses' family to protect baby for three months before he was put in river.
 - He led Pharaoh's daughter, even though she knew the child to be Israelite, to take care of him, not kill him.
 - He protected Moses even after he killed Egyptian.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He made Israel a large nation.
 - He continued keeping his promise to deliver his people from Egypt. He had promised earlier to Abraham AND to Jacob to deliver the people from slavery after four hundred years.
 - He was faithful to protect Israelites despite the wicked order of Pharaoh.
 - Had promised Abraham to make his descendants many and he kept that promise despite slavery.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - God protected Moses and the Israelites despite persecution.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - The Egyptians were evil toward Israelites, persecuting them, trying to kill the babies.
 - Moses, in his anger, committed murder himself and tried to hide it.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - Moses' family tried to save him, but they were helpless in the end. God had to provide a way.
 - Moses tried to help his people by killing the slave master, but failed. His efforts were useless.
 - The people in slavery were helpless.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- It is in God's hands alone because man cannot save himself. He must follow God's plan alone.

- Moses' mother trusted God to do his will for her baby.

General Application Questions:

- What are some things that make us slaves today? What can we learn from this story to help us?
- The Hebrew midwives disobeyed the orders of the king. Is there ever a time when it would be right to break the law or disobey an authority figure?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What particular challenge do you have in your life where you need God's help? How do you feel trapped like a slave in Egypt? How can this story help you?** How can it help you to know that God knows and cares about everything, including the very situation you are in now?
-

14. GOD CALLS MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH

Exodus 3 & 4

Moses was forty years old when he ran away from Egypt. He lived in the desert for forty more years and married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian.

One day, he was herding his father-in-law's sheep near Mt. Sinai, and the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So he went over to see this strange sight, and the Lord called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I have seen the misery of my people in slavery in Egypt. I now plan to rescue them and bring them back to the land of the Canaanites, an abundant land flowing with milk and honey. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. And he began arguing with Him. He said, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt? What if the Israelites do not believe me? And what if they ask who it is that sent me? What is his name?"

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "I will be with you. As a sign that I have indeed sent you, I will bring you all back to this mountain to worship me after I've brought the people out of Egypt."

And God gave Moses two other signs to show the people to help them believe what he said. He said to Moses, "Throw down your shepherd's staff." Moses did, and it became a snake! Then God said, "Now pick it up by the tail." When Moses picked it up, it became a staff again. God then told him to put his hand inside his robe. When he pulled it out, it was covered with leprosy, but when he put it back again it was healed. Then God said, "You will show to them these signs so they will believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, has appeared to you."

God also promised to send Moses' brother Aaron with him. So Moses agreed and went back to Egypt.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you think of a time when you felt overwhelmed with God's greatness or holiness? How did that make you feel?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (authority, in control)**
 - He appeared as a flame of fire but did NOT burn up the bush.
 - He gave Moses powerful signs, turning a staff into snake, making his hand leprous.
 - He had authority to command Moses and the Israelites. Moses had to obey.
 - His name, “I am who I am,” tells us that God needs no one else. He exists on his own and has always been. He is above all.

- **How does this story show that God knows everything?**
 - He knew the condition of his people in Egypt.
 - He knew Moses was the right leader even when a child. He prepared him through life in the palace and the desert.
 - He knew how He planned to rescue the Israelites.
 - He knew the Israelites would return to worship Him at Mt. Sinai.

- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, payment for sin)**
 - God appeared to Moses as a flame of fire.
 - He said to Moses, “Come no closer. Remove sandals because it is holy ground.”
 - His name, “I am who I am,” tells us that He is above and separate from sinful man.

- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind)**
 - He saw the misery of His people, and planned to rescue them, and lead them to the Promised Land.
 - He spoke to Moses. He appeared to Moses and did not hurt him despite his sinfulness.
 - He used a sinful man like Moses to do his will.
 - He planned to save the Israelites from slavery in order to keep His promise to bless all the nations through them. He did not allow Moses to be destroyed in Egypt.
 - He protected Moses from the snake he picked up.

- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He planned to save Israelites to keep His promise to bless all the nations through them. He did not allow them to be destroyed in Egypt.
 - He told Moses that His people would come back and worship at Mt. Sinai.
 - He promised to be with Moses and was patient with his doubts.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - He cared about His chosen people and planned to rescue and bless them.
 - Planned to save & bless.

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God’s just punishment for his sin?**
 - Moses had to remove his shoes and remain at a distance because man is not holy enough to be in God’s presence.

- **How does this story show that man is helpless to save himself?**
 - The Israelites could not save themselves from slavery.
 -

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - This was the only way for Israel to be redeemed from slavery. Only God's way.
 - Moses had to approach God as he was commanded.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to be saved?**
 - Moses knew he was a sinner standing in the presence of holy God. He hid his face, but believed and repented.
 - God demanded faith from Moses in order to obey God's difficult call on his life.

General Application Question:

- Moses was changed when he met face to face with God in all of His holiness. How can someone today get a greater understanding of how completely holy God is? Looking at creation? Considering God's laws?
- You can **be in awe** because of God's holiness **or be humbled** by your own sinfulness in comparison to God's holy demands. How can this **help you in your relationship with God?**
 - It shows you how much you need a Savior and drives you to Him in repentance.

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- What should you personally do so that you can consider God's holiness and your own sinfulness more fully? What could God show you? How should you respond?
 - Are you going through some kind of **suffering** or feeling like you are in a **spiritual desert**? **What might God be preparing you for?**
 - **What do you believe that God is calling you to do** which could be difficult or challenging? What would it look like for you to trust God in this area?
-

15. THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES ON EGYPT

Exodus 7-11

After Moses and his brother Aaron met with the elders of Israel, they went to Pharaoh and said, "The God of Israel says, 'Let my people go into the desert to hold a feast for me'"

But Pharaoh said, "Who is this Lord? I don't know Him, and I won't let them go. Why are you taking the people away from their work? Go away." Pharaoh was angry so he made their work a lot harder. So they cried out to Moses.

So Moses prayed to God, and God said, "Go tell the Israelites, 'I've heard your cries, and I will deliver you from the Egyptians. I'll make you my own people, and I'll bring you to the land I promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'"

Then Moses and Aaron went back to Pharaoh, and the contest between the king of Egypt and the God of Israel began. First, Aaron showed the sign of the staff turning into a snake. But Pharaoh did not believe, and he refused to let the children of Israel go. Then the plagues began. Moses stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and all the rivers and canals and ponds turned to blood. Even the water in the water jars turned to blood. All the fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad no one could drink from it. But God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he refused.

So God sent a plague of frogs all over the land, and Pharaoh called Moses. "Pray to the Lord to take these frogs away and I'll let them go." So Moses did. But then Pharaoh changed his mind.

Then Aaron stretched out his rod, and all the dust of Egypt turned into a plague of gnats. The magicians, who had imitated some of the earlier signs, could not do this sign, and they said, "This is the finger of God!" But Pharaoh did not listen.

God then sent the next six plagues on the Egyptians, but the Israelites were not touched by the plagues at all. These plagues were flies, livestock diseases, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. Each time Pharaoh would say "yes" when the plague came, but refuse to let them go after it went away.

So God told Moses, "I have hardened Pharaoh's heart to punish the Egyptians for their many false gods. I'm doing these signs so you will tell your children and grandchildren and so you will know that I am the Lord. Now I will bring one more plague on Egypt, and then Pharaoh will drive you out completely."

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What makes our hearts hard to God? How can small sins lead us to larger ones?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show us God's POWER? (Authority, Sovereignty, Needs No One Else)**
 - He purposed to show His glory to Egyptians and to Israel.
 - He had power over nature. He brought all the plagues. (Mention each one. Each plague reflected one of the Egyptians' false gods, showed how God was real and these gods were not.)
 - He controlled Pharaoh's hard heart by hardening it more.
- **How does this story show us that God is all knowing?**
 - He knew Pharaoh's heart, and what he would do, and how God would be glorified in it all.
- **How does this story show us God's holiness? (Righteousness, Hates Sin, Must Judge or Punish Sin with Death)**
 - He hated the idolatry of Egyptians. He punished Pharaoh and the Egyptians.
 - Sin brought death into Egypt, as well as all the other plagues.
- **How does this story show us God's grace? (Mercy, Communicates with Man, Kindness, Goodness)**
 - He saved the Israelites, despite their sin.
 - He communicated with Israel through Moses.
 - He gave Egypt many chances to repent.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness? (Does not change, keeps his promises)**
 - God is continuing to keep his promise to bring a Savior to the world through Israel.
 - He is also keeping His promise to Abraham to bring his descendants out of slavery after 400 years, and to bring them out with great wealth.
 - He is keeping his promise to Moses to use him to deliver His people.

What can we learn about man from this story?

- Man is sinful and stubborn. Pharaoh's heart was hard. Egyptians worshiped false gods.
- **What idols do people worship today?**
 - Idols today may be something besides a statue or part of physical creation. An idol can be anything in which you are placing your hope instead of Christ, such as education, or money, or position or reputation or security or pleasure or sex. Even believers at times have idols in their lives that distract them from the true God.

General Application Questions:

- God was punishing the Egyptians for worshiping false gods. **What are some of the false gods people worship today** in your community? Worshiping these false gods does not just mean bowing down before them. **How else do we worship or depend on such false gods?**

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What is one of the idols or falso gods in your life today that you sometimes depend on instead of God?** How is this idol preventing you from trusting God or from growing in Christ?
 - God protected the Israelites from the plagues that hurt the Egyptians. In what area of your life is God asking you personally to **patiently trust him more?**
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16. THE PASSOVER

Exodus 12

Hardening Pharaoh's Heart / One Final Plague

After the first nine plagues, God told Moses, "I have hardened Pharaoh's heart to punish the Egyptians for their many gods. I'm doing these signs so you will tell your children and grandchildren and so you will know that I am the Lord. Now I'll bring one more plague on Egypt, and then Pharaoh will drive you out completely.

God's Directions

"Now listen carefully:

- 1) Each family (or two families together if they are small) must take a one-year-old male sheep or goat. It has to be perfect, not sick or lame. Slaughter it just as it gets dark.
- 2) Dip some hyssop in the blood and splash it along both sides and above the door of the house where you will eat the lamb. Then stay inside the house with the sign of the blood until morning.
- 3) Roast the meat and eat it all. Don't leave any leftovers and don't break any of the bones. Eat it with bitter herbs and flat bread without yeast. And eat the meal quickly, wearing traveling clothes.

"That night I will pass through Egypt and kill every firstborn to punish the Egyptians for worshiping false gods. But the blood will be a sign for you. When I see the blood around the doors, I will pass over you. And you must celebrate this feast every year. When your child asks, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'On this day, the Lord brought us out of slavery in Egypt.'"

Sacrificing the Lamb / Deliverance

So the people sacrificed the animals, and the blood poured out, and they put the blood around the door. At midnight God passed through Egypt and killed every firstborn---from Pharaoh's palace down to the prisoner in the dungeon---and every firstborn animal too. But when God saw the blood of the sacrifice of the perfect lamb on the doors of the children of Israel, He passed over them. All was quiet where the Israelites were. Not even a dog was barking. But in the places where the Egyptians lived, wails of sorrow broke the stillness of the night.

It was still dark when Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron. He said, "Take everything you have and leave!" And their Egyptian neighbors said, "Yes, leave, or we'll all die!" And they gave the Israelites their gold and silver jewelry and rich clothing, just as God told Moses.... and Abraham long before!

That day, God delivered His people from the land of Egypt...about 600,000 men plus the women and children and all of their livestock.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What do you remember learning about justification from the story of Abraham?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about God?

- **How does this story show God's POWER? (Authority, Sovereignty, Needs No One Else)**
 - He purposed to show His glory to Egyptians and to Israel.
 - He had power over nature – brought plagues.
 - He controlled Pharaoh's hard heart. Hardened it more.
 - He sent the angel of death. He had power to kill all that He wanted and to pass over all that He wanted.
- **How does this story show God's KNOWLEDGE?**
 - He knew Pharaoh's heart, and what he would do, and how God would be glorified in it all.
 - He knew where the blood of the lamb was painted and whom to pass over.
 - He knew how to remind the Israelites for years to come about His delivering them from slavery. (Passover feast)
- **How does this story show God's HOLINESS? (Righteousness, Hates Sin, Must Judge or Punish Sin with Death)**
 - He hated the idolatry of Egyptians and punished Pharaoh.
 - Sin brought death into Egypt, as well as all the other plagues.
 - The only way of salvation was through a substitute sacrifice. The blood of the lamb painted on the door.
 - The sacrificial lamb had to be perfect, without blemish.
 - Blood had to be shed.
 - They had to do everything exactly. Should not break bones.
 - God's way – hiding behind the blood on the door – was the only way to live.
 - Even the Israelites, because they were sinners, would have died had they remained outside and not behind the blood of the lamb.
- **How does this story show God's GRACE? (Mercy, Communicates with Man, Kindness, Goodness)**
 - God saved the Israelites, despite their sin.
 - He saved those who believed Him by staying behind the blood of the lamb.
 - He communicated with Israel through Moses.
 - He gave Egypt many of chances to repent.
- **How does this story show God's FAITHFULNESS? (Unchanging, keeps His promises)**
 - He was continuing his plan to fulfill His promise to bring a Savior to the world through Israel.
 - He was keeping promise to Abraham to bring his descendants out of slavery after 400 years, and to bring them out with great wealth.
 - He was keeping His promise to Moses to use him to deliver His people.
 - He kept His promise to save those hiding behind the blood that they would live.
 - He kept promise to punish those not behind the blood.

What can we learn about man from this story?

- Man is sinful and stubborn. Pharaoh's heart was hard. Egyptians worshiped false gods.

- o Man cannot save himself. The Israelites were helpless to save their first born from the angel of death.

What do we learn from this story about how man comes to God?

- **Man must come to God in exactly God's own way. A man cannot make his own way. Only God can make a way; only He can provide a suitable sacrifice. How can we see this truth displayed in this story?**
 - o The Israelites could only be saved by trusting what God told them by obeying his commands.
 - o They had to sacrifice the unblemished lamb as commanded by God and shed its blood.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith in order to please God.**
 - o They had to trust God and remain inside the house.
- **In what other places in our previous stories have we seen that the blood of an animal saved the life of a person? What do we call that animal?**
 - o Adam and Eve – clothes; the covenant with Noah, Abraham and Isaac – ram in the thicket.
 - o We call that animal a substitute sacrifice. The animal sheds its blood, or loses its life in place of the person involved.
- **How is the lamb a TYPE or PICTURE of Christ? In other words, how does it point to or make us think of Jesus Christ?**
 - o He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29) He is the only suitable or effective substitute for sinful man.
 - o Just as the blood of the lamb provided a covering for the Israelites, so Jesus' blood provides a covering for us. When God looks at us, rather than seeing our sin, he sees Christ's perfect righteousness. So we trust in Christ's righteousness. Our faith is counted as righteousness.
 - o 2 Corinthians 5:21 – "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."
- **Example: The Great Exchange – 2 books covers. What Christ does for us.**
 - o Book 1 – lists all my deeds – good and bad
 - o Book 2 – lists all Jesus' deeds – but His are all good and beautiful and holy.
 - o Justification – is like 1) shifting my name from my book and putting it on Jesus' book, so that God grants me getting credit for all His righteousness, and 2) shifting Jesus' name to my book so that He takes the responsibility for all my sin and pays for it with His blood shed on the cross. So when we have put our trust in Jesus, when God looks at us he does not see our sin or our weak efforts to make ourselves acceptable. He sees that we are covered with the blood of Christ. God only sees all the goodness of Christ! We have been credited with His righteousness.
- **How can understanding our justification help us to live our lives as believers?**
 - o Too often we tend to try to build our own righteousness, to trust in ourselves rather than in Christ for a good reputation. We try so hard to do good deeds, to be committed to the church, to avoid certain sins, to use Christian sounding language, to be more educated, etc. These are all good things but they cannot make us righteous in God's eyes. When we feel unimportant, even we believers sometimes strive to make ourselves important instead of rejoicing in the importance of being a child of God!
 - o Remembering what the Gospel does for us, how it makes us God's special children, can free us up from this endless hopeless striving to be perfect. It leads to joy and peace and a growing desire to live for God!

General Application Questions:

- The blood of the substitute lamb painted on the doorposts provided a covering for the sinfulness of the Israelites so that they could be saved from the angel of death. So often even we Christians **try to create our own sense of righteousness, to hide our sin behind our own efforts at goodness.** What are some of the ways we try to do that? What does this story teach us about living our daily lives?
 - We try to cover our sins and failures by trying to obey all the teachings of the church, by being committed, or by thinking ourselves better than other people.
 - We first need to accept the salvation that God offers by hiding by faith behind the blood of the perfect lamb, Jesus Christ.
 - And throughout our lives when we sin we need to continue running to Him in repentance, trusting that His blood still covers us and makes us right before God.
- **Think about the Lord's Supper.** It points to what Christ did for you, just as the Passover reminded the Israelites of God's deliverance from Egypt. How can the Lord's Supper strengthen your faith? What should it remind you of about Jesus? Is there a way that we can make the Lord's Supper more meaningful in our churches?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What is one way that you personally try to create your own righteousness** or to make yourself feel good about yourself? Take time now to confess this sin to God and another brother or sister in Christ and renew your trust in Christ alone.
 - The Israelites, though they were sinners, were saved from the angel of death by **hiding behind the blood of the lamb.** Jesus is our perfect lamb. Are you hiding your sinful self behind the blood of the Lamb of God? Are you ready to repent of your sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone as your Savior? **Who do you know that needs to hear this message of Good News?** Tell your group and pray for that person.
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17. CROSSING THE RED SEA Exodus 13:17-14:31

Walking through the Desert / Trapped!

After God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt, instead of going the closest way to Canaan, He led them through the desert to the Red Sea. During the day, God went before them in a pillar of cloud and at night in a pillar of fire to give them light to see.

But when Pharaoh heard that they had left, he changed his mind again. "What have we done? We've let all our slaves go free!" So Pharaoh took his army and horsemen and chariots and chased after the Israelites. They caught up with them, trapping them beside the Red Sea. They could not escape.

When the people saw the Egyptians, they were terrified and cried out, "Moses, why did you bring us out in the desert to die? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

Stand Firm! Divide the Sea and Cross

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still." And the Lord spoke to Moses and said, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to move ahead! Lift up your staff out over the sea to divide the waters so that the people can go across on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will follow after you, and I will gain glory for myself through them, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." At this time the Lord moved behind them in the pillar of cloud to protect them from the Egyptian army. All night the cloud caused darkness for the Egyptians and light for the Israelites. And Moses stretched out his staff, and God drove the sea back with a strong wind. The waters divided, and the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground with a wall of water on their right and on their left. Then all Pharaoh's horses and chariots chased after them into the sea.

Deliverance

When the night was almost over, God looked down from the cloud on the Egyptian army, and He threw it into confusion. He made their chariot wheels jam so that it was hard for them to drive. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from those Israelites. The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt!"

Then God said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the water flows back over the Egyptians." Then the sea returned and swept them away and covered everything. Not even one of them escaped. That day God saved Israel from the Egyptians. Early the next morning they saw the Egyptians lying dead all along the shore. And when they saw the great power God had displayed, they feared Him and trusted Him. And they trusted in His servant, Moses, too.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- When have you been trapped needing a way of escape? How did you escape?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - God purposely led Israelites to a place where they could not save themselves.
 - God controlled the wind and waves and divided the sea.
 - He made the Egyptians follow the Israelites into the sea so that by destroying them He would gain glory for Himself and that Egyptians would know that “I am the Lord.”
 - He threw the Egyptians into confusion and made their chariot wheels fall off.
 - Egyptians said, “The Lord is fighting for them.” They did indeed see that He was the Lord.
 - God caused Israelites to fear and trust Him and to trust His servant Moses.
 - God saved his chosen people even though they also were sinners.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew what would happen to the Egyptians and knew they would follow the Israelites into the sea.
 - He knew the Egyptians would be destroyed and that they would know He is the Lord.
 - God knew He would save the Israelites and they would trust Him and Moses.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - The pillar of cloud separated Israelites from pagan Egyptians.
 - Punished the Egyptians for their idolatry and sin against the Israelites.
 - He rebuked them for doubt and encouraged them to push ahead.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - Israelites were sinners, even doubted God, but God saved them anyway in their helpless situation.
 - He continued to preserve the promise to bring a Savior through the Israelites for the whole world
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God had told Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years and then be brought back to Canaan. God was fulfilling this promise.
 - God said that Egyptians would follow them into the sea, and they did.
 - Egyptians said, “The Lord is fighting for them.” They did see that He was the Lord.
 - God had told Abraham that he would bless him, give him land of Canaan, make him a great nation, and curse those who curse him. All nations would be blessed through his descendants. God was keeping all of these.
 - Preserved the promise to bring a Savior through the Israelites for the whole world.

What do we learn about man from this story?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - Pharaoh was hard hearted, the Egyptians were full of hatred and were idol worshippers .
 - The Israelites complained and doubted, even though they had seen God do amazing things in the plagues and in bringing them out of Egypt.
 - They had cried out, "Leave us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians!" This is the prayer of rebels to God. "Leave us alone so we run our own lives!"
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - They were trapped! The sea was ahead, the mountains on the side, and the Egyptians behind.
 - They had an attitude of helplessness.
- **How does this story show that man is special to God?**
 - God showed special care for his people. He had a purpose for them.

What do we learn in this story about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - Salvation can only be provided by God.
 - "Be still and you will see the deliverance of the Lord." What does God mean when he says to BE STILL?
 - Have faith, quit striving and crying and complaining. Be still in heart and body.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved? In other words, what does it teach about what faith could look like in people's lives?**
 - "Let the Lord fight for you!" "Be still and see the deliverance of the Lord!" God is calling them to faith.
 - In the end, they trusted and feared God.
 - What does it mean to fear the Lord?
 - **How can you both "be still" AND "get moving" at the same time? What does that tell us about faith?**
 - They trusted God's servant and trusted God's plan and path for salvation through Moses.

General Application Questions:

- **How do people today tend to act like the Israelites in this story?** What challenges make it easy for people to forget God's blessings and begin complaining and doubting his care?
- **What might it mean for someone who is worried to "be still" and stand firm, waiting for God?** How might they have an attitude of being still while continuing to move forward?

Possible Personal Application Questions: (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What challenge (or dark cloud) do you have in your life now where you are striving to find an answer or crying and complaining about it?** How is this an opportunity instead to trust God? **What would it be like for you to "be still" and stand firm,** waiting to see what deliverance God has for you?
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18. MT. SINAI, TEN COMMANDMENTS

Exodus 19, 20, 24, 33, 34

God's Promises to His Covenant People

Two months after the children of Israel left Egypt, they camped in front of Mount Sinai. God told Moses to say to the Israelites, "You saw for yourselves how I delivered you from Egypt. If you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then, out of all the nations, you will be My treasured possession. You will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

And when Moses told the people, they responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said."

Purification and Power

Then God said, "Tell the people to purify themselves for two days before I come on the third day. Don't let anyone or any animal touch the mountain. If they do, they'll die because this is holy ground." The people obeyed God, and on the third day a thick cloud covered the mountain. There was thunder and lightning and a deafening noise, like a blast from a trumpet. Smoke boiled up from the mountain like it was coming out of a furnace, and the whole mountain shook. All the Israelites trembled in fear.

Ten Commandments

Then Moses went up the mountain, and God gave him the Ten Commandments. He said:

- 1) I AM the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.
- 2) Do not make for yourself any kind of idol. Do not bow down to them or worship them. I am a jealous god, and I will punish you and your children if you do this.
- 3) Do not use My name in vain.
- 4) Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy and by resting.
- 5) Honor your father and your mother.
- 6) Do not commit murder.
- 7) Do not commit adultery.
- 8) Do not steal.
- 9) Do not lie.
- 10) Do not covet what your neighbor has, not his wife, his servants, his livestock, or anything else.

God also gave them many other laws that were specifically made to help Israel function as a nation under God.

The People's Response

After all of this, the people were shaking with fear. Moses said to them, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning as He leads you into the Promised Land. When you come there, you must not make a covenant with the Canaanites or their gods or live with them because they will cause you to sin against me.”

The next morning Moses built an altar at the foot of the mountain and offered sacrifices to God so that the blood poured out. Then Moses and his assistant, Joshua, went back up the mountain, and God gave Moses two copies of the covenant between Himself and Israel written in stone. The cloud covered the mountain and whenever the people looked up, they saw the glory of God shining like a fire above them.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What is the purpose of laws in general?
- What is the purpose of God’s law?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He came in a cloud above them. The mountain shook and smoked with lightning and thunder.
 - The Israelites shook in fear.
 - He restrained people from touching the mountain, and the people obeyed out of fear.
 - He made the law. He was their Creator. So they belonged to Him. He was their Lord.
 - He demanded obedience.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He remembered His promises to them, and how He had acted on their behalf.
 - Through the Ten Commandments He gave people wisdom in how to relate to God and to each other.
 - God knew man’s heart and how he was most likely to sin.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - The people had to be consecrated, purified, in order to stand before God.
 - They must not touch the mountain or they would be put to death. Man is separated from God by his sin. He cannot touch God on his own, nor can holy God be in contact with sinful man.
 - Mountain was covered by a thick cloud symbolizing God’s presence in special way. He could not show Himself fully. God was with them in the thunder, the lightening, the shaking ground.
 - The people responded in awe and fear. They wanted Moses to be a mediator between them and God.
 - The law showed that there is right and wrong, sin and righteousness. And God was the judge.
 - The law was given to help keep the Israelites from sinning, to help them follow God’s holy example and will.

- God commanded them to not mix with the Canaanites, to covenant or live with them or turn to their gods. There was the need to be a separate, holy nation, not to allow themselves to be influenced by pagans.
- Gave them the law, which was holy, even though He knew they would not fulfil it perfectly.
- Any OT sacrifice tells us that 1) God is holy, 2) we are sinners, 3) we cannot save ourselves, 4) that there must be a mediator, a substitute, a sacrifice of blood for us to be saved. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. (Hebrews 9:22).
- Immediately after giving the law, we see them offer a sacrifice because they cannot keep the law! Only the substitute will be enough to atone for their sin.
- Cloud covered the mountain, and they saw the glory of God shining above them.
- God allows “no other gods,” shows that God cannot share his glory or his worship.
- God is a jealous god, separate, and holy. He cannot share His glory with others. We cannot put anything above God. He deserves our undivided worship.
- His name is holy, not to be used disrespectfully.
- He wants us to keep the Sabbath holy, to rest, to quit trying to earn my own salvation.
 - Sabbath means to rest from trying to fix your own problems. To remind us of our dependence on God. To remind the Israelites that they ultimately put their rest in the Savior who is coming.
- He wants us to relate to other people in a holy way. Commandments 5 – 10.
 - Respect, value of human life, sexual purity, truthfulness, contentment
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God protected people from death by warning them to not touch the mountain.
 - God came to talk with Moses, to communicate with us.
 - The sacrifice shows that God has provided a way through the bloody substitute to come to him.
 - Israel would be a treasured possession, kingdom of priests, who could relate God to other people in the world.
 - God knew that the Israelites could not obey the law, but he gave it to help them see their sin and their need for a Savior. They could not save themselves through their own law keeping.
 - The law is grace because it shows us our sin so that we turn to a Savior.
 - Law is our tutor, points us to Christ. (Romans 3:19)
 - Despite their sin, God still promises to return them to Canaan.
 - The law shows us how to follow God, how to obey Him.
 - If we follow his good law, then we will be blessed. Blessing is found in obedience to the law, which is motivated by faith.
 - God revealed himself, yet in a way that would not destroy them.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He reminds them, “I am the Lord who delivered you from Egypt.”
 - He promises to make them His treasured possession.
 - He promises blessing if they obey, cursing if they disobey.
 - He promises to return them to Canaan, just as he had promised Abraham.

What do we learn from this story about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - We see this in all God’s acts of grace toward them.

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - They needed to be purified to stand before God.
 - They needed the guidance of the law to relate rightly to God and to one another.
 - Men could not touch the mountain because of their sin even after purification for three days.
 - The law could not take sin away from their hearts.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - They felt helpless. They cried out to Moses to speak to God for them. They were not able in themselves to fully obey the law.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - Man can only come to God through a sacrifice.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - God gave them the law so that they could admit their sinfulness and their inability to save themselves.
 - Man must trust in the substitute, the Savior who would come, who was symbolized in the animal sacrifice.
 - He had to express his faith through obedience to the law.

General Application Questions:

- What are some ways that people today break God's law? What about Christians? How do we commit murder or adultery in our hearts? How do we bear false witness with our words or with our silence? How do we dishonor our parents? What kind of things do we covet?
- What are some situations in which we can get a deeper sense of God's awesome, fearful holiness? How should it make us feel about our sin? How should we respond to God in such a situation?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Can you think of a situation where **you experienced the awesome, fearful holiness of God?** How have you been guilty of making idols out of any thing or person in your life? What has this story taught you about how God views such idolatry in your life?
 - **How have you broken the ten commandments recently?** (Yes, you have!) How have you committed **murder in your heart?** For example: 1) Can you think of a specific relationship now where you are struggling with hating someone? What should this realization teach you? How should you respond? 2) How have you committed **adultery in your heart?** 3) What other ways have you broken the commandments that you never thought of before because the sin was mostly in your heart? (Lying? Coveting? Disrespecting your parents?) **How can realizing how deep your sin is help you move closer to God?**
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19. THE GOLDEN CALF

Exodus 32

After God had spoken the Ten Commandments to all the people, and they had agreed to obey everything, Moses went to the top of the mountain to talk to God. God made two stone tablets, and, with his own finger, carved the Ten Commandments onto the tablets. Moses was on the mountain for forty days.

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took them and made an idol cast in the shape of a calf. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." Then they began to sing and dance and worship that golden calf.

On top of the mountain, God had finished writing the Ten Commandments, and He said to Moses, "The people have already turned away from me. Now leave me alone so that I may destroy them!" But Moses pleaded with God to remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to not destroy His people.

So Moses went down the mountain. When he saw the people singing and dancing and worshiping the golden calf, he was very angry. Moses threw down the stone tablets, and they broke into pieces. Then he called with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the true God, come to me!" Out of the twelve tribes of Israel, only the tribe of Levi came to him. Moses told them, "Each one of you take your sword and kill those worshiping the golden calf!" Many people died that day, and the rest of Israel repented of their sin.

Because he had broken the stone tablets, Moses went back up the mountain to God. And God made Moses to carve out more tablets of stone, and he put the Ten Commandments onto them. These were the tablets that Moses put into the Ark of the Covenant.

After many days at Mt. Sinai, God led Israel toward the Promised Land.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you remember a time in your life when you were waiting for something good but became impatient and made a bad choice?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He had authority to give commandments to Moses and people.
 - He was able to write on the stones.

- He had power to maintain Moses on mountain for forty days.
- Authority to order the destruction of the rebellious people.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He was with Moses, but at the same time he was with the people and knew they had rebelled against him. God is everywhere.
 - He knew that they needed the law to guide them and to show them their sin.
 - He knew Moses broke the tablets and to make another.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He was angered by the people's sin and judged the people for turning against Him.
 - People died. Death is the penalty for sin. Some people repented.
 - He gave them the law. There is right and wrong, and God determines what it is.
 - He blessed those who stood up for his holiness, who were separate. He was with them.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He spared the Levites and Moses, even though they were also sinners.
 - He did not to destroy his people completely.
 - He had mercy on all those who repented and even on Aaron, even though he helped the people to rebel.
 - He communicated with Moses. Gracious enough to listen to Moses' prayer.
 - He gave a second set of the Ten Commandments to Moses.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to make them a great nation, and did not destroy them completely. He will still bring the Promised Savior through the line of the woman.
 - He was faithful to people of all times who would put their faith in the Savior. He had promised to bless the whole world through Israel.

What do we learn about MAN from this story?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - The people quickly forgot all that God had done for them, and forgot His laws that He gave them. They forgot His holiness.
 - People wanted to rule themselves, run their own lives, decide for themselves what was right and wrong.
 - They wanted any god. They accepted something as trivial as a statue to be a god.
 - They dishonored God by saying, "This is our god, who brought us out of Egypt."
 - Broke first and second commandments about false gods and idols.
 - Broke third commandment when they misused God's name and called a calf their god.
- **An idol is anything that you put your trust in other than God. What are some of the idols in your society? How about in the church?**

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**

- They tried to come to God through idols rather than waiting for God's servant and God's plan. It led to destruction.
- They tried to invent their own gods. It failed. Man cannot save himself.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - The Levites acted in faith.
 - Other people repented and God forgave them.

General Application Questions:

- **What kind of situations in life are there where it is hard to wait patiently for God?** What kind of shortcuts are we tempted to take sometimes?
- The Israelites wanted something they could see with their eyes to worship. For us, an idol is anything in our lives other than the true God that we ultimately depend on. If some opportunity or position or thing or relationship in our life comes under threat or is lost and the loss upsets you so much that you lose hope, perhaps it has become an idol for you.
 - Considering this, what are some of the things that we often turn into idols?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- What situation are you in now in your life where it is **hard to wait patiently on God? What shortcut** have you been tempted to take? How can this story help you to trust God more and wait patiently for His answer?
 - What is something that you are tempted sometimes to trust in other than God? I.e. What is one thing in your life that **you turn into an idol** sometimes? How might you repent of this idol?
-

20. THE TABERNACLE / DAY OF ATONEMENT

Exodus 25-29, 34-40; Leviticus 1-10, 16, 17

After the children of Israel repented from worshiping the golden calf, God told them to begin building the tabernacle, God's dwelling place with them. The people willingly brought offerings of all the precious things the workmen needed – gold, silver, jewels, cloth. It took one year to build the tabernacle exactly as God told Moses.

Description of the Tabernacle:

When it was finished, the tabernacle was like a big tent divided by a heavy curtain. In the room in front of the curtain, the Holy Place, there were three things: a gold stand for seven oil lamps, a gold table with twelve loaves of unleavened bread on it--one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and a small gold altar where incense burned before God day and night.

In the room behind the curtain, the Most Holy Place, was the Ark of the Covenant, a wooden chest that Moses made at God's command. Inside it were the two stone copies of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. The top of this chest was pure gold with two gold angels spreading their wings and facing each other. And God showed His presence there in a special way with His people in a bright light that hovered over the chest beneath the angels' wings.

Out in front of the tent there was a big altar for making sacrifices to God. And there was a basin of water so the priests could wash their hands and feet before they made the sacrifices.

Everything was very beautiful and everything was holy. God said if anyone except the priests touched the holy things, he would die. So around the tent and the altar was a fence of cloth on wooden posts.

Then God told Moses to dedicate his brother Aaron as the High Priest, Aaron's sons as priests under him, and other descendants of Levi to help with some of the work of the tabernacle and to carry it when the people traveled.

Making Sacrifices:

Every morning and evening the priests killed a perfect lamb and burned it on the altar. They also went into the front room of the tent, The Holy Place, to burn incense and light the lamps before God. And when a person sinned and broke one of God's laws, he brought a lamb or a goat for a sin offering. The priest sacrificed the animal and poured out its blood at the altar. This is why God said, "Don't eat meat with the blood in it. The life of the animal is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for your own lives."

There were several types of sacrifices, but God would only allow certain animals to be sacrificed: cattle, sheep, goats, or doves. And each had to be perfect, unblemished...no sick, old, or damaged animals...only the very best. Other animal sacrifices were not

acceptable to God and would not remove sin. The only way to remove the people's sin was the way God made for them.

Day of Atonement:

One time each year, on the **Day of Atonement**, there was a very special sacrifice. First, the High Priest chose two goats, one to kill and one to send away. Next, the High Priest sacrificed a bull and went behind the curtain into The Most Holy Place, in the very presence of God. He sprinkled blood on the gold cover of the chest to atone for his own sins first. Then, back outside, he sacrificed one of the two goats. He went behind the curtain again, and sprinkled the goat's blood on the gold cover of the chest. This was to atone for the sins of all the children of Israel. Finally, he brought out the living goat. He put both hands on its head and confessed the sins of all the people. He was putting their sins on its head. Then a man took the goat away into the desert so far from the camp that it could never come back again. And the goat carried away all their sins on itself.

Disobedience:

In spite of everything, the people still disobeyed God, even two of Aaron's own sons who were priests. They tried to burn incense in their way, not in God's way. So God sent fire from heaven and struck them dead right there in the tabernacle. Because they dishonored God and his holiness, their father Aaron was not allowed to mourn for them.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- How can you get a fuller experience of God being WITH you?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - God had authority to command the building of the tabernacle and to give strict instructions.
 - God completely controlled how the tabernacle was to be built and how the sacrifices were to be done.
 - God chose who should be the priests and who should work in the temple.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He knew what the people needed, that they needed to be able to meet with him.
 - God knew he was dealing with sinners. He knew what type of place would be suitable for sinners to meet with him, a place they could meet Him, but a place that still displayed His holiness.
 - He knew that the people needed Him for life.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**

- All the sacrifices teach us that man is sinful and cannot come to God without a proper offering. They also show God is holy.
 - God demanded a holy, perfect sacrifice – no blemish, sickness.
 - God destroyed the sons of Aaron for their violating his holiness in burning incense.
 - We see God’s holiness in everything that separates the holy from the unholy. The fence prevented the Israelites from walking in on the holy things. The walls of the tabernacle prevented all but the priests from entering. The heavy curtain inside the tabernacle prevents everyone except the high priest from entering the Most Holy Place. And he could enter only once per year. The people did not have direct access to God. They had to go through the priest, a mediator, with a bloody sacrifice.
 - The high priest had to bring a sacrifice for his own sins first, then a sacrifice for the people.
 - In a proper sacrifice, the blood had to pour out. The blood was precious because the life was in the blood. It always reminded us that a life had to be sacrificed in order for a human life to be saved. The life was a substitute for a life.
 - Everything had to be done exactly as God said. No compromise could be made.
 - All the holiness and perfection of the tabernacle and sacrificial system showed man his own sinfulness before God.
 - The sin of the people was transferred to the animal of sacrifice. Also it was sent to the scapegoat that was sent away.
 - The goat was separated from God’s people. It was a picture of their sin being removed from them.
 - Only certain types of animals were acceptable as sacrifice, and only perfect, healthy animals.
 - The priests had to be set apart to do this holy work because they also were sinners.
 - The other Levites were set apart.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God showed his grace through his PRESENCE with his people.
 - God was building a place where he can meet with sinners in a very personal way. God had to chase Adam and Eve from his presence. The same God who could not be approached on Mt. Sinai was now making Himself accessible to the people through sacrifices.
 - God showed his presence in bright light between angels’ wings.
 - In the tabernacle, we see God’s wrath or holiness meeting with God’s love and grace. He designed a place exactly perfect so that His holiness could be maintained and his grace could be shown.
 - God’s wrath and mercy meet at the tabernacle.
 - By being with them, God was teaching Israel how to live together as a holy covenant community with beauty, order, holiness, and purity.
 - God showed mercy to allow Aaron and other sinners to serve as his mediators.
 - **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God was still separating a people to Himself through whom He would bring the promised Savior.
 - The tabernacle pointed forward to Christ, the Savior.
 - Jesus had to be a perfect sacrifice, just as everything in the temple needed to be perfect and holy.
 - The tabernacle pointed forward to the New Jerusalem, to a future for the faithful to dwell with God.
 - God was using the events of history to teach about His plan of salvation.
 - God was teaching about sacrifice and pointing to Christ.

HOW CAN YOU CONNECT THIS STORY WITH PREVIOUS STORIES?

- Woman and Serpent, Cain & Abel, Abraham & Isaac, Passover, any stories related to sacrifice.

What do we learn about MAN from this story?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - God went to great lengths to give sinful man a way to meet with Him.
 - God gave the sacrificial system, which pointed to the Savior.
 - God wants to meet with man. He made a place to meet with us.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - Every time blood is shed as a sacrifice, it teaches that man's sin brought death into the world and can only be paid for by death, by a life substitute.
 - Even the high priest was sinful and had to have a blood sacrifice.
 - Aaron's sons sinned by not following God's instructions.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - Only God can make a way for man to meet with him. We must follow God's way of salvation.
 - Even the priest had to follow God's way.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - Man comes to God only by a sacrifice of blood, a substitute.
 - The sacrifice must be perfect and holy.
 - Man must TRUST God and follow His way.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - By bringing a sacrifice, man is admitting his own sin, and putting his trust in the Savior who would come.
 - We still are saved by admitting our sin and trusting in the Savior.

General Application Questions:

- Many times we don't approach God because we don't feel worthy enough. What kind of things make us not feel worthy?
- We can never make ourselves holy enough to deserve God's presence in our lives. The Tabernacle story shows that man's only hope for coming to God is through a perfect blood sacrifice made in our place. Only God can provide such a sacrifice. He did this in Jesus Christ. **How can believing this help us to come freely to God in trust and repentance?**
- God was with his people on a daily basis through the tabernacle. He is **now with us daily** through Christ. He wants to be involved in our daily life – providing guidance, food, fellowship, everything. **What are some ways that this truth could affect your life?**
 - Could produce thankfulness. Could build your faith to face a challenging situation. Could help to repent of sin and grow in holiness. Could help draw closer to other people

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- God still dwells with His people and wants to be near you. **In what way have you been holding him away from your personal life?** How can you repent and draw nearer to God as he draws nearer to you?
- How can **believing more in God's presence in your life** through Christ help you in a challenge you are going through now?

Lesson 20-B
TEACHING HOW to CRAFT BIBLE STORIES for TELLING

- **Activity:** Get everyone to open or share a Bible with a neighbor and **read or skim** through one of these full stories. (Ex. Creation of Man and Woman (Gen. 2), Noah (Gen. 6-9), Joseph (Gen. 37,39-50), Samaritan Woman (Jn 4), Nicodemus (John 3), or Lazarus (Jn 11) stories)
 - Ask these questions to the group:
 - **How is the story in the Bible different from the story we have crafted in our CBS stories?** What changes have we made?
 - **Why can we not always just use this story exactly as written? Why did we need to make changes?** (*too long or detailed for memory*)
 - **What do we need to do to make it more useful for teaching through Bible story telling?**
 - *Must keep it BIBLICAL!!! DO NOT CHANGE any facts!*
 - *Make it SHORT enough to memorize and tell others easily.*
 - **How should we shorten the story?** What things should we remove or not remove? (Notice how we shortened some of the stories mentioned above.)
 - **How long should a story be when we tell it?**
 - **Two to four minutes.** We have a few in CBS longer than this but it is not preferable. The shorter the better! If too long, perhaps better to craft two shorter stories instead.

In summary:

- **CHARACTERISTICS of a BIBLE STORY WELL CRAFTED for TELLING:**
- **True to Scripture!**
 - Only tell what is in the Bible. Don't add things that are not there. For some people this will be their main form of Scripture. It is important that it be accurate and true.
 - Always makes sure that people understand that your crafted stories are not Scripture themselves, but that they are derived **from** Scripture. It is important at various times to have people read the Biblical accounts. The Bible must be our final authority.
- **Clear and Understandable.**
 - Test the story out with other people for understanding
 - **Focus on important points.** Keep in mind your teaching goals when crafting the story. (i.e. with different purposes will emphasize parts of the story)
- **Memorable / Manageable to Learn.**
 - I.e. must be **SHORT** enough for others to easily learn by heart.
 - **Leave out details that are not essential** to communicate the main meaning of the story at this time.

- Remove less significant names of people & places.
 - Remove excessive **repetition** to help memorize more easily.
 - Make sure the story flows naturally just as it does in the Bible.
- Identify **key quotations** and memorize them word for word.
 - Ex. “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will bite his heel.”

OTHER THOUGHTS about CRAFTING BIBLE STORIES for TELLING:

- **Types of crafted Bible stories** (with examples from this booklet):
 - **Word for word** - Examples: Sinful Woman Washes Jesus' Feet, Healing the Paralyzed Man
 - **Crafted**- with minor editing or shortening - Examples: Noah, Passover, Samaritan Woman
 - **Compiled**- from multiple Bible passages - Examples: Creation of Angels, Crucifixion, Resurrection
- **Understanding:** Be sure you have a strong understanding of the story yourself before crafting it for telling.
 - Who are the characters? What happened before this event? What is the plot? What does the story teach or emphasize? Try to imagine why this story was told.
 - Visualize the story and the characters in it.
 - Close your eyes and see the story as you listen to the characters speaking.
 - Pay attention to clues that identify characters. (Ex. Esau was hairy)
 - Be aware of things, which may offend, or draw attention away or be confusing.
 - Pay attention to where the story begins and ends. Identify parts that draw away focus from the story.
 - Explain unusual or unknown things in the story before beginning the story.

Two Methods of Crafting Stories:

- **Write the crafted story using the principles above. Or ...**
- **Use the oral group method of crafting a story in APPENDIX 6-B.**

Homework: Craft a story for next week (review at the beginning of next class)

POSSIBLE STORIES for CRAFTING IN CLASS/HOMEWORK:

Genesis 19:1-29	Sodom & Gomorrah
Genesis 20:1-18	Abraham & Abimelech
Genesis 24:1-66*	Isaac & Rebekah
Genesis 30:25-31:55	Jacob becomes Wealthy and Leaves Laban
Genesis 34:1-31	Dinah & the Shechemites
Genesis 38:1-29	Judah & Tamar
Exodus 16:1-36	Manna & Quail
Exodus 18:1-27	Jethro Visits Moses
Joshua 2:1-24	Rahab & the Spies
Joshua 3 & 4	Crossing the Jordan
Joshua 5:13-6:27	Jericho
Joshua 7:1-26	Achan's Sin
Joshua 9:1-27	Gibeonite's Deception
Judges 3:12-30	Ehud
Judges 4:1-23	Deborah
Judges 7:1-25	Gideon Defeats Midianites
1 Samuel 1:1-28	Hannah & Samuel
Matt 13:1-23	Parable of the Sower
Matt 13:24-43	Parable of the Weeds
John 4:1-42	Samaritan Woman
John 9:1-49	Jesus Heals Blind Man
Acts 2:14-41	Peter's Sermon
Acts 4:1-22	Peter & John before Council
Acts 5:17-42	Apostles Jailed & Freed
Acts 6:8-7:60	Stephen
Acts 10:1-11:18	Peter & Cornelius, The Gospel to the Gentiles

21. THE SPIES, THE WILDERNESS, BRONZE SERPENT, THE PROMISED LAND
Numbers 13-21, Deuteronomy 4:15 – 31; 6: 1ff; 7:1-16; 8:10-20; 9:4-6; 11:1ff; 34:1-5;
Joshua 1:1 – 7:9

Twelve Spies Explore Canaan:

After the LORD had given His instruction to Moses at Mt. Sinai, the people set out to enter Canaan since this was the promise God had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses sent twelve spies, one from each tribe, who went throughout the land for forty days to learn how they could conquer the land.

When the spies returned, they all agreed that Canaan was a rich land flowing with milk and honey, but ten of them gave a bad report saying that the people and the cities there were very strong and that Israel could not defeat them. However, two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, believed they could defeat their enemies because God would help them just as he did in Egypt. But the people rebelled and would not enter.

God became angry and brought judgment on the Israelites. He declared that no one older than twenty years of age at that time would enter the Promised Land, and that Israel would wander in the desert until that generation all died - forty years.

Forty Years in the Wilderness / Israel's Unbelief:

So Israel wandered. Moses led them, and God often provided food (manna and quail from heaven) and water in miraculous ways for them. But the people complained again and again. One time, the people complained to Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? There is no bread or water, and we are tired of eating manna!"

The LORD became angry. So he sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they began to bite them, and the people were dying. They went to Moses and said, "We have sinned by complaining against God and you. Please pray for us to the LORD, so that He will take away these snakes." So Moses prayed for the people.

God told Moses to make a replica of one of the snakes out of bronze and to set it high up on a pole. When anyone was bitten, if they looked at the bronze snake, they would be saved. Moses made the snake and put it on a pole. Whenever a snake bit someone, when they looked at the snake on the pole, they lived.

Entering the Promised Land:

Finally, after forty years in the desert, God brought Israel back to the border of the Promised Land. Moses died on a mountain there after looking over into the Promised Land. God then appointed Joshua to lead them into the land.

Before Moses died, he reminded the people to never worship the gods or idols of Canaan, to not become proud and forget their own sinfulness, to remember God's love and his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to keep his covenant if they wanted to be blessed. He reminded them that God would punish them if they worshiped other

gods, but that if they repented and sought the Lord and obeyed Him, He would have mercy.

Then, under Joshua's leadership the Israelites crossed through the Jordan River on dry ground and began conquering the land.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What kind of things in life do you most often find yourself complaining or grumbling about?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He had planned for them to go to Canaan. He had promised them that land.
 - He had authority to send them back into the desert. They could not refuse.
 - He gave instructions to Moses at Mt. Sinai.
 - He provided them food and water.
 - He had power to punish their complaining, to send the snakes. No one could escape God's punishment.
 - He had power to heal the people from snake bites. God has power over creation. He made the snakes, but he has power over them.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew the thought and words of these complaining people.
 - God knew the report that the spies would give and that it would test the faith of the Israelites.
 - God knew that he could help the Israelites defeat their enemies.
 - He knew they would wander in the wilderness for forty years before entering the Promised Land.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - Because of their complaint, God judged them. He would not allow the adults besides Caleb and Joshua to enter the Promised Land. Instead, they would wander in the wilderness until that generation died.
 - God always punishes sin. He punished the complaints through the snake bites. Many people died. God must punish sin.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He provided a bronze snake so that anyone who would look on the snake would be saved.
 - He provided food and water and guided them in the wilderness.
 - He protected them from other nations as they wandered in the wilderness..
 - He bore with them instead of destroying them completely. Was longsuffering.
 - He listened to them and heard their cries after the snake bites.
 - He led them back to the Promised Land forty years later.

- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He said that that generation would die in the desert and it was so.
 - He kept his promise of land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by preserving His people. He was keeping the promise to bring the Savior through the line of the woman.
 - He said if they looked at the snake they would live, and they did.
 - Even though God punished that generation, He continued to preserve the people of Israel through whom He promised to bless the world.
 - God promised to bring back the next generation to the Promised Land, and He did.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - The Israelites complained time and time again, even after God had done so much for them.
 - They refused to trust his promises. They had no faith but listened to doubts and fear.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - Man cannot escape any punishment that God gives. They were helpless to save themselves from the snakes.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - They could only be saved by looking at the snake, by following the way God provided.
 - They could only live by eating and drinking what God provided.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - By looking at the snake, they were repenting of their sin and turning by faith in the way God provided to be saved.

General Application Questions:

- The Israelites listened to the bad report of the ten spies rather than the report rooted in faith in God by Joshua and Caleb. In what circumstances do we tend to be overly influenced by the majority of people so that it blinds us to the path of faith?
- In what kind of circumstances do we start to grumble and complain about our life? How can this story help us face such situations?
- When we experience God's discipline in our lives, how should we respond according to this story?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What circumstances are you going through now where it is easy to complain instead of trusting God?** What are you fearing in this situation? How does this story help you face your fear? Confess your fear and unbelief to God.
- **Think of a specific area of your life in which you are failing to obey God?** How does your failure to obey God show a lack of faith in your life?

22. JUDGES

Joshua 7-28, Judges

As the Israelites conquered the people of Canaan, the twelve tribes each took part of the land. It was their job to chase out all the rest of the Canaanites who still lived there so that the Israelites would not mix with them and be corrupted by their idols. After Joshua died, the twelve tribes of Israel ruled themselves. When they began to feel comfortable and prosperous in the new land, they forgot what God told them to do. This is how we could describe that time: “Every man did what was right in his own eyes.”

Then the angel of the Lord said to the people, “When I brought you out of Egypt I said, ‘Do not let the Canaanites live in the land with you’. But you’ve broken the covenant between us. You’ve let the Canaanites live with you, and you did not break down their altars and burn their idols. So I will not drive any more of them out of your land. They will be thorns in your side, and their gods will trap you.”

And this is exactly what happened repeatedly. The new generation would forget God, worship Canaanite gods and do terrible things. Their enemies would attack them, and whenever Israel went out to fight, God opposed them, and they would be defeated. When they became slaves again, they would remember God again, repent, and call to Him to save them. Then God would raise up a leader called a judge who would deliver them from their enemies.

But after a while they would forget God again, and this pattern would start all over again. Fourteen times in less than 350 years the children of Israel turned away from God to worship Canaanite idols! Every single time, God punished them just as He said He would when He gave them the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. Yet every time that the children of Israel repented from their sin and kept their part of the covenant by obeying Him, God forgave them, and He began to bless them all over again. This is called the period of the Judges. Some of the judges or deliverers were Gideon, Deborah, and Samson. The last judge to rescue the children of Israel was a man named Samuel. When he was a boy, God spoke to Samuel and told him what was going to happen in the future. As he grew up, God was with him, and everything he said came true. Thus all the people knew that Samuel was God’s prophet.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you think of a way that one sin can lead to another sin so that things get worse and worse?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- How does this story show that God is all powerful? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)

- The Israelites defeated their enemies when God was with them. They were defeated when God was not with them. It was only by God's power that they could win.
- God always had the power to save them from enemies.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew exactly who had sinned and what he had done. He when the Israelites sinned against them.
 - He also knew when they repented and he knew how to save them.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - God gave a commandment, and He expected obedience.
 - When the Israelites sinned against God, God turned against them to protect his holiness.
 - Over and over the Israelites turned against God, and God punished them.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - Showed grace over and over whenever they repented of their sin by giving them a judge to lead them and deliver them.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God promised to give them the land, and he did it, even when they were disobedient.
 - God continued to preserve the people of promise through whom He would send the Savior promised long before, the one who would come through the line of the woman.

What do we learn about MAN from this story?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - The Israelites were tempted over and over to turn away from God to idols, so quick to go their own way and forget God and all he had done for them.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - Over and over the Israelites were defeated by enemies and unable to save themselves. They had to cry to God.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - The Israelites could only continue to defeat their enemies if they followed God's commands.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - Every time Israel repented from their sins and trusted again in God, He saved them.

General Application Questions:

- What are some of the ways that we see people experience the consequences or fruit of their sin in this life on earth?
- One way that people "do what is right in their own eyes" is to not treat their own sin seriously. What are some ways that people tend to minimize their sin or try to make it seem unimportant? Give some examples.
- Why are our "small" sins important? What do they reveal about our hearts? Why are they dangerous even if they don't seem to cause much hurt to someone else?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **Can you name a sin tendency in your own life that you often regard as not important?** What does this sin actually reveal about your heart? What is the danger to you and others if this sin goes unchecked or is never repented of?
- **In what way have you recently been doing what is right in your own eyes** rather than looking at the issue through God's eyes? I.e. which sin easily entangles you these days? Dishonesty? stealing? Jealousy? Gossip? How has this sin damaged your relationship with God and with other Christians? What hope is there for you if you confess your sin and repent?

23. ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING - KING SAUL AND THE AMALEKITES

1 Samuel 15:1-23

When Samuel, the last of the judges, was old, the Israelites said to him, "We want a king like the other nations have."

Samuel was not happy about this, but God said to him, "The Israelites have rejected me as king. Ever since I brought them out of Egypt, they have turned away from Me to worship other gods. So just give them what they want. But warn them about how they will be ruled by kings who will mistreat and enslave them."

Despite the warnings, the Israelites still demanded a king to lead them into battle. So God led Samuel to a young man named Saul, and he anointed him with oil to make him ruler of Israel."

Saul did help Israel defeat some of its enemies, some of the people the Israelites had failed to drive out of the Promised Land, but Saul began to trust in himself rather than in the Lord. Once, instead of waiting on Samuel, the priest of the Lord, to offer a sacrifice before the battle, he got impatient and afraid and did it himself. God was angry.

Another time God spoke through Samuel and told Saul to attack the Amalekites to avenge them for attacking Israel in the past. They were idol worshippers. God said, "Destroy everything, even the livestock." But Saul and his men did not kill the enemy's king, and they kept the best animals. Saul even set up a monument to honor himself.

After the battle, Samuel went to Saul. When Saul saw him coming, he said to him, "Blessed be the Lord! I have fulfilled God's command!"

So Samuel said, "What then is this sound of sheep and cattle in my ears?"

Saul replied, "Oh, my men kept the best livestock to sacrifice to the Lord your God. But we destroyed everything else! We obeyed God!"

"Stop!" ordered Samuel. "Do you think the Lord loves sacrifices more than obedience? Obedience is better than sacrifice. Rebellion and pride are as bad as idol worship. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as King." Samuel turned to leave, but Saul caught his robe and it tore. Samuel said, "The LORD has torn the kingdom from you today to give it to your neighbor."

Finally Saul said, "OK, I have sinned. I violated God's command. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them. Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel. Come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD."

So Samuel went back, and Saul worshiped the LORD, but Samuel killed the king of Amalek in front of all, and then left, and never saw Saul again.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Have you ever said to someone, “I’m sorry,” but really did not mean it? Why did you say sorry?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He had power to show himself to the Israelites through his servant, Samuel. He was with Samuel so that everything he said came true. It confirmed to the people that Samuel was God’s prophet.
 - He had authority to give Israel a king and to choose Saul.
 - He had authority to reject Saul as king.
 - He gave Samuel the Spirit of power and protected him when he confronted King Saul.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He told Samuel when he was young what would happen in the future.
 - He knew and told Israel what a king would do to the Israelites.
 - He knew the kind of king Saul would be.
 - He knew that Saul did not obey him when he failed to kill all the Amalekites and their animals.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He rejected the sacrifice offered by King Saul because he was not a priest. He was not the one God had appointed to this office. He did not trust God enough to wait for Samuel.
 - He rejected Saul. He disobeyed by not killing ALL the Amalekites and their animals.
 - God’s holiness requires total obedience, not questioning and making excuses.
 - Saul died away from the Lord because of his sin.
 - The fact that a sacrifice was required before battle shows God’s holiness.
 - Israel was being punished for refusing to separate themselves from the pagan Canaanites such the Philistines. God required a holy nation, a separate nation.
 - **What kind of sacrifice did God want?** He wanted a sacrifice that came from a heart dedicated to God, a heart that trusted God. Sacrifice was not a way to bribe God to overlook sin. It was not just going through the actions. It had to be by faith, and could only be done God’s way!
 - Punished Saul for glorifying himself rather than God.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He gave the Israelites a prophet to speak to them.
 - He gave them the opportunity to make a sacrifice in order to meet with them.
 - He listened to his people and answered them.
 - He was very patient with Saul. He did not kill him immediately even though he had rejected him as king. He still had a chance to repent and be saved. Gave him a long life.
 - He was gracious to Israel to give them another more godly king.
 - He warned them of the problems that would come with a king.
 - He did not forsake Israel. Even though they rejected Him as king, He stayed with them.

- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He was still faithful to Israel, the chosen people through whom He would bring the Savior.
 - He punished Saul for doing the sacrifice, a job given only to the priests.
 - When God rejected Saul, he was indeed rejected.
 - He had promised to send a Savior through this nation. He was preserving them even in the hand of a wicked king.
 - He had told Abraham that He would curse those who curse him. God was punishing the Amalekites for attacking the Israelites as they came up from Egypt years before.
 - He had promised to protect Israel, and now was helping them to defeat their enemies.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - Israel rejected their Creator. They demanded a king. They were not trusting God.
 - Saul did things his own way rather than God's way, even when it was very clear. He refused to finish killing the Amalekites and their animals as God had clearly told him to do.
 - Saul was providing his own sacrifice, rather than trusting God to provide.
 - Saul made a monument to himself. He was more concerned about his own reputation than about God's.
 - Saul made excuses for his disobedience. He blamed the soldiers, blamed the people, and tried to sound holy because he was saving animals for sacrifice, etc. He showed he was more concerned about his own reputation than about God. ("Please honor me before the people").
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - The Israelites depended on God to help them in battle.
 - Saul could not do anything about being rejected by God.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - Man must trust God enough to obey him. He must trust God even when it doesn't make sense or seems hard. (Like waiting for Samuel to arrive.)
 - Man must come to God by the way God provided. God said that only the priests could sacrifice.
 - God cares more about the heart than about surface level obedience.
- **Does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - We see that Saul did not come to God by faith or true repentance and was rejected.

General Application Questions:

- The Israelites wanted a king like the other nations. What are some ways that Christians in this society are wrongly influenced to be like the outside culture?
- Saul made several poor excuses to try to make his sin look good. He claimed complete obedience even when it was only partial obedience. He blamed the soldiers and the people. He claimed he had had a better idea (than God's command) about how to use those fat cattle! We can use them for sacrifice!
 - **What are some ways that we Christians make excuses for our sin rather than confessing them and truly repenting?**
- If someone sins but is tempted to blame someone else, what should they do instead?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **In what specific way are you badly influenced by your culture?** What would true repentance look like for you in this situation?
- What challenge are you currently facing (like Saul waiting on Samuel to show up to do the sacrifice) where you are **tempted to take a shortcut or make compromises** in relating to God? A situation where **you become impatient while waiting on God?**
- Think of a situation in which you are **making poor excuses for disobedience?** How can this story encourage you to repent and obey?

24. DAVID THE KING

1 & 2 Samuel, esp. 1 Samuel 16, 17 and 2 Samuel 6, 7, 11, 12

After God rejected Saul as king, he led Samuel to visit a man named Jesse in Bethlehem to find the chosen king among his eight sons. Samuel thought God would choose one of the big strong brothers, but God said, “No, man looks on the outward appearance of a person, but the Lord looks on the heart.” So instead God chose the youngest son, David, who was still a shepherd boy. Samuel anointed the boy with oil in front of his older brothers. And God’s Spirit was with David from that day on.

One example of this was when David, still a boy, went to visit his brothers who were soldiers of Israel, when it was at war with the Philistines. When he got to the camp he saw that Goliath, a Philistine giant, was mocking the Israelites and their God because they were all afraid to fight with him. David saw what was happening, and he became angry. He told them he would fight the giant. Though he was small and did not yet know how to use a sword or spear, he knew that God would help him just as he had before as a shepherd protecting his sheep from wild animals like lions. When he faced Goliath, he killed him with a sling and a stone and gave the Israelites victory.

Saul was king for another 15 years after this. He put David in charge of some of his troops, but Saul would hear the women singing, “Saul has killed thousands, but David has killed tens of thousands!” So much of his remaining life Saul was trying to kill David because he was jealous. But David never tried to hurt Saul, and God protected him. After Saul and his sons died in battle, the leaders of the people anointed David King of Israel just as Samuel had done many years before. David was thirty years old when he became King, and he reigned for forty years.

David was a great warrior, and he trusted God very much. However, David did some big sins in his life like adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband, but he repented of his sin, and God forgave him.

When David had defeated all his enemies, he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, his capital city. David wanted to make a great house, a temple, for God. But God sent a message to David through the prophet Nathan. He said, “You will not build a house for me because you have shed much blood, but your son will build that house. I promise you that **you will always have a son to sit on the throne, your kingdom will last forever.**”

David praised God for his promises. Though he was a sinner in need of God’s grace, he was a man after God’s own heart. (1 Samuel 13:14) In fact, God used David to write many of the psalms of worship in God’s Word.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Think of a time when you saw someone for the first time and made a certain judgment in your mind about him that you found out later was mistaken. Why do you think you came to the wrong opinion?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)**
 - He rejected Saul and chose David as King.
 - He helped the boy David to defeat Goliath. He helped Israel to defeat their enemies.
 - He protected David from King Saul.
 - He made David a powerful warrior.
 - He enabled David to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - He knew David's heart. He chose him from among his older, stronger brothers.
 - He knew of David's sin.
 - He knew that David's son would build the temple.
 - He knew that David would always have a son to sit on the throne.

- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He punished Saul's family by killing them.
 - He was defending his own name when he helped David kill Goliath.
 - He did not let David build the temple because he had shed much blood.

- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God protected David from wild animals as a boy, from Goliath, and even from Saul.
 - God was gracious to give Saul more time after he had been rejected as king.
 - God gave David victory in battle. God used David powerfully even though he was a sinner.
 - God forgave David for his sin.
 - God promised that David would always have a son on the throne.
 - God allowed the Ark of the Covenant, the chest which symbolized his presence with them, to return to Israel, though they had lost it because of their sin.
 - When God promised a son to always sit on the throne, he was pointing to the Savior to come who had been promised from the time of the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden. This Savior, who would be the King, who come through the line of David. This demonstrated God's grace to David, to Israel, and to all the nations of the world.

- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God promised David that his son would build the temple.
 - God promised David that his son would always sit on the throne.
 - God was still faithful to Israel to bring the Savior promised long ago in the Garden of Eden and again to Abraham. Here he promises to bring that Savior, the King, through the line of David.
 - God promised that David would be king fifteen years before it happened, but he kept his promise and protected David from harm by Goliath and Saul.

What do we learn about MAN in this story?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**

- Even David, a man after God’s own heart, who wrote so many wonderful psalms of worship to God and served Him faithfully, did some big, big sins – adultery, murder, coveting.
- The Philistines, enemies of God, were wicked and godless idolaters.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - The Israelites were not able to save themselves from the Philistines, but God provided David to deliver them.
 - David was helpless against Goliath, but God helped him.
 - David was helpless in his situation with Bathsheba (see 2 Sam 11, 12). His sin was revealed, but God forgave him.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - David walked by faith, trusting in a Savior to forgive him and help him.
 - When David repented, God forgave him.
 - Even though David was a king, he could not remove his own sin. Only God can forgive sins.

General Application Questions:

- **King David was a type or picture of the greater King Jesus who would come to be our Savior!**
 - How can we better take this message of King Jesus to people in our community who need a true king?
 - What are some ways that we as a church could submit more to Christ's kingship?
- Sometimes we feel that God won’t use us because we are **too weak or small or have sinned too much?** What does God want to teach us about this in this story?
- Look at **Psalm 32:1-5 to see how unconfessed sin affects us.** If God does still know everything, how does it affect us when we realize there is sin that we are hiding from God and other people?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- What **problem** do you have in your life that you feel you **cannot defeat because it feels like a giant?** How can trusting in Jesus, the Savior God provides, help you face this problem?
- **What unconfessed sin** do you need to bring out to God and loving friends?
- In what area of your life do you need to submit by faith to Christ's kingship?

25. ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

1 Kings 18

Elijah was a great prophet that God sent to the northern kingdom of Israel in the days of Ahab the wicked, idol worshiping king. Because of Israel's sin, Elijah prophesied drought, and God stopped all rain for three years. During this time Elijah went into hiding from Ahab. At the end of three years without rain, he reappeared and showed himself to King Ahab. Ahab saw Elijah and said, "Is that you, you troublemaker of Israel?" Elijah said, "I have not troubled Israel. You have done so by worshiping the idol Baal!" Then Elijah said, "Gather all of Israel at Mt. Carmel, and we will see who is the true God, the Lord or Baal."

On the chosen day, King Ahab was there with four hundred fifty prophets of Baal. And all Israel were gathered at Mt. Carmel. Elijah stood alone for the Lord. Elijah said to the people, "Let me offer a sacrifice without fire. Let the four hundred prophets of Baal also offer a sacrifice without fire. The god who answers with fire is the true God." All the people said, "Yes! This is a good plan!"

Then, early in the morning, the prophets of Baal prayed, "Oh, Baal! Hear us! Send fire! Oh, Baal. Hear us! Send fire!" They cried out until midday and nothing happened. At midday, Elijah mocked them, "Maybe Baal is asleep! Maybe he has gone on a journey. Shout louder!" Then the prophets of Baal began to jump and dance and shout loudly and even cut themselves with knives until the blood flowed. "Oh, Baal! Hear us! Send fire! – Oh, Baal. Hear us! Send fire!" When evening came near, still nothing had happened.

So Elijah said, "Enough! Now it is my turn." Elijah built an altar to the Lord from twelve stones. He slaughtered a bull and placed it on the altar. He dug a trench around the altar and had men pour twelve large containers of water on the sacrifice. The water went on the bull, the wood, and the stones and filled up the trench. Then Elijah stood back and prayed, "Oh, God. Show that you are God and that I am your servant." Then, immediately, fire came down from heaven and completely consumed the sacrifice, the wood, and even the stones and the water.

Then all the people shouted, "The Lord! He is God!" And Elijah said, "Take those prophets of Baal and kill them." And immediately after that the rain came again.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What is an idol?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- How does this story show that God is all powerful? ((has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)

- God caused the rain to stop for three years. He has power over His creation.
 - God protected Elijah from Ahab and fed him for three years.
 - God consumed the wet sacrifice, including the stones, in the flash of an eye.
 - God showed his power by responding to the prayers of one man of faith compared to four hundred men who were praying to a dead idol.
 - God had the authority to demand holiness from his people.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew there would be a drought and that it would end after three years.
 - God knew where to send and hide Elijah.
 - God knew what would happen to the sacrifices and to the prophets of Baal.
 - Unlike the false God, Baal, the true God never sleeps nor goes away. He always sees and knows everything happening in the lives of people.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - God punished Ahab and Israel for idolatry by bringing a drought.
 - God showed his holiness by consuming the whole sacrifice. God is a consuming fire.
 - God refused to respond to idolaters and punished the prophets of Baal by ordering their death.
 - God's holiness is demonstrated in the need for a sacrifice to atone for sin so that man may come before God.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God spoke to Elijah and through him to the people and the king.
 - God gave Israel a chance to repent of their Baal worship.
 - God showed his power to the people to help them turn back to Him.
 - God protected Elijah, even though he was a sinner himself.
 - God responded to Elijah's prayer of faith.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - Elijah prophesied drought as God had told him, and it happened.
 - God was faithful to protect his prophet.
 - He was also faithful to show himself holy to Israel.
 - He brought rain afterward as he said he would.
 - God preserved Israel, the chosen people through whom the promised Savior would come. He kept leading them to repentance.

What do we learn about MAN from this story?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - Clearly God has been using the drought to punish Israel for its idolatry.
 - The prophets of Baal died because of their idolatry.
 - Ahab tried to shift the blame for drought to Elijah rather than his own idolatry as leader.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - The Israelites could not save themselves from drought. Only God, in his own timing, could bring the rain.
 - Elijah was helpless to protect himself from Ahab.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - God hated idol worship. The people could never come to God in that way. They could only come in His way – repenting of sin, and putting faith in the Savior that would come.
 - Elijah did as God commanded him, and presented God to the people in the way God willed.
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - In this story, a lack of faith and repentance by Ahab had led to much heartache among the Jews.
 - God responded to Elijah's faith before the altar.

General Application Questions:

- What are some things in our lives that can feel like three years of drought?
- If God is still powerful today and reigns over His own creation, what does that say about his care for you in hard times?
- Ahab and the prophets of Baal put their trust in a false God. What are we tempted to trust in instead of the true God?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What drought is there in your life?** What long-term struggles are you trying to endure? How can this story encourage you? Pray for the Lord to help you and give you strength.
 - What powers in your heart are **competing with God for the rule of your life?** What are you trusting sometimes instead of God to save you?
-

26. PROPHETS FORETELL THE COMING OF THE PROMISED SAVIOR AND THE NEW COVENANT

During all the years when kings ruled Israel and Judah, God sent prophets to warn the people of God both about judgment for their sins and about God's great mercy for those who repent of their sin and trust in God. The prophets reminded them of the coming Savior who had been promised to them for so long, the one who would deliver them from their sins."

One of the greatest prophets, Isaiah, said, "The Savior will be born from a virgin. His name will be called Immanuel, which means 'God who is living WITH us.' He will be called the Prince of Peace. His kingdom will never end.¹" He also said that the Savior would be like a sacrificial lamb, that he would suffer without defending himself, that he would be mocked, and that he would die a cruel death to pay the price for all of our sins. Prophets also foretold that the Savior would be raised from the dead.² Prophets foretold many other specific things that would happen to the Savior. For example, the promised Savior would come from Bethlehem³, would have his hands and feet pierced⁴, would be sold for thirty pieces of silver⁵, would be betrayed by a friend⁶, would be crucified with sinners⁷, and would have lots cast for his cloak⁸.

Prophets also spoke of the NEW COVENANT which would be fulfilled in the promised Savior. God said through the prophet Jeremiah, "My people have broken my covenant but I will make a new covenant with them. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."⁹

God also told the prophet Ezekiel something similar, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."¹⁰

After the return of God's people to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple, God stopped speaking through the prophets for four hundred years. But in this time of suffering and weakness under the dominion of other countries, some Jews still remembered God's promises of a Savior who would come, so they waited with eager expectation.

¹ Isaiah 7:14

² Psalm 16:10

³ Micah 5:2

⁴ Psalm 22:16, Zechariah 12:10

⁵ Zechariah 11:12-13

⁶ Psalm 41:19

⁷ Isaiah 53:12

⁸ Psalm 22:18

⁹ Jeremiah 31:31-33

¹⁰ Ezekiel 36:26-28

Some Old Testament Prophecies about the Savior Who Would Come

Promise Verses	Prophecies	Fulfillment Verses
Isa 9:7	He will inherit the throne of David.	Matt 1:1
Micah 5:2	His place of birth.	Matt 2:1
Dan 9:25	When the Descendant will be born.	Luke 2:1-2
Isa 7:14	Who will give birth to Him.	Matt 1:18
Jer 31:15	Many children will be killed.	Matt 2:16
Hos 11:1	His escape to Egypt.	Matt 2:14
Isa 9:1-2	His work in Galilee.	Matt 4:12-16
Psa 110:4	He is a Priest like Melchizedek.	Heb 6:20
Isa 53:3	He is rejected by the Israelites.	John 1:11
Isa 11:2	Some of His characteristics.	Luke 2:52
Zech 9:9	His coming to Jerusalem.	Matt 21:1-11
Psa 41:9	He is betrayed by a friend.	Mark 14:10
Zech 11:12-13	Thirty pieces of silver were paid.	Matt 26:15
Psa 27:12	False witnesses accuse Him.	Matt 26:59-62
Isa 53:7	He remains silent when accused.	Matt 26:62-63
Isa 50:6	He was hit and spit upon.	Mark 14:65
Psa 69:4	He was hated without a cause.	John 15:23-25
Isa 53:4-5	He suffered for others.	Matt 8:16-17
Isa 53:12	He was crucified among sinners.	Matt 27:38
Psa 22:16 & & John 19:37	His hands and feet were pierced.	John 20:25-27 & Zech 12:10
Psa 22:6-8	He was mocked and insulted.	Matt 27:39-44
Psa 69:21	He was given vinegar to drink.	John 19:29
Isa 53:12	He prays for His enemies.	Luke 24:34
Psa 22:18	Others cast lots for His coat.	Mark 15:24
Psa 16:10	He is raised from the dead.	Luke 24:1-8
Psa 68:18	He ascends to heaven.	Luke 24:50-51
Gen 12:3	Through Him comes the blessing promised to Abraham.	Gal 3:14-29

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Is there something that you long for in your life that you have waited for over a long period of time and are still waiting for? Tell your neighbor about it.

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

- What was the work of the prophets?

- It was to warn people of judgment and tell of God's mercy. They would remind them of the coming Savior and what He will be like, and what He will do.
- **How do we see God's faithfulness in this story? I.e. What are some of the important promises from the prophets regarding the Savior?**
 - From Isaiah:
 - Born of a virgin.
 - Called Immanuel, God WITH us.
 - Prince of Peace, will bring peace.
 - Kingdom will never end.
 - Will be like a sacrificial lamb.
 - Will suffer without fighting back.
 - From other prophets:
 - Will die to pay for our sins.
 - Will be raised again.
 - Come from Bethlehem.
 - Hands and feet pierced.
 - Sold for thirty pieces of silver.
 - Betrayed by a friend.
 - Crucified among sinners.
 - Lots cast for his cloak.
- **What is the New Covenant from Jeremiah and Ezekiel? How does that show God's faithfulness?**
 - Change their minds and hearts, focused on inner lives.
 - Will be their God and they my people
 - New heart of flesh to replace heart of stone.
 - Will give the Holy Spirit to help follow laws.
- **Some Jews always waited expectantly for the coming of the promised Savior! (ex. Simeon and Anna) How would these prophecies help build the faith of the Israelites?**
- **Thinking ahead to the New Testament, how were some of these prophecies fulfilled?**

General Application Questions:

- God is a promise keeper. God made many other promises in Scripture to those who trust in him. What are some of those promises? Make a list of these promises.
- We will see in the New Testament stories that God fulfilled all of these prophecies. How does this help you in the way you consider the Bible, especially regarding its trustworthiness? If God's Word is trustworthy, how should that affect your life?
- Those Jews that really trusted God were waiting expectantly and patiently for the day the Savior would come. It gave them hope. Where can we get hope for this life and for the future?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two to use.)

- **Which promise of God is especially hard for you to trust today?** Where is it hard to feel hope? Where do you need to repent of unbelief? How can this story encourage you today?
- God used people or the prophets to speak his word to the people in exile? How can you be used by God to speak His truth to others? **Who will you go and tell His message to this week?**

27. THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 1:5 - 2:20, Matthew 1

Four hundred years passed since God spoke to Israel through prophets. There was complete silence from God, and Jewish people now lived under the dominion of the Roman kingdom. Then one day, God spoke again! He sent an angel to speak to Zechariah, a priest in the Temple. He told him that his wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to a son who would announce the coming of the promised Messiah. Zechariah did not believe at first because he and his wife were very old and had no children, so God made him mute until after the birth of his son. But God did what he said, and Elizabeth gave birth to John, who would grow up and preach in the wilderness, announcing the arrival of the Savior.

Six months after Gabriel spoke to Zechariah, God sent his angel to the region of Galilee, to the town of Nazareth, to the house of a virgin named Mary, who was Elizabeth's cousin. Mary was promised in marriage to a man named Joseph who was of the family of David.

The angel said to Mary, "Greetings, you who are favored by God." Mary was confused and afraid. Gabriel said, "God has blessed you for you shall give birth to a son. You will call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will rule over Israel and Judah forever.

Now Joseph, Mary's fiancé, was a righteous man. When he found out that she was pregnant, he did not want to shame Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to break the engagement and divorce her quietly. While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The child is conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. She will have a son, and you will name Him Jesus which means 'the Lord saves,' because He will save His people from their sins." When Joseph woke up from his dream, he took Mary home as his wife. But he didn't sleep with her until after the baby was born.

Soon after this John was born to Elizabeth, then six months later Mary was also ready to give birth. At that time, the king in Rome decreed that everyone must return to the town of their ancestors to be counted for tax purposes. Joseph was from the house of David, so he returned to Bethlehem in Judea to be registered along with Mary.

So many people were traveling to be registered that they could find no place to stay in Bethlehem. So they found a place for animals. While they were there, Mary gave birth to a son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a feeding trough for the animals.

Nearby, there were shepherds out in the fields watching their animals that night. Suddenly, an angel appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. For in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you to recognize him. You will find the baby wrapped in

strips of cloth and laid in a feeding trough for animals.” Then a whole army of angels appeared and sang “Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace to men on whom His favor rests.”

When the angels disappeared, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go into Bethlehem and see this thing the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Joseph, Mary, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. After they saw Jesus, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, and they spread the word around to everyone they met. And everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- When have you put yourself in an unimportant, lowly position in order to help others in your life?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show us Jesus' power and authority?**
 - God enabled Elizabeth to give birth in her old age.
 - He made Mary to be with child through the Holy Spirit.
 - He used the decree of Caesar to get Mary to Bethlehem, where the prophet had said the Savior would be born. God moved the whole world because of one pregnant woman.
 - He helped Mary to deliver His Son even in a dirty barn.
 - He sent the angels to announce the birth of the Savior and chose to first announce the good news to poor shepherds.
 - He provided a stable and a manger to protect baby Jesus.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything? and is everywhere?**
 - God knew the time and place the Messiah would be born. He knew the people He would use to bring the Savior.
 - God told Zechariah about John. He did what he said.
 - God told Mary and Joseph what would happen and it did!
 - God knew the hearts of the shepherds and that they would spread the news.
 - God knew the time had come to save his people.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - The glory of God and His holiness was displayed in the angels.
 - God made Zechariah mute because of his unbelief.
 - The shepherds were terrified because they were confronted with God’s holiness and majesty.
 - The reason we need the Savior God was sending was because God is holy and man is sinful.
 - Jesus, the promised Savior, was born to a virgin. His Father was God, not man, so he was not born in sin.
 - Joseph was restrained not to have sexual relationship with Mary before Jesus’ birth.

- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God came to be “with us.” He came into our own broken, dirty, lowly sinful dusty world.
 - God gave favor to Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph.
 - God reached out to the people at the bottom of the community – shepherds, carpenter, a poor girl.
 - Jesus was born in a manger, born to love the common man.
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God kept his promise to bring a Savior, the promise from Genesis 3:15.
 - God said the Savior would be born in Bethlehem.
 - He said he would be born to a virgin.
 - God said the Savior would be born to the line of David.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - God sent his only Son to help us.
 - God used sinful and weak human beings to bring a Savior to the world, so he can relate to us completely.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God’s just punishment for his sin?**
 - Man needed a Savior because he was lost in sin.
 - Zechariah was a man of God, but even he struggled to believe God!
 - The shepherds were frightened by the glory of God because they sensed their own sinfulness in contrast to the holiness of God.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - Man could not make his own way. Only God could send a Savior.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God’s way?**
 - Salvation comes only from the Lord. The Savior he provides is the only way to be saved. His name would be called Jesus because He would save people from their sins.

General Application Questions:

- **Read Philippians 2:5-8.** Jesus is God the Son. He lowered Himself from His position of equality with God in order to enter our world in the most lowly way in order to connect with us in all of our lowliness. We have low, dirty hidden places in our hearts and lives. How can we allow Jesus more fully into those places?
- Jesus was born among lowly people in a lowly place, born in weakness. How can this be an encouragement to us in our daily lives?
- “Do not be afraid! For I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. For . . . a Savior has been born to you . . .” How should we respond to this great news?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Think of a time when you felt that God did **not really understand you or did not really care** about you because you are not important. How can this story encourage you?
 - **Jesus wants you to admit that you need his help! How can you allow the Savior to come into the lowly, dirty places in your heart or life? What would that look like?** How have you responded to this Savior that God sent? If you have not yet repented of your sin and put your trust in Christ, what is preventing you from doing that today?
 - “Do not be afraid! . . . **a Savior has been born to you . . .**” How do you personally need to respond to this amazing news today?
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28A. JOHN'S MINISTRY, JESUS' BAPTISM

John 1:19-31, Matthew 3

This is the story of John's testimony to Jesus. When John became a grown man, he showed himself to Israel in the wilderness clothed in camel skins and eating locusts and wild honey. He was preaching, "Repent! For the kingdom of God is at hand!" And those who repented he baptized in the Jordan River.

Many crowds of people were going out to hear him speak and to be baptized. But the chief priests and teachers of the law, leaders of Israel, stayed in Jerusalem, and they sent their messengers to John. The messengers asked, "Are you the Christ?" John said, "I am not." They asked, "Are you Elijah?" John said, "No." "Then who are you?"

John said, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord.' There is one coming after me, who is greater than me, because he was before me."

At that time, Jesus also came to be baptized by John. When he came up out of the water, the heavens were opened, the Holy Spirit descended on him as a dove, and the voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved son, I am very pleased with him."

The next day, John saw Jesus walking among the crowds, and he said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! This is the one I was telling you about when I said, 'There is one coming after me, who is greater than me, because he was before me!'"

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What are the things in your heart and life you search for most? What are the empty places in your life?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about GOD?

- **How does this story show us Jesus' power and authority?**
 - The Holy Spirit influenced people to go out to the desert to hear John the Baptist.
 - John says that the one who is coming would be much greater than himself.
 - God opens the heavens and sends the Holy Spirit like a dove.
 - God declares Jesus to be His only Son, to be divine. He also declares Him to be pleasing to Himself. God alone has authority to declare what is good.
- **How does this story show that God knows everything?**
 - God knew and planned how John would announce Jesus' coming.
 - God knew and announced who Jesus was.
- **How does this story show that God is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - God set aside John the Baptist for a special holy work of preparing the way for Jesus.
 - John called people to repent of their sins, and to be cleansed spiritually through baptism.

- Jesus was much greater than John. Because John was a sinner and Jesus was holy God, John was not worthy to touch his sandals.
 - God declared Jesus holy by opening the heavens and sending the Holy Spirit as a dove, and announcing that Jesus was his “Beloved Son, with whom He was well pleased.”
 - John said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.” He was connecting Jesus to the sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament – especially the Passover Lamb. That lamb had to be without blemish, perfect, and his blood would cover the sins of the people to protect them from God’s holy wrath.
 - Since Jesus is God’s Son, all God’s attributes apply to Jesus as well.
 - Jesus was righteous, so He identified himself with sinful man by being baptized, even though He had no sin.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - God spoke to people through John.
 - God cared for John in the wilderness.
 - As John preached, God moved people’s hearts and led them to repent of their sins and be baptized.
 - God gave people time to hear the Gospel and to repent.
 - Jesus, God’s Son, humbled himself to come to earth as a man and live with us. He was “God with us.”
 - Jesus identified himself with sinful man by being baptized, even though he had no sin.
 - Jesus was “the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world.” This reminds us of God’s grace over the Israelites at the Passover, and of the whole sacrificial system of the Old Testament whereby people brought a perfect lamb as an offering to atone for their sins. Jesus would be the final Lamb, the final sacrifice.
 - ****What stories can you remember that we have done in the Old Testament which talk about a lamb that takes away sins?**
- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God promised through Isaiah hundreds of years earlier that one would come who would be a “voice crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord.’” John the Baptist fulfilled that promise.
 - God said through John that one would come after him who would be much greater than him. That was Jesus.
 - Jesus was the final fulfillment of the lamb in the Old Testament – the Passover lamb, the lamb that Abel sacrificed, the animal that was killed to provide clothes for Adam and Eve after they sinned, and every other sacrificial lamb. He was to be the final substitute.
 - God promised in the Garden of Eden when he cursed the serpent that someday the Seed of the woman would come to defeat Satan forever. Jesus was born of a woman. He was that Seed. He was the promised Savior.

What do we learn about MAN and how man relates to God or is saved?

- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God’s just punishment for his sin?**
 - John was calling for sinners to repent in preparation for the coming of God’s kingdom.
- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God’s way? (according to God’s will and plan?)**
 - The only way to be forgiven for sins would be through Jesus, the Lamb of God.

- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - John prepared people for Jesus by telling them to repent. And they were being baptized, representing the spiritual cleansing that God was doing in their hearts.
 - John said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" He was encouraging people to put their faith in Jesus.

General Application Questions:

- The people went out into the wilderness looking for John. What are the kind of things that people go out searching for or longing for? Where are some of the empty desert places in people's lives?
- When the people heard Jesus called "Lamb of God," they would have thought of all of the Old Testament sacrifices like the Passover and the ram Abraham removed from the thicket. They also would have remembered the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. They would think of a sacrifice that died in place of them to pay for their sins. What kind of sins in people's lives today has Christ died to pay for?
- The Israelites had been waiting for thousands of years for the promised Savior. What are some situations where the waiting seems too long for us?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- The people went out into the wilderness looking for John. What are the **things in your heart that you go out searching for?** What are the **empty places** in your life? How can Jesus fill that empty space for you?
 - Jesus is the Lamb of God, who has come to take away the sins of the world, including your sins. **What particular sin do you need to take to him today for forgiveness and cleansing?**
 - How do you sometimes struggle to wait for God, to believe God can accomplish what He has promised for you? **Which promise of God do you most need to believe and experience?** (His care for you, His forgiveness for you, His listening to your prayers, His gift of the Spirit, His return, what?)
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28B. Satan Tests Jesus (**no picture*)

Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13

After John baptized Him, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert that's between Jerusalem and Jericho. He stayed there and fasted for forty days and forty nights while Satan tested Him. He did not eat anything, and at the end of this time, He was hungry.

Then Satan said to Jesus, "If You're really the Son of God, the Anointed One, prove it. Order these stones to turn into bread."

But Jesus said to Satan, "The scripture says, 'Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'."

Then Satan took Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the highest point of the Temple. "If You are really the Son of God, the Anointed One, then jump off! For the scripture says, 'God will order His angels to take care of You'. It also says, 'They will hold You up with their hands so You won't even hit Your foot against a rock.'"

But Jesus answered, "It also says, 'Don't put the Lord your God to the test.'"

And again, Satan took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "I'll give You authority over all these kingdoms and their glory. It has been handed over to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. It will all be Yours. All You have to do is bow down and worship me."

Then Jesus answered for the last time, "Get away from me, Satan! The scripture says, 'Worship the Lord your God and no one else.'"

When Satan finished testing Him that time, he left Jesus alone for a while, and angels came and served Him. During Jesus' life, Satan tested him with every sin that people have ever done...or even thought of doing. But Jesus resisted Satan's testing every time and never sinned.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What is a way that you have felt Satan's temptation strongly at times in your life?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS?

- Does this story show us that Jesus was truly man?

- He was truly tempted just like other men.
 - He was physically hungry.
 - He needed to pray, to depend on God. He needed the Holy Spirit to comfort Him.
 - Satan tried to tempt him in the same way he does other men – through physical desire, pride, and position.
- Why is it important that Jesus was **truly man**?
 - Jesus went through the same painful struggles with temptation to sin as all other men.
 - Jesus is able to empathize with us.
 - Jesus also depended on God's powerful care to watch over him and minister to him with angels.
 - Jesus was the Seed of the woman, just as God promised in the Garden of Eden. He was born a man.
 - The Seed of the woman was supposed to defeat Satan. He would reverse the curse that occurred in the garden by defeating death. Here in this story Jesus begins his defeat of Satan.
 - Does this story show us that Jesus was **truly God**?
 - (IN OTHER WORDS . . .)
 - How does this story show that Jesus is **all powerful like God**? (has all authority, is in control, is supreme and sovereign)
 - Jesus had power and authority to rebuke and resist Satan, to send him away.
 - Does this story show that Jesus **has all knowledge, just like God**?
 - Jesus knew Satan and his schemes.
 - Jesus knew Scripture and how to use God's Word to fight Satan and his lies with truth.
 - He displayed the perfect wisdom of God in the ways that He answered Satan. He understood Satan and the emptiness of His lies.
 - He knew that only God was to be worshiped.
 - Does this story show that Jesus is **holy**? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)
 - Jesus was holy. He did not sin, despite severe temptation.
 - Jesus used Scripture in the right way. He said, "It is written . . . "
 - Does this story show that Jesus is **gracious**? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)
 - Jesus remained the holy, unblemished Lamb, who would become a sacrifice for the sins of the world.
 - Jesus graciously humbled himself, becoming a human, in order to serve and save mankind.
 - Jesus identified with us humans through human suffering and temptation.
 - Does this story show that God (Jesus) is **faithful**? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)
 - Jesus is the Seed that was promised when God cursed the serpent (Satan) in Eden.
 - Jesus overcame Satan, as God promised He would.
 - Jesus was faithful to use Scripture. The Old Testament was Jesus' Bible!

What does this story teach us about Satan?

- Satan is a deceiver.
- Satan even uses good things, like Scripture, to deceive people into following him.
- Satan uses Scripture, but manipulates it, turning truth into lies.
- Satan tempted Jesus in the same ways he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden. He tempted Jesus' physical hunger, his spiritual pride, and his pride in position as Son of God. He tempted him to rule himself independently and to reject the Father.
- Satan knows our weak points. He knows how to tempt us.
- Satan is bold enough to approach anyone, even Jesus.

What do we learn about MAN and how man relates to God?

- Does this story show that man must have **faith and repentance** in order to please God and be saved?
 - Jesus is worthy of our trust, our faith. He was tempted, but did not sin.
 - Jesus is God and deserves our trust.
- How did Jesus fight temptation?
 - He knew the Scriptures and responded to Satan's attacks by pointing to and trusting that God's Words are true and powerful.

General Application Questions:

- What are some of the ways Satan most often tempts people today in your culture or community?
- How does Satan tempt believers? How does he tempt us in ways similar to how he tempted Jesus? How can this story help us stand against him when we are tempted?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal):

- What is a **way that Satan has used recently to try to deceive you** and influence your life? Is there an area of weakness that Satan particularly likes to attack?
 - Are you overly confident sometimes in your own fleshly strength to resist Satan? How can attention to God's Word help you to trust more fully in God rather than yourself?
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29. JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES

Luke 5:1-11, 27-31; 6:12-15

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Galilee, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by fishermen who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have not caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions, including James and John, were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi (or Matthew) sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law . . . complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Then one day, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles. They were Simon, whom he named Peter, his brother Andrew, James, John, Matthew and others, including Judas Iscariot, who later became a traitor.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- If you were Jesus choosing people to be your main twelve disciples, what kind of people would you choose?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- How does this story show us Jesus' power and authority?

- Jesus went to Simon and to Levi. He initiated.
 - He had power over creation, and caused fish to swarm into net.
 - He had authority to tell Simon to go out again and cast the nets.
 - Power to call disciples to come follow Him and abandon their previous life and work
 - Simon Peter saw that Jesus was God and was overwhelmed! He recognized that Jesus is Lord and calls him that.
 - He had authority to call Levi. Levi simply followed him without question.
 - He showed that He was God through His power and authority.
- **How does this story show that Jesus knows everything?**
 - He knew how to move the hearts of Peter, James, and John to call them to himself.
 - He knew that they would catch many fish.
 - He knew his plans for them to be fishers of men!
 - Knew heart of Levi.
 - He showed that He was God through all that He knew..
- **How does this story show that Jesus is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, punishes sinners, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - Peter is afraid, realizes Jesus' holiness and his own sinfulness when he sees Jesus' power. Sees that he does not deserve to stand in His presence.
 - Even the fish had to obey Him!
 - He was more holy than the Pharisees, who were focused on external obedience to rules or appearance before other people. Jesus was concerned about changing hearts, making people truly holy.
- **How does this story show that God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - Jesus went out to where Simon and Levi were. He reached out to them first.
 - He gave them a huge catch of fish! He was lavishly generous!
 - He chose to show himself to sinful men like Simon and the other disciples.
 - He chose sinful men, men on the outside of society, people of low standing, through whom to do His great work.
 - He encouraged Simon. "Don't be afraid."
 - He called Simon Peter to "catch" men. God is mercifully reaching out to mankind. Peter is his instrument.
 - He called a man with a bad reputation, a tax collector, to follow and serve Him.
 - He filled Levi with joy! He was happy to give up a very profitable business! His heart was changed by God's grace, so he had a feast! Because Levi's heart had been changed, he wanted his friends to know Jesus!
 - Jesus ate with and associated with sinners and with those with bad reputations. He reached out to men rejected by society.
 - He came to be doctor to those who were sick from sin. Jesus attracts the ones not welcome in the normal church.
 - Jesus had a banquet for those who came in humility.
- **How does this story show that God (Jesus) is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - God was continuing to work out His plan, as Jesus raised up disciples. He had a plan to work through them to accomplish His purposes.
 - He told them it would be worth their time to fish again, and gave them a big catch!
 - Jesus came for sinners, and is faithful to be with sinners. This is why he entered their world.

- **How does this story show that Jesus was a human?**
 - He took a boat across water. He ate and drank.
 - Needed his Father's help and guidance. He prayed!

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - Jesus wanted to use Peter and friends for His glory and service despite their sin and lowliness.
 - He cared about the sick of heart – the ones looked down on by the world. He took time with them.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - Simon doubted Jesus, though he was willing to cast the net once more.
 - Simon admitted, "I am a sinful man." "I don't deserve to be in your holy presence."
 - Jesus responded to those who realized they are sinful and need help. (Peter, tax collectors, sinners)
 - The Pharisees hearts were judgmental and hateful toward others.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - Peter was helpless before Jesus.
 - Tax collectors and sinners had no hope. They were "dirty."
 - A doctor is only good for the sick, those who admit they need help.
 - Jesus did not respond to those who would not admit they were sick in sin.
 - As a man, Jesus depended on God to guide him in decisions like choosing the disciples.

What do we learn about the path of SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - Jesus planned to build the faith of his disciples. He showed them their need to repent and put their trust in him.
 - Those who draw close to Jesus in faith and repentance have his favor, while those who don't trust Jesus and refuse to see their sin are judged.
 - Even Jesus depended on his heavenly Father in prayer to help him choose twelve disciples. He needed that relationship.
 - Simon, James, John, and Levi left everything immediately to follow Jesus! Levi probably left a very good business! This is the kind of trust that Jesus calls us to.
 - We see that Levi cannot help inviting his friends to know Jesus! This is the fruit of a changed life!

General Application Questions:

- Jesus said that only the sick need a doctor or a cure. The Pharisees did not think they were "sick" or sinful. **How do we fail to see our own sin and weakness?** How does this prevent us from depending on Jesus?
- Jesus challenged the disciples' faith by telling them to let down their nets even though they had already tried all night to catch fish. **What are some ways He might call us to "let down our nets"?**
- In calling the disciples Jesus was beginning to build His church. What can we learn from this story about building His church right where we are?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Do you sometimes think you are too sinful or too unimportant for God to care about you? Why? How does this story encourage you? **How could God even use you?**
 - **How might God be calling you to “let down your nets”?** In other words, how might he ask you to make a step of faith to serve him? Do you have a sense that God is calling you to some particular action or attitude? What might that be?
 - Simon Peter and Levi left all to follow Jesus. **What could God be asking you to leave in order to follow him more closely?**
-

30. JESUS HEALS AND FORGIVES A PARALYZED MAN

Mark 2:1-12

After John had baptized Jesus, Jesus went about preaching from town to town. And everywhere Jesus went crowds followed him, and pressed up against him all the time.

One day Jesus came into Capernaum and went into a house. He sat down to teach, and the crowds filled the house and the street outside the house. People were even looking in the windows and doors. Everyone was listening to Jesus teach.

Now there was a paralyzed man in Capernaum. He had four friends who picked him up in his bed and brought him to Jesus. But they could not get to Jesus because there were too many people. Finally, when they could find no other way, they climbed up onto the roof. Then they made a hole in the roof and lowered the paralyzed man on his mat down in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw the faith of the men, he said to the paralyzed man, "Your sins are forgiven."

Now there were teachers of the law listening to Jesus. When they heard these words, they were saying in their hearts, "How can he say this! Only God can forgive sins! He's blaspheming!"

But Jesus knew in his spirit what they were thinking in their hearts and said to them, "What is more difficult? For me to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take up your bed, and go home'? Now, I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins." So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Get up! Take up your bed! And go home!" And the man did! Immediately he got up, took his bed and went out in front of them all! And everyone was completely amazed and gave glory to God and said, "We have never seen anything like this before!"

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What are some ways you have gone out of your way to help a friend? Or perhaps a way that a friend has gone out of his way to help you?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn from this story about JESUS?

- **How does this story show us Jesus' power and authority?**
 - He had power over lameness and all illness, power to heal the body.
 - He also had authority and power to forgive sins.
- **How does this story show that God (Jesus) knows everything?**
 - Jesus knew the thoughts of the teachers' hearts.
 - Jesus knew the hearts of the paralytic and his friends. He saw their faith and responded.
 - He knew how to show his authority to forgive sins – by healing the body.

- **How does this story show that God (Jesus) is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - Jesus is not pleased with doubt. He condemned the lack of faith of the teachers of the law.
 - God is perfect and whole. Jesus did not care only about the body, but especially about the spirit of man. He wanted to save the man lost in sin.
- **How does this story show that God (Jesus) is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - He forgave the sinful man for his sins, and he healed the man's body.
 - He exposed the sinful doubts of the teachers, giving them a chance to repent and believe.
 - He was patient with the crowds, including the men intruding on his meeting.
 - He revealed himself to those people, as well as to us.
 - Jesus, God's Son, took time to sit down with sinners and to patiently teach them.
 - "Only God can forgive sins!" And Jesus forgave sins, thus proving that He is God.
- **How does this story show that God (Jesus) is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - He said he could heal the lame man, and then he did it!
 - All sickness and brokenness began when man rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden. The Promised Savior would reverse the curses begun by Satan's temptation. Jesus shows his power over sickness and over sin. This proves that He is the Promised Savior, the curse reverser!

What do we learn from this story about MAN? (Ex. He is valuable to God; he is sinful; he is helpless to save himself.)

- Jesus loves man, and loves to show him mercy in many ways, as he showed the lame man.
- Man's greatest problem is his sin, which separates him from God.
- The paralyzed man could not get himself to Jesus. And all men are helpless to save themselves.

What do we learn from this story about SALVATION ? (how man comes to God?)

(Ex. He can only come according to God's will and plan. He must come by faith and repentance to be saved.)

- Jesus responded to those who trusted in him. He responds to faith.
- Rather than being annoyed with the friends for making a hole in the roof, Jesus is deeply thankful for their faith.
- The fruit of faith is action. The four friends sacrificed themselves to bring their friend to Jesus.
- We experience the full measure of grace by responding to Jesus as the lame man had to get up and walk. He needed to "walk" out His faith.
- "Salvation is found in no other name." (Acts 4:12)

General Application Questions:

- How could you use this story in personal evangelism? How can it help relate the Gospel to the life of a lost friend of yours?
- The paralyzed man had to "walk out" his faith. What are some ways we might be called to take concrete steps of faith in our lives?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **How have you seen your own lameness, your own helplessness to save yourself recently?** In what area of your life? How have you had a hard time in your life trusting God lately? How can you throw yourself by faith at the feet of Jesus for help?
- The man needed to **"walk" out His faith** to experience complete healing. Do you have **a challenge in life requiring faith?** What might it look like in your life to step out, to make your faith practical in real life?

31. JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

John 4:1-45

After the Passover, Jesus and His disciples went back to Galilee. This time they went through the country called Samaria. The Jews at this time despised the Samaritans because they were descended from Israelites who married Assyrians hundreds of years back when Assyria had captured the northern kingdom.

While in Samaria, Jesus and his disciples came to a well that their ancestor Jacob had dug. It was about noon. Jesus was tired, so He sat down by the well while His disciples went into town to buy food. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "May I please have a drink?" She was astounded. "You're a Jewish man, and I'm a Samaritan woman, so how can You ask me for a drink?" (For Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans.) Jesus said, "If you knew the gift of God and Who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked Him . . . and He would have given you living water." She replied, "Sir, you don't have a bucket and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?" Jesus explained, "When a person drinks water from this well, he gets thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him, will never be thirsty again. The water I give him will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life." "Sir, give me this water so I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming back to this well to draw water."

"Go call your husband, and come back here," said Jesus. "I have no husband," she told him. "You're right," Jesus said. "You have had five husbands, and you are not married to the man you're living with right now." "Sir, I can see you are a prophet. My ancestors sacrificed to God on this mountain, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people should worship." Jesus said, "A time is coming when you will not worship in either place. The hour is coming and is now here when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman replied, "Well, I know the Messiah is coming, and when He does, He'll explain everything to us." Then Jesus plainly told her, "I who speak to you am He."

The woman left her water jar by the well and went back to town to tell everybody. "Come see the Man who told me everything I've ever done! Can He be the Messiah?" So they came back with her to the well to see Jesus. Many of them believed in Jesus because of what the woman said, and they begged Him not to leave right away. So Jesus stayed for two days, teaching the people, and even more of them believed in Him. And they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said. Now, we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Christ, the Savior of the world."

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask one of these pre-story questions to the whole group or discuss in pairs.

- How do you and your church relate to those who are rejected by society?
- Where is the place and what are the circumstances where you find you can worship God best?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **How does this story show us Jesus' power and authority?**
 - He crossed cultural barriers without the fear of being ridiculed by the Jews.
 - He had the authority to give the water of life to the Samaritan woman freely and without discrimination or prejudice. He is the source of living water!
 - Jesus commanded the woman to go and call her husband.
 - Jesus had the power to change hearts. The people who saw him were changed. They believed.

- **How does this story show that Jesus knows everything?**
 - Jesus knew everything the woman had ever done. He knew her heart.
 - Jesus knew the need of this woman. She needed both physical and (especially) spiritual water.
 - Jesus knew the time when the true worship will be done. He knew what true worship would look like.
 - Jesus knew the best way to reach this needy woman to lead her to repentance and faith. He was concerned about her specific needs and situation.
 - He knew how to avoid her arguments and get to her heart. He knew how to speak to her both in love and in truth.

- **How does this story show that Jesus is holy? (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as the payment for sin)**
 - He confronted the woman over her sexual sin.
 - He desired true worship, not simply following Jewish or Samaritan tradition.

- **How does this story show that Jesus or God is gracious? (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)**
 - Jesus spoke with the woman with grace, respect, and gentleness.
 - He spoke to a woman who was both a Samaritan and a woman with a reputation as a sinner.
 - He loved her by listening to her objections. He spoke with her in the way that would best lead her to repentance and faith.
 - He offered the woman living water, the Gospel that would lead to eternal life. (Isa 12:3, Psalm 42:18, Jer 2:13)
 - He revealed himself to the woman that He was indeed the Messiah.
 - He stayed two more days with the people, preaching and offering eternal life to Samaritans, enemies of the Jews.

- **How does this story show that God is faithful? (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)**
 - Jesus cared for this woman, and he was faithful to pursue her until she saw her sin and his grace.
 - God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed. Also, through the prophets, he promised that the Savior would come for Gentiles as well as for Jews. Here Jesus saved this Samaritan woman and her neighbors.
 - Jesus is the curse breaking, breaking the curse of sin and death.
 - Jesus was faithful to reveal himself to the people that He was the promised Messiah. He gave spiritual water to whoever believed.

What do we learn about MAN?

- **How does this story show that man is valuable to God?**
 - Jesus loved this woman. He used this chance to rest to reach out to her.
- **How does this story show that man is a sinner deserving God's just punishment for his sin?**
 - This woman came to the well at mid-day to avoid other people. She had the reputation of being a sinner.
 - The woman had been divorced many times, and was at that time living sinfully with another man.
- **How does this story show that man needs God and is helpless to save himself?**
 - The woman had no idea about eternal life or how to get the "living water." The water she got could only last a short time, and then she would be thirsty again.
 - She showed her true spiritual need when she believed Jesus and ran back to tell her neighbours.
 - The lady was helpless to quench her sexual desires. She was ruled by her passions.

What do we learn about SALVATION? (how man comes to God?)

- **How does this story show that man can only come to God in God's way? (according to God's will and plan?)**
 - One is not saved because of the place or style of worship, but by God's way, which is spirit and truth, i.e. when the truth of Jesus enters someone's heart by faith.
 - She was changed. She was no longer afraid to be with the people of the village. She wanted to tell others of this great salvation. In other words, when she drank by faith from Jesus' living water, a stream of truth and life flowed out to her neighbors!
- **How does this story show that man must have faith and repentance in order to please God and be saved?**
 - The woman accepted Jesus' confronting her sins, and believed that He was the Christ, i.e. the Messiah..
 - After the village people had stayed with Jesus, they also believed.
 - People are saved, not by their traditions, but by their hearts being changed by truth.
- **How was the Samaritan woman involved in God reaching other people with the news of salvation?**
 - She went and told her neighbors what she had seen and heard.
 - She was not afraid of what people would think of her.

General Application Questions:

- Sometimes **you may feel like an outcast**, rejected by other people. Or **too sinful** for God to save you. After hearing this story, what do you think Jesus would say to you when you feel this way?
- Jesus reached out to outcasts. How does your **church relate to those who are rejected by society?** (HIV/Aids victims, alcoholics, people who smoke or have bad language, etc.) How might God want our churches to change in treating the needy or outcast of society?
- Do you and your church look at women as Jesus does? Do you value them as sisters in the Lord and partners in the Gospel? What would look different if you and your church treated them as Jesus did?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Jesus knew everything the woman had ever done. **God still knows everything, including your heart and your hidden sins.** What do you need to confess to Him today?
- What outcast or person of a different tribe or nation do you think God is calling you to reach out to this week?

32. JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

Mark 6:30-44

One day Jesus was with his disciples. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. They said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding villages and buy themselves something to eat.” But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

They said to him, “That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you remember a time when God miraculously provided for you? How have you seen God’s provision in your life?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **How does this story show us Jesus’ power and authority?**
 - He captured people by the power of His words. They were staying all day to listen to Him.
 - He commanded people to be given food.
 - Multiplied bread and fish.
 - Provided more than all the people needed.
 - Power over the natural world.
- **How does this story show us Jesus’ knowledge?**
 - He knew he would feed all the people and challenge the disciples’ faith.
 - He knew the true condition of the people – heart and body, their desperate need for him, the Good Shepherd.

- **How does this story show us Jesus' grace?**
 - He provided in abundance for all the people to eat.
 - He displayed his power in order to help people believe in him.
 - He had compassion on people, even though He and the disciples were tired. He looked on them as sheep without a shepherd. He put their needs before His own.
 - He taught the people, giving them God's Word.
 - He challenged his disciples' faith.
 - He used the little that disciples had to offer and multiplied it.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - God promised in the Garden of Eden a Savior who would break the curse brought on by Satan. Part of the curse was the struggle to feed ourselves ("Man would eat by the sweat of his brow."). Jesus is the curse breaker. He displays his power to feed and provide for his people here.
- **What do we learn in this story about how man relates to God?**
 - The people depended on Jesus alone to provide food.
 - The disciples were helpless to fix the situation. Their resources were not enough at all.

General Application Questions:

- The whole earth was cursed because of the man's sin against God in the Garden of Eden. From that point man would struggle to feed himself and his family. (Genesis 3) Jesus is the Savior who reverses this part of the curse! He is able to provide. What are some of the key areas of provision that we must trust the Lord for today?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Think of an area in your life where you are **struggling to have what you need to feed or clothe or educate or care for your family**. How can this story help you to deal with your struggle today? What need is Jesus asking you to trust him for?
 - Jesus used the small fish and bread given to him to feed his people. **What small thing do you have to offer to God to use for His kingdom?** How can you give it up? How could God help you if you make this step of faith?
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33. JESUS CASTS DEMON OUT OF BOY, FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION Mark 9:14-32

Once Jesus had been away with Peter, James, and John. And when they returned to the other disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, just as his father had described. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can? All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing the boy terribly, the spirit came out, and the boy was like a corpse. Most of the people said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- How much faith is necessary for God to help us in our troubles?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about Jesus? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- How does this story show us Jesus power and authority?
 - Had power over the demon. Cast him out.

- Did it by the power of his word.
 - Demons must obey Jesus. He has authority.
 - He rebuked the disciples because of lack of faith.
- **How does this story show us Jesus' knowledge?**
 - Jesus knew the father's heart, his struggle to believe even though he desired to believe.
 - Jesus knew the kind of spirit in the boy, and how to heal the boy.
- **How does this story show us Jesus' grace?**
 - Healed the boy, responded to the father's weak faith.
 - Communicated with the disciples, helped them understand faith and prayer.
 - Was patient with the father and with his disciples.
 - Took the boy by the hand and helped him to stand. He touched him.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - Jesus is the promised Savior, the one who would defeat Satan and his demons reverse the effect on people's lives. Jesus displays his power over demons here.
 - Jesus always responds to faith, even weak faith. He answered the father's prayer and honored his honesty about his struggle to believe!
 - Jesus is a healer.
- **What do we learn in this story about how man relates to God?**
 - Salvation comes only through faith. All things are possible for those who believe.
 - Man struggles to believe. God responds to honest struggles, for those who know they are weak and sinful and who cry out for help like the father did. God counts such faith as righteousness.
 - The father was helpless. The disciples were helpless. Only God (Jesus) could save the boy.

General Application Questions:

- "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!" How does Jesus promise to respond even to the smallest faith? What are some of the most difficult situations for us to trust God? How does this story encourage us? How can it encourage us in our prayer lives?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!" How have you recently felt **like the father, wanting to believe but finding faith to be a struggle?** How does this story encourage you?
 - Jesus is calling you to come to him. You don't have to understand everything about him. You need to give up on making your own way and trust your life to Him. How can trusting Him like this give you life even now? **What faith decision do you need to make today?**
-

34. JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

John 11:1-44

There was a man named Lazarus who was a close friend of Jesus. He had two sisters, Martha and Mary. One time Lazarus became very sick, and his sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, the one whom you love is sick." When Jesus received the message, he said to his disciples, "This sickness will not end in death but in the glory of God."

Jesus loved Lazarus and his two sisters. So when he heard Lazarus was ill, he stayed two more days in that place before traveling with his disciples to the home of Lazarus. He told his disciples, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad (delight/rejoice) I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." When he arrived, Lazarus had been dead for four days. When Jesus came near to the home, he found many people weeping and mourning for Lazarus. Martha came to Jesus and said, "Lord, if you had only been here, my brother would not have died. Yet, I know that God will give you anything you ask."

Jesus said, "Lazarus will rise again." Martha said, "Yes, I know, he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." But Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live even though he dies. Do you believe this?" Martha said, "Yes, I believe that you are the Christ, Son of God." Then Martha ran to Mary and told her, "Jesus is here". When Mary came to Jesus, she said, "If only you had been here, my brother would not have died." Then Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus, and he wept. Then the mourners said, "See how he loved him!"

Jesus said, "Roll the stone away from the tomb." But Martha said, "But he has been dead for four days. By now, there will be a very bad smell!" Then Jesus said, "If you believe, you will see the glory of God." When they had rolled away the stone, Jesus prayed, "Father, thank you that you have heard me so that the people here may believe that you sent me." Then he commanded, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came out of the tomb, and Jesus said, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." Many people believed in Jesus that day.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Can you remember a time when have you seen God work in a powerful way? How does this affect how you live daily?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- How does this story show us Jesus's power and authority?
 - He raised Lazarus from the dead.
 - How? – by His Word (reminds us of God's power in creation).

- Why? – to show His own glory (He had a purpose, was in control.)
 - He does it in His own time and plan.
- He shows that He has power over life and death.
- **How does this story show us Jesus' knowledge?**
 - He knew what would happen. He told the disciples everything ahead of time.
 - He knew Lazarus was dead before He traveled.
 - He knew the purpose for his death – that the disciples would believe, and that people would see the glory of God and would know that God had sent Him.
 - He knew what the hearts of the people, including disciples, needed.
- **How does this story show us Jesus' grace?**
 - He loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, so he waited because he had a greater purpose in mind. He loved all of us who would be told or read the story later.
 - He showed compassion, crying tears of pain at the death of his friend.
 - He showed mercy. All people, including Lazarus, were sinners, not deserving such kindness.
 - He loved by demonstration.
 - "I am the resurrection and the life." He was the life giver.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - Lazarus' death did not end in death, just as Jesus had said. He did what he said.
 - Jesus intended that God would be glorified. He is in control of it. This purpose was fulfilled.
 - God had promised of a Savior who would have power over death and Satan. Jesus is indeed the Promised Savior, the curse reverser!! He reversed death!
- **In this story, how do we see how man relates to God?**
 - Mary and Martha showed faith in calling Jesus.
 - Mary and Martha believed Jesus was able to stop death. So they had some belief and some doubt. Jesus responds to even the smallest faith. "He who believes in me will live even though he dies."
 - Jesus glorified himself so that people would believe.
 - The Greek word for Glad is *chairō*. It means to rejoice, to delight, and to be glad. Jesus is delighted in the fact that he was not present to meet the need of Lazarus. Jesus' delay to meet Lazarus' need made no sense to human thinking. He had a greater purpose - to show His own power and help grow their faith.

General Application Questions:

- Did Jesus require **perfect faith** by Mary and Martha in order to act? How does Jesus respond when your faith is mixed with doubt and despair?
- What are some ways people respond when God's answer to their prayers is "No" or "Wait"? What does this story teach us about how to respond better?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- What are some areas in your life that you struggle with, thinking Jesus has **delayed meeting your need**? Maybe you will wait four days like Lazarus, or forty years like the Israelites in the wilderness. Can you trust Him by waiting? What might God be trying to teach you?
- Do you worry about what will happen when you die, where you will end up? Can you be certain? Where are you putting your hope? What are you trusting to help you deal with death?

34-B. CBS Lesson - Song and Drama #2:

Song:

Choose a Story that you have already learned in CBS and get into a group of five students to take 1 hour to try to craft and write a song that directly tells comes from one of the stories. Then present the song to the entire class.

Drama:

Choose a Story that you have already learned in CBS and get into a group of 5 to 15 students (the number depending upon the story) and take one hour to prepare a drama. Make sure that you have all the roles clearly defined and have all the people involved. There should be one person who is the narrator to tell the parts of the story that are not spoken by the characters represented. Then present the drama to the entire class.

SONG WRITING PRINCIPLES:

- **REGARDING LYRICS/WORDS:**

- Biblical – accurate, true
- Clear Message, esp of Gospel
- Easily remembered
 - Either simple enough for all to remember
 - Or simple chorus for all with verses for song leader
- God-centered
- Has clear theme (esp in chorus)
- Good question: Ask a non-Christian to listen and see HOW they understand the words. TO make sure you are really communicating well.
- WORDS that touch the heart

- **REGARDING PRESENTATION:**

- Appealing melody.
- Familiar enough in tune for people to like and learn
- Good rhythm, flow
- Fun, engaging
- Dancing – culturally acceptable, honoring to the Lord
- Gestures match words
- Motivational, stirs feelings
- Good pronunciation
- Does the tone of singing match the tone of words (ex. Joyful, serious, sad, reverent, happy, peaceful)?
- Inspiring. Done with confidence
- NOT TOO LOUD. Don't let INSTRUMENTS drown out words
- Most important - WORDS and WORSHIPers (Instruments are just tools)

35-A. THE RICH YOUNG RULER Matthew 19:16-26 (& Luke 18:18-30, Mark 10:17-27)

One day a young ruler came up to Jesus, knelt before him, and asked, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do to get eternal life?"

"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good – God. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

"Which ones?" the man inquired.

Jesus replied, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself."

"All these I have kept since I was a boy," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

Jesus looked at him and loved him and answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- How are you rich? In other words, what areas of blessing or ability or gifts or talents do you have in your life?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

- **What was the young man like? What do we know about him? His behavior? His reputation?**
 - He was rich, young, and a leader. He had obeyed all the law, at least he thought he had. He was a very good man in the eyes of the community, judging by the disciples' reaction at the end of the story. Very well thought of.
 - **What was his reputation based on?**
 - Obedience, respectability, leadership, obviously blessed through riches.
- **What did the young man ask Jesus?**
 - What good deed must I do to get eternal life?
 - **What does his question show us about what he believed about getting eternal life?**

- It was something to be merited through good deeds. He could acquire it himself by his own deeds.
- **What did the young man call Jesus? Why?**
 - “Good teacher”; maybe to impress or flatter.
 - **What does this show us about how he believed someone gets eternal life?**
 - Through earning, by doing or saying the right things. Through nurturing a good reputation. If people think well of me, surely God will!
- **How did Jesus answer him?**
 - Keep the commandments!
 - **Do you think Jesus really expected the man to succeed in getting eternal life through obeying commandments? If not, why would he answer this way?**
 - No, he knew man’s heart and thoughts. He wanted to show him how his understanding was wrong, how he was depending on the wrong thing to save him. Law keeping. It is as if Jesus said, “Ok, if this is your method for pleasing God or earning eternal life, then this is how you have to do it – simply obey!”
- **What was the man’s answer when Jesus told him to obey the commandments? What did this answer show about him?**
 - Which ones? Which laws?
 - He really thought he could do it, that he was indeed able to keep the law. Had a checklist in his mind.
- **What was Jesus’ answer?**
 - He names the main commands regarding how you treat others – don’t murder, commit adultery, steal, lie; honor father & mother; treat neighbor as self.
 - **What LIFE RULES do we today, even Christians, try to keep sometimes in order to be “right” or to “get life”?**
- **What was the man’s response?**
 - I’ve done all this!! I’ve kept them all! WHAT ELSE? What do I still lack?
 - **How did he feel upon hearing this, Jesus’ first answer?**
 - Very happy. Felt like he was successful and had passed the test! Probably assumed he would have satisfied any other requirement. This was a boost to his pride!!
- **What did he seem to think about God’s law?**
 - That it could be kept.
 - **What does this tell us about what he understood about God’s holiness?**
 - It showed a very low opinion of God’s holiness. A holiness that man could attain.
 - How could he have thought that he had kept all the law, that he met the standard?
 - Only if he compared himself to other people.
- **How did Jesus respond? How did he feel about the young man?**
 - It says he loved him.
 - **So was he giving him the next bit of advice to hurt him or to help him?**
 - To help him by challenging his way of thinking, to help him find the true way to life.
 - **So what exactly did Jesus say?**
 - If you want to be PERFECT, sell all! Then you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, FOLLOW ME.
 - **What did Jesus mean by, “If you want to BE PERFECT?”** What is he telling the young man about the path he’s trying to use to get eternal life?
 - If you are going to get eternal life by obeying the laws, then the only way is to be absolutely perfect.
- **Jesus told him to “sell all.” How did the young man feel now? Why?**
 - He was very sad. So sad that he gave up and went away because he had much wealth.
 - **What does this tell us about the young man?**
 - His wealth was very important to him – more than gaining eternal life – more than a relationship with God.
 - Why do you think it was so important to him?
 - He depended on it – to provide for him, to give him reputation and comfort.

- o **What does this tell us about what he thought about eternal life or treasure in heaven?**
 - He did not really believe that heaven was worth such a sacrifice.
 - Did not really believe that a relationship with God was really what LIFE was about. His view of eternal life was just an extension of a condition in which he lived. I.e. that his successful, comfortable, reputable life would just continue forever.
- o **What do you think Jesus was telling him about eternal life?**
 - It is a RELATIONSHIP with him! In this relationship are more riches than anyone could imagine. It is all you need. And it is available now! These riches. This relationship.
- **What did Jesus say after the young man left?**
 - o It is hard for a rich man to enter kingdom of God, actually impossible (i.e like camel through needle)
- **How did the disciples respond to what Jesus said?**
 - Who then can be saved? (if not this rich, respectable, obedient man?)
 - o **Why were they so amazed or dismayed?** What did this show about what they believed about getting eternal life?
 - Same as rich man. (THIS is the WORLD's VIEW!)
 - What did they think riches or leadership or position or reputation meant?
 - That God blessed person because the person deserved it.
 - Why did this make them worry about their own lives?
 - They figured if the rich young ruler was not good enough, neither were they!
- **How did Jesus answer the disciples?**
 - With man it is impossible. With God all things are possible!
 - o **What did Jesus mean by this? What do you think Jesus was saying about keeping the law as the path of salvation or eternal life?**
 - Jesus is saying, this way DOES NOT WORK! With man, it is impossible! Only God himself can keep the law! (Think back to what Jesus first said when the man addressed him as "Good Teacher." What was he saying about himself? I am God!) i.e. only Jesus himself could keep the law perfectly. Only God could make salvation possible. Only if God becomes man and keeps the law FOR man, AND man puts all his trust in the real law keeper can man be saved or get life!
- **So what are the two ways of getting life that we find in this story? Which is the only one that can ever work?**
 - o 1) depending on self – law keeping,
 - o 2) depending on God and the way that he makes. Only this works!
- **Were the young man's riches helping him or hurting him? How were they hurting him?**
 - o His riches were hiding from him his great need of a Savior. He was happy to trust in himself.
- **So does God hate riches? Does God require every person to sell all his riches and be poor before they can follow God? So why do you think Jesus told the young man to "sell all"? What do you think Jesus knew about the man's heart that caused him to answer this way?**
 - o He knew the man was putting all his hope in his riches – how they met his needs, how they gave him reputation, how they made him feel righteous and worthy.
- **So what do you think Jesus means by being a "rich" man? Does "rich" only mean material wealth?**
 - o No, he's talking of any kind of "riches", any blessing or gift, any thing that man depends on more than God to make himself righteous before God.
- **What examples of "riches" can you think of in people's lives?**
 - o Cattle, property, education, reputation, good behavior, position in the church or community, health, abilities or talents. Talents, good grades, popularity, social skills, being accepted by others, opportunities, obedience, discipline, education – what school you're going to, experiences
- **Can such "riches" bring problems, even in a Christian's life?**
 - o Yes! We can depend on them to "stay" "in" with God, to stay blessed, to keep our reputation, our state of righteousness. They may block us from RELATIONSHIP! Jesus wants us to depend on him continually, never to depend on our blessings, our gifts, our talents in place of Him. We must

be grateful for them, yes! To use them for His glory, yes! But not to turn to them into means of save ourselves.

- **What did the man not understand about using obedience to the law to gain life?**
 - God's standard is unimaginably high. PERFECTION. (READ Matthew 5:20,21,22, 27,28,43,44) Therefore, no one can obey perfectly enough to meet this standard.
 - "It is impossible," for any man depending on his own strength, discipline, or ability.
- **The disciples felt hopeless! What hope did Jesus give them? What did they not yet understand about God?**
 - "With God, all things are possible!" God's mercy is huge beyond our imagination. Even big enough to save a man who is "rich", whose "riches" have blocked his relationship with God. God can save anyone who stops trusting in their own "riches" and puts their hope in the Savior, the way he provides.
- ***So in summary – God is saying to each of us, "your "richness" is blocking your relationship with me. You need to "sell all", trusting that the riches you'll get from me are so much better. Then, just FOLLOW ME. Be with me. Abide in me. Be strengthened by me. Rest in me.***

General Application Questions:

- **How are we often deceived by our own efforts to be good?**
 - By working so hard to keep all the rules of the Bible or the church (or school, or culture) that you actually think you have succeeded? That you have fully kept the law?
 - **But what is the truth about our law keeping?** Have you ever lusted or hated or gossiped or been prideful? Of course you have! Have you always prayed for your enemy? etc. What does God really demand?
- Jesus says to each of us, "**Sell all!**" What do you think He means when he tells you to "Sell all?"
- **How does God really feel about you?** (Think of how Jesus felt about the young man when he saw how he was deceived by his own self-righteousness, his own riches). Can you DO anything to make him love you more? NO! How does this make you feel? What does it make you want to do? How can you respond now to his great love for you?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What is one of the "worldly riches" you have in your life?** Possessions? Abilities? Family? Education? Health? Reputation or position in the church or community? Some accomplishment or good deed? How have you allowed this thing to **deceive you**, i.e. **to satisfy you so that you do not look to Jesus** enough for forgiveness and help? **What would it look like for you to sell this thing?**
 - What good deeds do you need to repent of? I.e. What is a **recent time when your good deeds led to sinful pride?** How can you repent?
-

36. A SINFUL WOMAN WASHES JESUS' FEET

Luke 7:36-50

One day a Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought a jar of expensive perfume and entered the house. As she stood behind Jesus at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is-- that she is a sinner."

Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher?"

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven-- so she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Have you ever known someone who felt so much shame about something, that they avoided other people? Or avoided the church? If you feel free, talk about this with your neighbor.

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **What does this story teach about Jesus?**
 - **How does this story show us Jesus' power and authority?**
 - He had power and authority to forgive and save even the worst of sinners. He changed the woman's life so that she was not ashamed to enter the Pharisee's house.
 - **How does this story show us Jesus' knowledge?**
 - He knew what Simon the Pharisee was thinking and how he was judging Jesus.
 - He knew the heart of the woman and her sinful condition.
 - **How does this story show us Jesus' grace?**

- He welcomed the sinful woman who came to Him by faith.
- He welcomed the Pharisee into his life by going to his house and inviting him to faith, though we don't see his repentance yet.
- He promised that he who is forgiven much will be able to love others more fully.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - The Promised Savior would forgive sin, break the curse of sin. He did this with the lady. He broke the curse of sin in her life.

What does this story teach about MAN?

- **There are two main people (besides Jesus) in the story. – Who is the sinner?**
 - Both are sinners. The woman's sin had been a wayward life, probably of prostitution. Simon's sin was pride, self-righteousness, and being judgmental.

What does this story teach about how man relates to God? And how our relationship with God affects our relationship with other people?

- **Who was forgiven? Who was not?**
 - The woman was forgiven. The man was not.
- **So what was the difference between the two people in how they dealt with their own sin?**
 - The difference between the two was that the woman knew and admitted her sin. She knew she needed a Savior, she ran to seek out the Savior and rejoiced to find Him.
- **What was the difference in how they treated other people?**
 - The woman experienced the love and mercy of the Savior. Because of this she was able to show her love so openly. She did not fear what others thought. She showed great love for her Savior. And it seems likely that she was able to love others as well – to tell other sinners where she found help and how they could too.
 - The Pharisee was full of himself. He was prideful, judgmental, and hateful. He did not realize that he was needy. He was blind to his own danger. And he was not able to love others. He hated others and only loved himself.
 - BELIEF in the Gospel vs. UNBELIEF
 - Forgiven (woman) vs. Lost (Pharisee)
 - LOVE for others (woman) vs. NO LOVE for others (Pharisee)
- **"Her many sins are forgiven so she loved much." Does this mean that her love earned her forgiveness?**
 - NO! Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you."
 - Love is the evidence or proof of her forgiveness, salvation.
- **SUMMARY:**
 - One who is forgiven and knows it and believes it and lives in it – will LOVE both God and man. Love is the outward expression of having been loved and forgiven by God.
 - What is the Gospel? It is like one beggar leading other beggars to a great banquet of food that he has discovered. He does not keep it to himself!

General Application Questions:

- What kind of people do we have a hard time loving? Who do we judge most harshly?
- If you realize what a big sinner you are yourself and how much you need the Savior all the time, how will this change your attitude toward your neighbor or your enemy?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **Who is someone that you have a hard time loving? Who do you tend to judge harshly? Who are you jealous of? Who have you not forgiven? How can experiencing Christ's forgiveness more fully help you to love this other person?**

37. THE LAST SUPPER

Luke 22:1-22; Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

The chief priests and teachers of the law were seeking a way to kill Jesus. Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, to betray Jesus. So Judas went to the leaders of the Jews and agreed to hand Jesus over to them for money.

Now it was time for the Passover celebration, and Jesus had sent his disciples to prepare the Passover meal. He said, "I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer. I will not eat it again until it has its fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. But one of you right here is going to betray me. The Son of Man will die as God has decided, but how terrible it will be for that man who betrays him!"

The disciples were upset and began to ask Him, "You don't mean me, do you? Lord, who is it?" "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me."

After they had eaten the Passover meal, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples. He said, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this to remember me." In the same way, Jesus took the cup and said, "This is the New Covenant in my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

When they had shared the bread and the cup and after Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "All of you will fall away from me. But after I am resurrected, I will meet you in Galilee." And the disciples were all very sad. After the Passover meal was finished, they sang a psalm. Then they left the city of Jerusalem and went out to a garden on the Mount of Olives together.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What does the Lord's Supper mean to you? Why do you think we do it in the church?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **How does this story show us God's (Jesus') power?**
 - God was sovereign over Jesus' suffering for our sins.
 - Judas betraying Jesus was part of God's plan to save the world. In his sovereignty, God sometimes allows Satan to influence people to do bad things, but He works these things out according to His own plan for our good and His glory. Jesus had authority to command his disciples.
- **How does this story show us Jesus knowledge?**
 - He knew he would suffer and die and also that He would rise again from the dead.
 - He knew Judas would betray him. He knew what Satan had done.
 - He knew his followers would fall away.
 - He knew forgiveness of sins could only come through His own suffering.
 - Jesus said, "Until I eat it with you in the Kingdom of God." He knew that He would be raised again from the dead by God's power. He knew he would meet the disciples after his resurrection.
- **Does this story show us God's holiness?**

- God's wrath on mankind because of our sin could only be atoned for by Jesus' death, by the shedding of His blood. He was the only truly holy and righteous sacrifice. Jesus had to suffer.
- Jesus said, "Woe to him who betrays the Son of Man." Sin must be punished.
- **Does this story show us God's grace?**
 - Jesus would give his body to be broken and his blood to be spilled to provide forgiveness of sins.
 - He gave the bread and wine to teach the disciples about his death and to help us remember his sacrifice for us until He returns.
 - Just as Jesus is the Bread of Life, so the Lord's Supper gives us spiritual nourishment by helping us remember Jesus and what He did for us on the Cross. It is a meal for sinners.
- **Does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - The Lord's Supper reminds us of the Passover and of God's promise of a Savior. Jesus would be the faithful Lamb of God pointed to by the Passover and by every other righteous sacrifice in the Old Testament. He was the suffering Lamb prophesied by Isaiah.
 - The wine fits the blood theme throughout Scripture.
 - Jesus spoke of the New Covenant, which would have reminded them of Jeremiah's teaching.
 - Jesus gave us a way to remember Him and what He has done for us.

What does this story teach us about MAN?

- Judas' fall into temptation shows man's sinfulness. Despite three years in Jesus' presence, he did not really believe. His heart was receptive to Satan's influence. He is a strong example of one lost without God even while doing religious things.
- Jesus predicted that all the disciples would fall away. They were all weak and helpless. None were strong enough to stand with Jesus in His sufferings.
- Man could not save himself.

What does it teach us about how man comes to God?

- Man can be forgiven only because Jesus sacrificed his body and blood.
- Man comes to God through faith in Christ's sacrifice. The Lord's Supper helps us remember and strengthen our faith. Man cannot make his own faith. Even faith is a gift of God.
- Telling them that they would deny him was giving them an opportunity to repent of their weak faith.

General Application Questions:

- Jesus told His disciples, "All of you will fall away because of me, but after I am resurrected I will meet you in Galilee." What can we learn from this statement about ourselves and God? What can it teach us when we fail?
 - Jesus knows we will sin and betray him at times. However, he has his hands on us and will never let us go. Therefore, He will still lead us to repentance and will continue to work with us and be with us - all because He died and was raised again. He will not give up on us but continue the good work He has begun in us.
- Jesus was crucified so that we may commune with God. **How should we seek fellowship with God?**
 - through the Word, through prayer, through worship, through the Lord's Supper, etc.
- Jesus promised a day when we would fellowship with Him in heaven. How can you have assurance that you will be there with Him? If we have this assurance, how should this change the way you live your life day by day?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Consider how much Jesus went through to provide forgiveness for you. Have you accepted this gift through faith in Christ? What do you need to do to receive this precious gift today?
- **How can you grow in one of the ways God has given us to seek fellowship with Himself? How do you want Him to change you?**

38. GETHSEMANE AND JESUS' ARREST; JESUS BEFORE PILATE

Matthew 26:36-50; Mark 14:32-15:20; Luke 22:39-23:25; John 18:12-19:16

When Jesus and his disciples had finished eating the Passover meal, Jesus brought them out of the city to the Mount of Olives to a garden called Gethsemane. Jesus told his disciples, "Watch and pray so that you will not be tempted." Then he took Peter, James and John a short distance away and said, "I am sad to the point of death. Stay here and watch." Then Jesus moved another short distance away and prayed, "Father, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet, not what I will but what you will be done."

When Jesus had prayed, he returned to find the disciples sleeping. He woke them up and said, "Could you not stay awake for even one hour?" And they were all ashamed. Then Jesus left them to pray again the same way. When he had prayed this second time, Jesus returned to the disciples and found them sleeping. Then Jesus went and prayed the same thing a third time. When he returned to the disciples, he said, "Awake – the time has come, and the betrayer is near."

Then Judas appeared with a mob of soldiers. He greeted Jesus with a kiss, and the soldiers seized Jesus and took him away. Then all the disciples ran away in fear.

First the soldiers and leaders of the Jews took Jesus to the house of the High Priest. There witnesses falsely accused him, but Jesus remained silent. The High Priest said to Jesus, "Speak up, man. Why aren't you saying anything to defend yourself? Tell us, are you the Anointed One of God?" Jesus replied, "Yes, I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God." When he heard this, the High Priest tore his clothes and said, "Blasphemy! We don't need any more witnesses. What do you think?" And everyone said, "He's guilty, and He deserves to die!"

When morning came and the leaders of the Jews had finished questioning Jesus, they brought him to the Roman governor. His name was Pilate. Pilate asked, "What crime has this man committed?" The leaders of the Jews said, "He claims to be a King." Then Pilate brought Jesus in to question him. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say that I am, but my kingdom is not of this world."

Then Pilate turned Jesus over to his soldiers to be beaten. After they had whipped Jesus severely, Pilate spoke again to the Jews, "I find no fault in this man. Let me release him to you."

But the Jews said, "No! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" But Pilate said, "But I find no fault in this man!" Then the Jews said, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the King in Rome!" Then Pilate became afraid. The Jews shouted all the more, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Then Pilate allowed them to take Jesus away to be crucified.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- How have you been rejected or falsely accused? How have you felt nobody is on your side?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about JESUS? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **How does this story show the power, authority, and sovereignty of God?**
 - God was in control. Jesus submitted to His Father's will. He knew God's plan to provide salvation for sinners must be accomplished.
 - Jesus said, "The time is here. The betrayer is near." He knew God was working His sovereign plan.
 - Jesus did not try to fight against God plans when He was falsely accused.
- **How does this story show that Jesus' knowledge?**
 - Jesus knew the suffering which was coming. He knew how difficult it would be.
 - He knew "the hour has come."
 - He knew his purpose to come into the world ("to seek and save that which was lost")
 - He knew what Judas and the Jewish leaders were doing.
- **How does this story show us God's holiness?**
 - God is holy. Man's sin could only be paid for by the death of His sinless Son.
 - God's wrath over sin had to be satisfied by Christ's death.
 - God saw His Son's pain, but could not respond or rescue Him because the penalty of sin needed to be paid in full.
- **How does this story show us God's grace?**
 - God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him to pay for our sins. He knew how bad it would be for Jesus, listened to His prayer, but willed that He should still die in our place. Jesus gave up His life willingly.
 - He allowed sinful man to betray, falsely accuse, beat, and finally crucify Jesus.
 - God gave Jesus the grace to persevere in His sufferings and patiently allow them to happen.
 - Jesus was patient with the disciples' weakness and fear. He did not reject them even though they all failed him.
 - Jesus was fully man. He graciously submitted to deep human suffering on our behalf.
 - Christ's humility. Even though He was God of the universe, he suffered the deepest humiliation because of love for man.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - God's promise in Eden (Gen 3:15) to send a Savior who would defeat Satan was fulfilled in Jesus. It was the same promise made to Abraham to bless all nations through his Seed. It was the promised repeated through all the history of Israel. He did not change His plan even though it meant saying "No" to his own Son and turning His back on Him for a while.
 - Jesus knew God's plan and refused to go against it, even though it meant great pain for himself.
 - IT Reminds us of Isaiah's prophecies of the Savior who would suffer, who would be led to death like a lamb to the slaughter, not defending himself. (Isaiah 53:6,7)
 - These prophecies were fulfilled: Psalm 41:9 – betrayed by a friend; Isaiah 53:3 – rejected by Israel; Zech 11:12-13 – betrayed for thirty pieces of silver; Psalm 27:12 – falsely accused; Isaiah 53:7 – remained silent before accusers.
- **What does this story teach about man?**
 - Man is so valuable to God that God would make a way for man to be saved through Christ.
 - Man is a rebel against God. On his own, he does not want God's will for himself. He wants to rule his own life. All the most "religious" people refused to look at their own sin, to confess their own sin and failure and humbly submit to God's plan. They were actively involved in killing Jesus
 - Man is helpless and unable to save himself. Even the disciples, those closest to Jesus, those who had heard His words and seen his miracles, were too weak and fearful to stand with Him.
 - Man's sin is the reason Jesus submitted to this humiliation and pain.

- **What does this story teach us about how man relates to God?**
 - Jesus prayed to His Father. Even the Son of God pleaded with God. But He also had complete faith in God's purpose for Him. He agreed to follow God's will even when it hurt him.
 - Jesus was persistent in prayer. He repeated his prayer three times.
 - Man can only be saved by God's plan. He is helpless to save himself.
 - **What can we learn from Jesus in this story about how to face difficult trials?**

General Application Questions:

- What are some situations we believers can be in today in which we feel abandoned or falsely accused? How can it encourage us knowing that Jesus himself had this experience?
- How can remembering the details of Jesus' suffering help to grow our faith?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **When have you been deserted or accused falsely, and it seems nobody is on your side? How can Jesus' example encourage you? How can his sacrifice give you strength to endure?**
 - Have you considered how deeply God loves you and how much He has done to save you? Take time to consider the experience of Jesus in Gethsemane and before the authorities. Remember what your salvation cost Jesus. How does this affect you personally?
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39. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

Jn. 19:16b-42; Mat. 27:27-61; Mk. 15:16-47; Lk. 23:26-56

After standing before Pilate, Jesus had been badly beaten, and the Roman soldiers had put a crown of thorns on His head to mock Him. Blood was running down His face and down His back where He had been beaten. After Pilate handed Jesus over to the soldiers to be crucified, they made Jesus carry His own cross through the streets. When Jesus had carried it as far as He was able, the soldiers forced a man from the crowds to carry the cross for Jesus. His name was Simon of Cyrene. They walked through the streets of Jerusalem and out of the city and up to the hill called Golgotha.

When they reached Golgotha, they crucified Jesus along with two robbers. First, the soldiers laid the wood on the ground in the form of the cross and laid Jesus on it. Then they bound his arms to the wood with rope and nailed heavy metal spikes through His hands and feet into the wood. Then, using ropes, they lifted the cross into the air and secured it into place. They also crucified the two robbers in the same way, one on each side of Jesus. Then they sat down at the foot of the cross and began to throw dice, gambling for the clothes of Jesus.

There were many people nearby watching to see what would happen to Jesus. There were the women who had followed Him throughout His ministry. They were standing back watching everything very closely. The chief priests and teachers of the law were also there. They were mocking and reviling Jesus and making fun of Him saying, "He saved others. Why can't He save Himself?" One of the robbers who was crucified beside him also mocked and reviled Jesus. But the other rebuked him saying, "No, stop! We are guilty. We deserve to be here, but this man is innocent." Then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus said to him, "I tell you the truth, today, you will be with me in paradise."

Now when it was about mid-day, there came a great darkness over the whole land until about three o'clock. At this time there was a terrible earthquake, and everyone was very frightened. At that time, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He also said, "It is finished!" And He gave up His spirit to God and died. And immediately the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces from top to bottom. There was a Roman commander at the foot of the cross, and when he saw all these things, he said, "Surely this was the Son of God!"

Now it was Jewish custom to not leave bodies hanging overnight or on the Sabbath. So they asked the Roman soldiers to finish the job. The soldiers broke the legs of the two robbers, and they died very quickly. When they came to Jesus, however, they found that He was dead already, and they did not break His legs, just as had been prophesied. One of the soldiers thrust his spear into the side of Jesus, and when he pulled it out, blood and water came out of Jesus' body. Joseph of Arimathea got permission to take the body of Jesus. He put it into a nearby tomb that had never been used before, and he rolled the stone over the tomb and went out. But the women who

had followed Jesus throughout his ministry were watching everything very carefully, and they saw where Joseph had laid Jesus' body.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- How does understanding or remembering about Jesus' death on the cross affect your daily life?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

- **What do we learn about God from this story?**
 - **How does this story show that God is all powerful?**
 - The sky turned black in the middle of the day.
 - God sent an earthquake. This reminds us of Mt. Sinai.
 - He tore the veil of the temple in two the very moment Jesus died.
 - He shook the hearts of men like the Roman commander so that they believed.
 - **How does this story show that God is all knowing?**
 - Jesus had predicted his death and suffering many times.
 - He knew what he was facing and did not resist.
 - He knew that the thief would be with him in Paradise.
 - The prophets foretold that the Savior would be innocent, would be counted among sinners, would be pierced for our transgressions, would not fight to protect Himself, mocked, insulted, cast lots for His cloths, that His bones would not be broken.
 - He would be like the Passover lamb, a perfect lamb whose blood was shed for the sins of people.
 - **How does this story show that God is holy?**
 - Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He was without sin or blemish. Only He could have been a sufficient sacrifice for our sins to satisfy God's wrath. He took our punishment. The only sufficient sacrifice for sin.
 - Like the Passover lamb, his bones were not broken.
 - He was the true picture that was portrayed in all previous OT sacrifices. They all pointed to Him.
 - "It is finished!" Jesus totally completed all that was needed to satisfy God's wrath and enable Him to give love to sinners.
 - The Most Holy Place was made accessible by Christ's death. It reminds us that because God is so holy, we can only come to Him if God himself makes a way. He did that in Christ.
 - **How does this story show that God is gracious?**
 - Jesus submitted himself to all forms of humiliation and suffering to save us sinners.
 - He was spat on, mocked, reviled, made fun of, beaten, kicked, made to carry His cross, nailed to that cross, hung on cross in agony, died – all because of us!
 - He suffered the indescribable pain of having His Father turn his back on Him. He gave himself willingly. God gave Him up because He loved us so much.
 - Christ died so that those who believe in Him might live.
 - "God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son so that whoever believed in Him would not perish but have eternal life."
 - Christ shed His blood and broke His body for sinners like us.
 - The veil of the temple was torn in two. Sinners can now, by faith in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, approach the Most Holy place where God dwells. We can now be in complete fellowship with God. We can pray directly to God.

- **How does this story show God's faithfulness?**
 - This fulfilled the promise of God in the Garden of Eden and throughout Scripture that God would send a Savior for the world to give His life for sinners.
 - Jesus was clearly the true Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
 - Jesus was a perfect lamb, sinless. His bones were not broken.
 - Jesus fulfilled the job of the tabernacle. The torn curtain shows that sinful man no longer needs a priest or a bloody sacrifice. Jesus finished the sacrifice.
 - All the requirements for the blood sacrifice were completed forever in Christ. Every OT sacrifice had pointed to this moment.
 - Many prophecies were fulfilled in this story. For example:
 - He was pierced, crushed, suffered for our sin. (Isaiah 53:4-6), hit and spit on (Isaiah 50:6), crucified among sinners (Isaiah 53:12), mocked, and insulted (Ps 22:6-8)
 - His hands and feet were pierced (Ps 22:16, Zech 12:10) They cast lots for His clothes (Ps 22:18)

- **What do we learn about man from this story?**
 - Man is infinitely valuable to God. He "so loved him that He gave His only Son . . ."
 - Man is sinful, wicked, rebellious, and hard hearted. The Jews hated Jesus, mocked him, and had him killed. So many refused to believe their need for a Savior. Their pride prevented them from seeing and admitting their sin.
 - Men are weak and helpless to save themselves. The disciples hid and deserted Jesus, including Peter, who had vowed to never leave Him.

- **What does this story teach us about how man relates to God?**
 - Only by believing in Jesus and what He did on the cross are men saved.
 - Like the Passover lamb, people are now saved by putting their hope in the way of salvation God has made. Only those sinners who hide themselves behind the blood of the lamb by faith are saved from death.
 - The thief admitted his sin, repented, believed in Jesus and was saved!
 - Jesus said, "It is finished!" All that was necessary to satisfy God's wrath toward sinners has been done!

General Application Questions:

- It is finished! No more sacrifices are needed. Jesus has done all that is necessary for you to be rescued from sin and death. He is calling out to you to repent of your sin and trust in what He has suffered for you. He continues to call out to you in this way even after you are saved. Repentance and faith are the heart of how we continue to grow closer to Jesus. **What kinds of things prevent us from repenting and believing?**
- You've done nothing to earn your salvation so you have no reason to be proud. Jesus did it all! Your response should be thankfulness and humility. How could living a life of deeper humility help you to better draw others toward our Savior?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What is something in your life that makes it hard for you to live a life of true repentance and trust the Gospel?**
- Believer, if you were to live more fully day-by-day truly trusting that you are saved and cleansed and forgiven, how could your life be different? **What effort to save yourself can you now lay aside** to experience freedom, knowing Jesus finished the work of providing you salvation?

40. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18

Jesus was buried before the Sabbath began at sunset on Friday, and Pilate put four Roman guards at the tomb. The Sabbath ended at sunset on Saturday. Before the sun was up Sunday morning, the women went to the tomb with more spices and ointments for Jesus' body. They asked each other, "Who is going to roll the stone away from the tomb for us?" Suddenly there was another huge earthquake. An angel of the Lord rolled the stone away and sat on it! The Roman guards at the tomb were so scared they fell down on the ground in a faint.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus, but He's not here. He is risen just like He said He would be. Don't you remember what He said? 'The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful men, be crucified, and three days later rise to life.'" Then the angel said, "Come, see where He was lying. Then go tell the disciples he's going to Galilee ahead of you, and you will see Him there. Now don't forget what I've told you." So the women ran off to find the disciples.

When the women left, some of the guards at the tomb went back to the chief priests and told them what happened. Then the religious leaders gave the soldiers a lot of money and told them, "You have to say that His disciples came and stole the body while you were asleep."

When the women found the disciples they told them everything that had happened. Many of the disciples did not believe them. But Peter and John went racing to the tomb. John got there first because he ran faster, and he peeked inside, but he did not go in. When Peter got there, he went straight inside the tomb. He saw the strips of cloth Jesus' body was wrapped in, but there was not a body inside the wrappings anymore! Then John went inside too. They both saw that the tomb was empty, and they believed!

They returned to the other disciples and told them what they had seen. The disciples were all amazed that Jesus had risen. Later that day Jesus suddenly appeared among the disciples where they were hiding, but Thomas was not present. When the others told him about it, he said, "I will not believe until I see the nail marks in his hands and put my hand in his side."

Later, while the disciples were in the upper room with the door locked, Jesus suddenly appeared among them. He said, "Peace be among you. Thomas, come, see my hands and put your hand in my side. Stop doubting and believe!" Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus answered, "You have seen and believed, but blessed are those who do not see and yet believe."

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Why is Jesus' resurrection from the dead important?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about God in this story? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **How does this story show us God's Power?**
 - He raised Jesus from the dead!
 - He had power over creation. He caused the earthquake and made the soldiers faint.
 - He had authority over angels. The angel rolled the stone away and spoke to the women.
- **How does this story show us that God knows everything?**
 - Jesus had said He would die and rise again in three days. It happened!
 - The angel knew where disciples would meet Jesus.
 - God knew what it would take to give victory over death and to build the faith of the disciples.
 - Jesus knew the hearts of the disciples and what they needed for encouragement.
- **How does this story show us that God is gracious?**
 - God gave victory over death to all who believe in Jesus. By raising Jesus, God proclaimed that what Jesus did on the cross was enough to save sinners!
 - God showed mercy to Roman guards as well as religious leaders. Despite their sin against him, he gave them time to keep living and repent.
 - God communicated with the ladies through the angel.
 - Jesus allowed himself to be handed over to sinful men – for the sake of sinful men!
 - He showed mercy and patience to Thomas when he did not believe.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - Jesus said over and over again that He would rise from the dead – and He did!
 - God promised in the Garden of Eden that He would send a Savior some day, the Seed of the woman, who would defeat Satan and conquer the death that man's sin brought into the world. Here He did it!!! And by raising Jesus from the dead, God declared that salvation was truly accomplished!
 - The Psalms said the Savior would be raised from the dead, and he was!

What do we learn about man from this story?

- God loves Him enough to raise His Son from the dead so that man can know Him!
- Man struggles with unbelief – as the disciples did.
- Man lies to cover up the truth, as the religious leaders did by paying the guards to lie.

What do we learn about how man relates to God?

- God had to make a way for man to be saved. He alone raised Jesus.
- The ladies believed the angel. Man is saved by faith in the Savior.
- Only a risen Savior would be enough to save us from our sin! A dead man would only be another brave warrior who died for us, but would not take our guilt away!

General Application Questions:

- God did this all for you! Jesus gave himself over to sinful men to be crucified so that your sin could be paid for. And God raised Him from the dead to prove that He has conquered death for us. **How should each of us respond to this wonderful news of His love?**
- If God has power to raise Jesus from death, He has power to help us with our problems. What are some of the situations believers face today where we need to remember God's power?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- Christ's resurrection guarantees our resurrection at the last day to eternal life. Christian, how can confidence in your future resurrection change the way you live your life? **In what area of your life do doubts enter your life? What would it look like for you to trust God more with this concern or anxiety today?**
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41. THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Luke 24:13-35

On that same day, Sunday, two of Jesus' followers were walking the seven miles home from Jerusalem to their village of Emmaus. They were talking about what had happened in the past few days. Suddenly another traveler was walking with them. It was Jesus, but they did not recognize him.

"What are you talking about so seriously?" asked the stranger. They stopped in the road, and their faces were twisted with grief. One of them spoke because he was astonished, saying, "Are you the only one in Jerusalem who doesn't know what's happened these last few days?"

"Well, what things?" He asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth. This man was a powerful prophet from God. But our religious leaders had Him crucified. And we had hoped He was the one to set Israel free."

"On top of that, this is the third day since it happened. Some of our women went to the tomb early this morning, and they could not find His body. They came back claiming that angels told them He's alive. Some of us went to the tomb, and it was just like the women said. But no one has seen Him."

Then Jesus said, "You are so slow to believe the prophets! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things to enter His glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained everything that the scriptures said concerning Himself.

As they were getting close to Emmaus, Jesus acted like he was going farther down the road but they said to Him, "Look, it's nearly evening. Spend the night with us." So He went home with them.

When they sat down to supper, Jesus took the bread and blessed it. Then He broke it and gave them some. Suddenly they recognized Him! It was Jesus! And just like that, He disappeared. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Within an hour they were headed back up the road to Jerusalem. When they found the disciples and some others gathered together, they heard the same story from them. "It is true! The Lord is risen! He has appeared to Simon Peter!"

Then the two men from Emmaus told everything that happened on their way home and how they recognized the Lord when He broke the bread for them.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- Is there a time in your life when things were not turning out in the way you expected? How did God help you get through that time?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about God in this story? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **How does this story show us that God is all powerful?**
 - He had power to raise Jesus from the dead.
 - Jesus had power to suddenly appear and disappear and to be recognized when He wanted.
 - He had power to change the two men's hearts and to encourage them.
 - God sent angels to appear to the ladies and to Peter.
- **How does this story show us that God knows everything?**
 - Jesus knew the disciples and their thoughts and situation.
 - He knew the Scriptures completely and how to make them clear to His followers.
- **How does this story show us God's grace?**
 - Jesus patiently communicated with the two men, explaining Scripture to them.
 - He patiently showed that all of Scripture is the story of God's grace toward sinners.
 - Jesus was patient with their doubt and unbelief.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - Jesus showed that all of the Scriptures had been pointing to this time, the time when the Messiah would suffer and die for the sins of the world and then be raised again after three days. It was all the fulfillment of God's great promises.
 - God raised Jesus from the dead, keeping His promise to send the Seed of the Woman who would defeat Satan and death.

What do we learn about man from this story?

- Man is weak and slow to understand, full of doubts and fears, just as were the two men.
- Disciples were looking for the type of Savior that they wanted. They were more concerned about national freedom than freedom from sin. Man is blind to the depth of his sin.
- Man can only understand God and His work as God makes it clear to Him through His Word.

What does this story show us how man relates to God?

- Jesus called the men to an understanding of God's promises and faith in the Christ.
- Only through the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption is man able to be saved from sin.
- Salvation could only be accomplished if the Christ suffered as had been told in Scripture.
- Jesus worked faith into the hearts of the men. Only by faith could they really know Him. He challenged their unbelief.

General Application Questions:

- What things in our lives lead us to discouragement and despair? What things make it hard sometimes to believe God is at work in our lives? How can this story encourage us?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- **What are you discouraged about today? In what way do you feel God has not showed up to help you? How can this story encourage you?**
 - Jesus was so patient with the two disciples as He explained to them all the Scriptures said about Himself. In what area of your life do you need to remember His patience with you?
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42. APPEARANCES AND ASCENSION OF JESUS

Luke 24:36-53, Matthew 28:16-20

When the two brothers from Emmaus came to tell the disciples about meeting Jesus, while they were still talking, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they had seen a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, He asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate it in their presence.

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms." Then He opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

When He had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany on a mountain, the disciples worshiped Him but some doubted. Just before He was taken up into heaven, He lifted up his hands and blessed them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Then they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Ask a Pre-story question to the whole group or discuss it in pairs.

- What does it mean to make disciples?

THE THE STORY: Tell the story and learn it together as a group through many repetitions.

POST-STORY DISCUSSION: Lead a discussion guided by these questions:

What do we learn about God in this story? How do we see that Jesus is God?

- **How does this story show us that God is all powerful?**
 - Jesus appeared to them in a closed room.
 - He was truly raised physically from the dead and proved it.
 - He was able to give peace to their troubled hearts.
 - Jesus was changing the hearts of the disciples. They were joyful after He left them the second time rather than in despair.

- He promised to provide them power from on high to be His witnesses.
- **How does this story show us God knows everything?**
 - Jesus knew their doubts and how to assure them.
 - He knew he would leave them and what would happen to them afterwards, that the Spirit would empower them.
 - He knew the Scriptures totally and was able to explain all that had happened.
- **How does this story show us God's holiness?**
 - God hates sin. The only way for sins to be forgiven was for Jesus to sacrifice his own life for us. Jesus explained it all again to the disciples.
- **How does this story show us God's grace?**
 - Jesus gave his life for our sins.
 - He appeared to His frightened, weak, doubting disciples to strengthen them. He was patient with their doubts. He gave them peace.
 - Jesus patiently communicated with them and explained all that had happened and what would happen in the future.
 - He blessed His disciples before ascending to heaven and promised to empower them to bless others with the news of salvation.
- **How does this story show us God's faithfulness?**
 - Jesus rose from the dead as he had promised.
 - He reminded them of how the words of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets had been fulfilled in Him. This showed God's faithfulness to his plan of salvation for sinners.
 - He was continuing God's promise to bless all of the nations through Abraham's family and through the disciples!

What do we learn about man from this story?

- Man is a sinner. This is why Christ died for us.
- Even the disciples, those who knew Jesus best, were weak and full of doubts. They could not save or help themselves and needed Jesus to encourage them.
- After Jesus appeared and strengthened their faith, the disciples were full of joy and gratitude to God, ready to serve Him.

What does this story show us about how man relates to God?

- Only through the death and resurrection of Christ is salvation possible as people repent of their sins and receive forgiveness by trusting in Jesus.
- God uses his disciples as witnesses to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to the nations and to make more disciples through baptism and teaching them His commands.

**** WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "MAKE DISCIPLES"?**

- **Consider what Jesus says:** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." According to this statement, what does making disciples include?
 - **Baptizing** - What does this mean? Does it just mean the actual act of baptizing?
 - No, it means evangelizing, leading people to repentance and faith in Jesus and having them publicly identify themselves with Christ and his people through baptism.
 - **Teaching** (doing discipleship with believers) - So what does this discipleship involve?
- **Discipleship:** Let us look at what discipleship is and how we are to live out making disciples. Here is a good definition of discipleship:

- Discipleship is ***intentionally*** equipping believers with the **Word of God** through **accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit** to increasingly live lives rooted in ongoing **repentance and faith in the Gospel** in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ.
- **So, looking closely at this definition, what are the key parts of discipleship?**
 - Intentional - It is a purposeful practice of mature believers of helping younger believers
 - Bible based - It's content is from God's Word, and it's methods are guided by God's Word.
 - Accountable - it involves commitment from both the discipler and the one being disciplined.
 - Relationship - it is best done in the context of meaningful, committed relationships between believers and those discipling them. It is best accomplished in one-on-one or small group relationships.
 - Spirit empowered - Both the discipler and the disciple are prayerfully dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen them for the journey.
 - Gospel driven - a lifestyle of Spirit led self examination, growing repentance, and deepening trust in all the Christ did for us on the cross is key to producing disciples who are humble and joyful and love to obey God's Word more and more.
- **What is the purpose of all of this?**
 - To help grow mature and faithful followers of Christ, full of humility and love, living in growing repentance and trust in the Gospel, overflowing with Christ's love for the lost, for other believers, and for the world.
- **Let's look back at the stories we have been learning about Jesus Christ and look at how Jesus did discipleship.**
 - In which stories do we see **Jesus being intentional in training his disciples?**
 - In which stories do we see **Jesus discipling them based on the Word of God?**
 - In which stories do we see **Jesus holding his disciples accountable?**
 - In which stories do we see **Jesus' discipleship being based on close relationship?**
 - In which stories do we see **Jesus depending on the power of the Holy Spirit in his discipleship?**

General Application Questions:

- What are some of the things that prevent us from helping Christian converts grow more and more into disciples of Jesus? What are some things we could do differently in our churches to do a better job of both 1) leading people to faith in Christ, and 2) helping them to become mature disciples who follow Christ in all areas of their lives?
- How does knowing that Christ is with you and is at God's right hand now interceding for you encourage you to be His witness and disciple maker?

Possible Application Questions (Small Group or Personal): (Choose one or two questions to focus on.)

- If you have experienced repentance and forgiveness through Christ, are you now ready to be a witness for Him wherever He puts you? **Whom do you think He is calling you to share the Good News with this week?**
 - **Who is one person that you can either continue to disciple or can begin discipling? (Name them specifically).** How can you begin to use these tools of Bible Storying and the definition of discipleship to help you replicate a faithful follower of Jesus?
 - Who could you ask to help you grow as a disciple of Christ? Pray that God would help you find such a person.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX #1

CBS Overview: Tracing the Promise of a Savior

In the very beginning God created everything good. There was nothing wrong, sinful, or broken. No disease, no war, no conflict, no hunger. He created angels to worship him and serve him. They were part of his good creation. Lucifer, the most powerful of the angels, wanted to be like God and take his place, so he rebelled against God along with some of the other angels. They were driven from God's presence because God is an all knowing, all powerful, and Holy God. This Holy God cannot stay with sinners and sin must be punished, so the man and woman were driven out of the garden away from God's presence. These rebellious angels are now evil spirits in the world today, and even Lucifer, now called Satan, is still trying to deceive people so that they will not listen to God.

So again, God created the world completely good and created mankind extra special. Mankind is the pinnacle of creation because we were created in God's image. Man was given dominion over the earth and told to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. God rested and modeled Sabbath rests for us. The next story shows that man was made uniquely from the dust of the earth. His work in the garden was to cultivate and care for God's creation. God had created two special trees in the middle of the garden; the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The man commanded that he could eat from all the trees except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because the day he would eat from that tree he would die. There was no suitable helper for the man so God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him and from his rib he formed a woman. The two were united together and became one flesh. They were both in the garden of Eden without sin and without shame.

In the next story the serpent comes to the woman and deceives her by telling her that if she eats the fruit, she will be wise like God, knowing good and evil. Seeing that the fruit was good for food, a delight to the eyes, and good for gaining wisdom, she chooses to go against God's command and eats the fruit. She then gives some to her husband who was also there with her. We learn that the husband was present and was silent and did not speak up and stop his wife from sinning but willfully participated in sin. Once God confronts them, the man and the woman begin to cover themselves to hide their shame, and then blame their sin on others. God then brought the curses on the serpent, the woman, and the man. We learned that in the curse on the serpent, who was Satan in disguise, God mysteriously promised a Savior in Gen 3:15 when he said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed, the seed of the woman will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." God also modeled a blood sacrifice in this story where he provided animal skins for both the man and the woman. They could not cover, hide, or blame away their sin. They could not be accepted by God without blood

being shed by an innocent substitute that died in their place After this they are driven out from the presence of God. They were physically and spiritually separated from God, and the relationship was broken. The rest of the Old Testament shows God being faithful to fulfill the promise of Gen 3:15 that one day he would bring through the line of the woman, a person who would crush Satan and all the works of destruction and decay that he led us into., This Savior would remove the sting of sin and death and bring mankind back into right relationship with him.

The next story, Cain and Abel, shows that man must come to God the way God has instructed. As God told Cain, sin is crouching at the door and wants to devour us. Even after Cain killed his brother Abel, God was gracious and provided a replacement son in Seth through whom the promise of a Savior would come.

Next, in the story of Noah and the flood, mankind's sin had become great on the earth, and "God saw that every intention of the thoughts of the heart of man were always evil." God promised to save Noah and his family and rescued them from the great flood. Though Noah was a sinner like all men, he was a righteous man who walked with God. He did what God commanded him to prepare for the flood, building the ark and collecting all the animals. After saving Noah, God put a rainbow in the sky as a promise of his covenant with mankind to never again flood the whole earth with a flood. This story is a picture of salvation. By keeping Noah and his family alive, God was keeping alive his promise of a Savior who would one day come through the Seed of the woman. The ark was also a picture of salvation. The only way for Noah and his family to be saved from drowning was to be inside the ark when the flood came. There was only one door or one way into salvation from the flood. Jesus is our one door to salvation. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except through me." (John 14:6) Jesus also said, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me he will be saved." (John 10:8,9).

Many generations after Noah God appeared to a man named Abram who, along with his wife, was very old and childless. He was told to leave everything and go with his wife and nephew to a land that God would show him. God promised he would make Abram a great nation, that he would make his name great, that he would bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him, and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him. God was telling Abram that the promise of the Savior coming from the Seed of the woman would come through his descendants. Abram obeyed and went to Canaan, the promised land. Even though Abram sinned and lied about his wife in Egypt because of fear, God still chose to bless him. Later, after he and Lot had returned to Canaan as very wealthy men, a conflict arose between their sheperds over grass and water for their animals. Though Abram had the right to choose where to keep his herds, instead he let Lot choose the land to live in. Later when Abram needed assurance, God appeared to him and told him not to fear. When Abram doubted and asked what good it would be if he had all this land and animals but didn't have a son to inherit, God took him outside, showed him

the night sky, and told him if he could count the stars then he would know how many his descendants would be. And "Abram believed God and God credited it to him as righteousness". Abram's faith is what saved him, not his works.

In the next story, Abram shows his faith by being obedient to God's call to go and sacrifice his only son, Isaac, for whom he had waited twenty-five years, on the mountain. The story is a picture or type of Christ as Isaac was the only son of Abram just as Christ was the only son of God. Also, Isaac submitted to his father's will to be sacrificed just as Jesus Christ submitted to his father's will and died on the cross. Isaac also carried the wood up the mountain to the place where he was to be sacrificed just as Christ carried the cross up the hill where he would be crucified until he could carry it no further and received help. The only difference is that a perfect lamb appeared to be a replacement lamb for Isaac but Jesus Christ was himself the perfect lamb standing in for all sinners who would put their faith in him.

Next, God repeats the same promises to Isaac and his son, Jacob, that he had given to Abraham. He repeated these in a dream he gave Jacob while he was fleeing from his brother after cheating him out of his birthright and his father's blessing.

Years later, God preserves his promise to bring mankind a savior by allowing Jacob's favorite son Joseph to be sold by his brothers into slavery. Joseph faced many trials but God was with him and helped him. Even at the very end after Jacob had died and Joseph's brothers feared his revenge, Joseph was able to say to them, "Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended It for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." God used Joseph to save his family. The line of the promised Savior would continue through his brother Judah.

After Joseph died, there arose another Pharaoh that did not know Joseph, and he made the Israelites their slaves. After around 400 years Moses was born and had to be put in the river as the Pharaoh made a decree that every Israelite male was to be killed. Moses survived and was rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter and grew up in the royal palace. He later saw the affliction of the Israelites and killed an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite slave. He then fled to the desert and lived there for the next forty years. While there, he married and began to shepherd the flock of his father-in-law. One day at Mt. Sinai an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush. God promised to rescue his people through Moses and bring them out to worship him on the very same mountain Moses was on. Moses doubted but God was patient with him and gave him many signs and even agreed to have his brother Aaron go along with him to help him.

Moses and Aaron went to the Pharaoh to tell him God said, "Let my people go!" When Pharaoh refused and made their work harder, God sent nine different plagues. Each time Pharaoh agreed to let the people go if the plague would only go away, but after the plague

was removed, he changed his mind and refused to let the Israelites go. Then God promised one final plague, after which Pharaoh would drive them out completely. This was the Passover which was to be celebrated every year to remind the people of Israel that God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt. Each family had to take a perfect one year old male goat or sheep and slaughter it. They then were to paint the blood on the doorposts and stay inside behind the blood of the perfect lamb sacrifice until morning. They could not break the bones and had to do everything God commanded them. The people of Israel were saved but the firstborn children of Egypt all died. What God had promised Abraham and long before had come true. The people were slaves in a foreign land for 400 years and then came out with great wealth.

The Israelites were set free and went towards the promised land being led by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night. When they reached the Red Sea, they were trapped between the sea and Pharaoh's army. The Israelites were afraid and told Moses he had made a mistake. Moses said, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." God parted the sea and the Israelites walked right through. God delivered the people through his servant Moses, and the Egyptians were defeated. Just as the only way of salvation for the Israelites was through the Red Sea, the only way for us to come to God and be delivered from our sin and death is God's way.

The Israelites come to Mt. Sinai where God gives his perfect law God is a Holy God who wanted to separate his people from the rest of the surrounding cultures to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. The ten commandments were given to Moses, and the people said they would obey it completely, But in a very short time, while Moses had climbed the mountain to receive the written copy of the ten commandments, the people became impatient for his return and built and worshiped a golden calf. After punishing many of those who rebelled, God forgave the Israelites and continued to be with them when they repented.

After this it was time to build God's dwelling place with his people, the Tabernacle. The Israelites contributed all the valuable things to build the Tabernacle, which was a tent divided by a curtain into two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. It was surrounded outside by walls of animal skins. There were special sacrifices every day and night and different ways in which the priest had to conduct themselves. Aaron was appointed High Priest pointing to the great and final high priest, Jesus Christ. Every year on the day of Atonement the High priest would get one bull and two goats. First he would slaughter the bull and take the blood in the Most Holy Place and sprinkle it on the ark of the covenant for the forgiveness of his own sins first. He would then sacrifice one of the goats and return to the Most Holy Place and sprinkle the blood on the ark of the covenant for the forgiveness of the sins of the people of Israel. He would then take the third goat and

confess the sins of the people onto the head of the goat. Then it would be taken far into the desert to never return to symbolize the sins of the people being carried away. While the priests entered the Holy Place every morning and evening, only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place and then only once per year on the Day of Atonement as the mediator for the people of God. This points us to the true mediator, Jesus Christ, sitting at the right hand of the Father, mediating for all Christians.

After leaving Mt. Sinai, God led the Israelites to the border of the Promised Land where Moses sent twelve spies into Canaan to check out the land. Tragically when the people heard the reports of the spies, they feared and did not trust God to give them victory over the Canaanites so God punished them by sending them back into the desert for forty more years. Finally after this time, when all the adults except Caleb and Joshua had died out, God helped Joshua lead them into the Promised Land. After Joshua died, the Israelites did not destroy or chase out all of the Canaanites as God had instructed but mixed with them and were led into idolatry. Over four hundred years, the Israelites went through repeated cycles of rebelling against God, then being punished by God through enemy nations, then repenting of their sin, and finally being delivered by a judge who God sent. After a period of peace and prosperity they would turn to the idols of their neighbors again to restart the cycle. God's kindness in sending judges like Gideon, Deborah, Samson, and Samuel when the Israelites repented showed his faithfulness to fulfill the promise of Genesis 3:15 to bring a Savior for sinful man through the Seed of the woman despite the Israelites continuing to do what was right in their own eyes.

When the Israelites rejected God as king and begged for a human king, Saul was appointed king. He began his kingship trusting God and serving faithfully, but later became proud, turned away, and disobeyed God time after time. After Saul, still faithful to fulfill His promise of a Savior coming through the Seed of the woman, God appointed David as king, and promised him that he would always have a descendant sitting on the throne. David was a man after God's own heart, though he fell terribly into sin several times, including his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband. When he repented, God showed him mercy, and eventually gave him a son, Solomon, who would continue the work that King David had started.

After Solomon, because of his sin, the kingdom was divided into the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah. Over hundreds of years there were many kings in both kingdoms. Except for some of the kings in Judah, most of them rebelled against God. In these years God sent many prophets to these kingdoms, warning of sin and judgment, promising mercy when the people would repent, and giving hope of an eternal kingdom. They made many prophecies about what the promised Savior - the circumstances of his birth, what he would be like, what he would do,, and how he would die and be raised again. After the people of Judah were exiled in Babylon and brought back, the final

prophecies occurred. Then for 400 years there was silence - no word from the Lord. The people of God just waited.

Finally, after the 400 years, the silence was broken, and Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel and told of the child she would bear even though she was a virgin, the child who would be the Savior of the world. The angel had already appeared to Zechariah, and his wife gave birth to John the Baptist. Jesus was born to the virgin Mary in Bethlehem just as had been prophesied. After Jesus reached adulthood, the time came for him to enter his ministry, so he came to be baptized by John. When John baptized Jesus, the heavens opened, and the spirit descended like a dove, and a voice from Heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, whom I am well pleased." The next day, John saw Jesus again and declared to his followers, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!"

After Jesus chose his twelve disciples, he did and spoke many things that showed that he is indeed the promised Savior, the curse reverser. He is the one who has the power to crush the Serpent/Satan and reverse all the curses that came on mankind and the world in the Garden of Eden because of man's sin. Jesus showed in the story of the paralyzed man that he has power to forgive sins, that he is the Son of Man who was prophesied about in Daniel. It also shows that he has the power to heal and power of the sickness that came into the world after the fall of mankind. In the story of the Samaritan Woman, he shows that he has the power to give living water in the story of the Samaritan Woman. He is indeed the Savior who can satisfy the deepest part of our souls. Where we search for satisfaction in all sorts of idols, Jesus is the only one who can give us this living water. We also see here that Jesus fulfilling the promise given to Abram that all the nations would be blessed through his seed. Jesus is bringing the good news to those outside the Jews, in this case the Samaritans.

The next story shows that Jesus has the power to break the curse on the man where he would have to battle to feed his family by the sweat of his brow. Jesus has power to provide food when he fed the 5000. Jesus is the bread of life. In the story of healing the demon possessed boy, Jesus shows his power over the demons who came into the world with the fall of Lucifer. Finally, when he raises Lazarus from the dead we see that Jesus has power over Death itself!

The next two stories teach about how we are to come to Jesus. The story of the Rich Young Ruler shows that the law has no power to save and that we cannot build our righteousness on our good deeds but that we need a completely different way to think about it. Whatever we are trusting instead of Jesus to give us life, i.e. whatever is preventing us from drawing near to Jesus by repentance and faith alone, we need to sell it, to get rid of it!. Our foundation must be Jesus Christ and anything that we put above him must be taken down in order to follow him. The story of the sinful woman shows that the

fruit of experiencing God's forgiveness through faith in Christ is love. Those who follow him will show their faith by how they love Jesus and also others.

Now that we have seen through His words and deeds that Jesus is indeed the Savior promised in the Garden of Eden, the Curse Reverser, here in this final line of stories on our Bible storying cloth, we see Jesus DOING what he needed to do in order to save us! First, in his final time of fellowship with his disciples before his death, he shares the Lord's Supper with them. He instructs them that going forward His followers are to take the Lord's Supper often to remind us of His blood that was shed for us and His body that was broken for us. Jesus then takes his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane where he prays. His disciples cannot stay awake even though he warns and pleads with them. Jesus prays the same prayer over and over, "Father, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet, not what I will but what you will be done."

Finally, Judas comes to betray Jesus, and he is arrested and taken before the High Priest where he is silent and does not defend himself against all the false accusations. Eventually Jesus does speak and tells the High Priest that he will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds, a claim to divinity that the book of Daniel prophesied about. The High Priest recognizes this claim and cries, "Blasphemy" while he tears his clothes and sends him to Pilate for sentencing. Pilate does not find guilt in Jesus, yet he has him flogged. Then he finally decides to allow the mob to decide, and they choose to have Barabbas freed and Jesus crucified.

Jesus is then forced to carry his cross through the town, a sign of great shame. When he can carry it no longer a man named Simon is forced to carry the cross for him. He is crucified at Golgotha, and the soldiers throw lots for his clothes just as it had been prophesied. After three hours all went dark as Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" And then he said "It is Finished," and he said, "Into your hands I commit my Spirit." The ground shook, and there was darkness, and the temple veil was torn in two from the top to the bottom. Even the Roman Centurion said, "Surely this was the Son of God!" Then Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb, just as the Old Testament had prophesied.

Then, on the third day, while the women were on the way to the tomb early in the morning another earthquake happened, and an angel rolled away the stone. When the women arrived they found the angel there and the roman soldiers lying on the ground like dead men, but Jesus was no longer there. The angel gave them the report, and they had different encounters with Jesus before reaching back to the disciples. It is an amazing fact that it was women who were the first to see the risen Lord and not men. Women during that time had no legal standing and their testimony would hold no weight in a court of law, but yet God chose women to be the first ones to witness his resurrection.

The disciples also have interactions with Jesus over the next period of time with Jesus appearing to them multiple times. Thomas was one of the disciples who doubted, but God appeared to him later, and Thomas believed by proclaiming, "My Lord and My God." Jesus then said, "You have seen and believed, but blessed are those who do not see and yet believe." Jesus then appears to two of his followers on the road to Emmaus. He opens their minds to understand the Scriptures and reveals to them how the entire Old Testament is about himself. Later he appears again to the disciples and leads them to the vicinity of Bethany and blesses them. He also opens their minds to understand the Scriptures and how the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms are all pointing to himself. When he reached the right place, Jesus blessed them and gave them the Great Commission. He then ascended into heaven and left them to wait to receive the promised Holy Spirit which he would give them after his ascension.

During all these stories we see the importance of blood sacrifice in the Old Testament. This shows that there must be the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins. (Hebrews 9:22) We see so many sacrifices in the Old Testament where blood was poured out. We see later that the blood of bulls and rams could never truly take away our sins. It was all pointing to the perfect lamb of God, his own Son who would come and dwell among us and live a sinless life, die the death on the cross that we as sinners deserve, and then be resurrected three days later showing he has power over sin and death. Satan has been defeated. He still roams the earth trying to deceive people, to keep them from listening to God, but the venomous sting that the serpent used to have is no longer. Jesus was able to crush the sting and venom of the serpent. Sin and death no longer have a hold on us. Because of Christ, we can be brought back into proper relationship with God, and he gives us the power of his Holy Spirit to remind us of our identity, convict us of sin, and to draw us closer to him.

APPENDIX #2

SCHEDULING SUGGESTIONS for CBS trainings:

For teaching the lessons chronologically in your church where you have plenty of time, we **strongly suggest** teaching/preaching **through all forty-two stories**, one by one, doing the next story every week or two, over the course of about a year. This will lay a wonderful foundation within your church for understanding the Gospel fully and maturely. It is important that people get a strong sense of how God has been working out over time His plan to bring a Savior for sinners to the world. This is why you must do them in order and **not skip any major stories**.

We particularly encourage our trainees to train **other pastors or church leaders to be trainers or teachers themselves** so that they may know and teach these stories in their own ministries. When doing such training, we suggest that you at least **teach through the thirty stories marked** in the table of contents with an **asterisk (*)**. The leaders you are training should be able to study the other stories from the booklet and teach them using the model you have set for them. Again, make sure they have a strong understanding of the chronology of the stories and why that's important in God's plan to bring a Savior. There are a variety of **ways to schedule the thirty stories** in order to train other church leaders. You have to choose the one that fits best with your situation and your trainees. Here are several options:

Possible general plans for arranging 30 weeks of training in a year.

- 1) **Teach only one story per week, three stories per month.** Meet for three to four hours each time. During this meeting you should review last week's story, then **work hard to learn the new story together**. Repeat it so many times that **every participant** you are equipping to be a trainer **knows the story very well**. Then lead the dialogue and make sure they feel equipped to lead the dialogue themselves **without reading the notes** to their hearers. They should begin to recognize a repeated pattern in the way we ask questions from these stories. Meet weekly for three consecutive weeks each month, then skip one week in order for participants to rest or catch up or do something different in their church. If this pattern is followed, the course may be completed in ten months. This is the most effective way to schedule training if all the participants are nearby enough to come to the training and return home the same day. It is better if stories are spread out over these months rather than all taught in a few long seminars so that people can learn a small number of stories well and immediately **put them to use** after they've learned them. It is vitally important that each participant in your training be **committed to using the story of the week in ministry that very week**, whether in preaching or teaching.
- Or
- 2) **Teach three stories per month, meeting once per month for two full consecutive days to thoroughly cover the three stories.** Learn and teach the three stories very well as described above. Participants will then be **committed** during the following month to **teach these stories to their church or ministry one by one over the coming weeks**. Then they will return to be trained with three more stories the next month. Of course, this approach will require more revision of individual stories by each participant prior to them using the story in ministry.
- Or
- 3) **Teach six or seven stories over three days, meeting once every two months.** Participants will then be committed during the next two months to relearn each story one per week and teach it to their people. This is the least effective plan because it requires more self-discipline to work hard each week relearning a story. This is only best when all the students and the teacher come from far away and have to spend a lot on transport, therefore making it more financially reasonable to cover a lot of stories in one meeting.

APPENDIX # 3

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE for a SINGLE TRAINING SESSION

of ONE STORY in a 3 to 4 hour session.

(within a 30 Week Chronological Bible Storying Training Program for Pastors and Leaders)

- **(15 min) WORSHIP & PRAYER**
- **(20-30 min) REVIEW last week's story:**
 - Share testimonies about using the stories in varying ministry settings.
 - Get one or two people to share the story from last week.
- **(5-10 min) Introduce a main idea that the story teaches:**
 - Choose an **introductory question** to help people begin thinking. They may discuss this question briefly in pairs or in the larger group.
 - Note the Pre-story introductory questions listed with each story. Use one of these or make up your own.
- **(60 to 90 min) Learn the STORY together:** (suggestions)
 - As the leader, you should narrate the story yourself three to four times for the group.
 - Have people stand and fill in gaps as you tell the story.
 - Have participants tell the story to each other in pairs.
 - **Creative ways to review story:** You may use games between teams or individuals to keep people's attention while they are going through repetitions of the story
 - (SEE APPENDIX: LEARNING ACTIVITY IDEAS).
 - Have two to three individuals get up and tell the story. After each telling, briefly ask the class if there are any changes that could be made in the way the story was told. (i.e. anything left out or added, anything out of order). Always be very encouraging to the one telling the story! Don't make them feel foolish for making mistakes.
 - Each story should be gone through six to ten times while you are together!
 - **Remember! EVERYONE MUST KNOW WELL THE STORY BEFORE LEAVING because they will be telling the story themselves to others by heart!**
- **(40-60 min) Teach the story using the LESSON PLAN outlined in this study guide.**
 - ***See APPENDIX #3 for basic template of dialogue questions for CBS.**
 - You as **teacher** should **LEARN the QUESTIONS BY HEART** and be very familiar with the key answers you are listening for! **DO NOT READ OFF THE QUESTIONS and ANSWERS!!!!** Take plenty of time probing each question helping people observe the story and think hard for possible answers. Create your own follow up questions to help them discover the answers themselves. This is so much better than telling them the answers yourself!
 - Make sure each trainee feels equipped to ask the same questions in their church or ministry so that they can do the training with confidence.
 - ****VERY IMPORTANT! This booklet is ONLY for YOUR PREPARATION as a TEACHER! It is NOT to be used when you are presenting the lesson!!!!**
 - **YOU as teacher MUST KNOW the STORY BY HEART VERY WELL yourself.**

- Also, make sure you **know the basic QUESTIONS** by heart! We use the same basic set of questions for all the stories in this CBS course.
- It is **not important that your students mention every answer that we have provided in this booklet**. But if you read through all the answers and study them yourself ahead of time, then you will have a feel for what is most important. This can direct your follow-up questions.
- **(20 min) Discuss APPLICATION questions** in groups of **three to five people** and pray for one another.
- **(10 min) PRAYER** – Take prayer requests, and pray for one another, especially about how each person is using Chronological Bible Storying in their ministries.

TOTAL – 3-4 hours

APPENDIX # 3-B

In Summary: SIMPLIFIED EXAMPLE of CBS STORY TEACHING: (This little outline is HOW you DO each LESSON!)

- **Introductory Question:** Ask questions and allow participants to discuss in pairs for 5 minutes.
 - receive 2-3 answers.

LEARNING the STORY TOGETHER:

- **Tell Story two or three times (3x)**
 - Ask questions from participants about details of story -(maybe have all of them stand up-they can sit down if they answer correctly)
- **Repeat Story yourself one more time. (1x)**
 - Have students **tell the story in pairs**-each does his/her best to tell the story from memory while the other person listens.
- **Have one or two volunteers tell the story to the group. (2x)**
- Important Note: $3x + 1x + 2x = 6$ **times MINIMUM** for the students to hear the story!
 - ***The goal is always to have the story told 6-8 times in different ways.**
 - Do NOT do fewer times!!! The students must know the story well!

LEARNING MEANING of STORY through QUESTIONS:

- **GOD:**
 - How do we see God's **POWER** in this story?
 - How do we see that God **KNOWS EVERYTHING** in this story?
 - How do we see God's **HOLINESS** in this story?
 - How do we see God's **GRACE** in this story?
 - How do we see God's **FAITHFULNESS** in this story?
- **MAN:**
 - How do we see that he is valuable or special to God?
 - How do we see that man is a sinner and helpless to save himself?
- **RELATIONSHIP - Man in Relationship with God:**
 - What does this story teach us about how man must come to God? How can man be saved? What has God done so that man may be saved?

DISCOVERING PERSONAL APPLICATION through QUESTIONS:

- Ask the preselected question you have chosen to help people discuss how this story impacts their life TODAY! Be ready to give your own answer to the students when you ask the question as an example.
-

APPENDIX #4

INTERPRETATION or UNDERSTANDING QUESTIONS for TEACHING GOAL of EVANGELISM / BASIC DISCIPLESHIP

GOD: What does this story teach us about GOD?

1. How does this story show that God is **all powerful?** (omnipotent, in control, supreme and sovereign)
2. How does this story show that God **knows everything?** and is everywhere? (omniscient, omnipresent)
3. How does this story show that God is **holy?** (righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death to pay for sin)
4. How does this story show that God is **gracious?** (loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates with man)
5. How does this story show that God is **faithful?** (never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says)

MAN: What does this story teach us about MAN?

1. How does this story show that man is **valuable** to God?
2. How does this story show that man is a **sinner** deserving God's just punishment for his sin?
3. How does this story show that man needs God and is **helpless** to save himself?

RELATIONSHIP: What does this story teach us about the RELATIONSHIP between God and Man, i.e. God's saving works and how man should respond?

1. Does this story show that man can only come to God in **God's way?** (according to God's will and plan?)
2. Does this story show that man must have **faith and repentance** in order to please God and be saved?

*EXACT LESSON PLAN to use when helping people understand this template of questions:

STORYING QUESTIONS: GOD, MAN, RELATIONSHIP (SALVATION) – Template or Repeatable Pattern:

- This week we want to discuss one very valuable group of questions, which may be used as a **repeatable** group of questions that may be used in each of our chronological stories to learn about God, man, and how man can be saved. These are a combination of application and interpretation questions (see Topic #7 below). Through them we focus on key character qualities of God and man and observe in the story the details of how these truths are displayed.

GOD

- To begin this discussion, ask the group you are teaching these questions to, **“What do you need to know about God in order to be saved?”** I.e. What character qualities of God must be understood in order for someone to understand the Gospel and know how to be saved? Take plenty of time for people to think and answer. Keep asking them, “What else?” “Anything else?” until you think you've covered most of the needed answers.
- **Next, ask the class to help you group together the answers** that they gave. For example, God's righteousness and holiness could go together, or God's love, grace, and mercy could be grouped together.
- **Finally show them how these groupings can lead you to five basic questions about God** that we can use for every story to describe the most important character qualities of God that should be understood in order to be saved. These are: (Remember – do NOT give them these answers until you have taken plenty of time in discussion.)
 - 1) God's **POWER** – (omnipotence, sovereignty, in control, authority)

- 2) God's **KNOWLEDGE** – (*all knowing, omnipresent*)
 - If God knows everything, you cannot hide your sin.
- 3) God's **HOLINESS** – (*righteous, just, law giver, hates sin, demands death as payment for sin*)
 - If God is holy and perfect, he must punish sin.
- 4) God's **GRACE** – (*loving, merciful toward sinners, kind, communicates, loving*)
 - Because God is gracious he makes a way for us to be saved.
- 5) God's **FAITHFULNESS** – (*never changes, keeps his promises, does what he says*)
 - God always keeps his promises. We can count on Him.

MAN

- Next ask “**What do you need to know about man (yourself) in order to be saved?**”
- **Key answers** should be related to the following:
 - **How valuable or special man is to God. How sinful and lost man is before God.**

RELATIONSHIP: (SALVATION) (How man comes to God)

- Finally ask, “**What does a person need to know about how a person is saved? In other words, what God has done to save us? And “how do we need to respond to what God has done?”**
 - Answers here should focus on God's plan to bring a Savior, who Jesus Christ is, and what Jesus did for us, especially in his crucifixion and resurrection. They should also focus how we are to respond to God by confessing our sin, admitting that we deserve God's wrath and are helpless to save ourselves, and by turning from our sin to Jesus (repentance, and faith).
- Now we can come up with a basic set of questions which can help us to deal with any story we are using:

In Summary Again:

GOD

- Power?
- Knowledge?
- Holiness?
- Grace?
- Faithfulness?

MAN

- **Valuable** to God?
- **Sinner** deserving God's just punishment for his sin
- **Helpless** to save himself.

RELATIONSHIP (between man and God)

- What does this story teach us about how man comes to God? About what God has done to save us and how we are to respond to what God has done.

*This set of questions is a **great starting point to study almost any Bible story!** Over time you can choose which questions work best for each story and to make up more of your own questions! Remember, the goal is to help your students discover these great truths on their own so that they apply them to their lives!*

APPENDIX #5

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS (i.e. Questions to Understand Meaning in a Story) for DIFFERENT TEACHING GOALS or TOPICS

CREATING MORE DIALOGUE QUESTIONS in a different way than the above template.

- ***i.e. for stories and learning purposes NOT in this CBS curriculum**
 - (**See chart at end of booklet - PANGA/JEMBE/MIWANI/GUNIA)
- **Note:** In our 42 CBS stories, our main purpose is evangelism and basic discipleship. We want people to understand the basics of the Gospel and how God was working out His plan to bring us a Savior throughout all of biblical history. However, many times we want to focus on **other topics that Scripture teaches about.**
- **Here are some simple instructions on how to create a helpful set of dialogue questions to use in helping learners discover what God is teaching in a particular story.**
- **EVERY DIALOGUE TEACHING** should have 3 types of questions:
 - **OBSERVATION** (of DETAILS) - **WHAT DOES IT SAY?** / also called **JEMBE* (hoe) QUESTIONS:** These are mostly closed questions helping participants understand the facts about what happened in a story. Start with words like *What? Where? When? How many? How? Which? Who?*
 - I.e: Who are the characters in this story? How did God create the light?
 - **INTERPRETATION** (some people call these "spiritual observations") - **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** / also called **MIWANI* (eye glasses) QUESTIONS:** Find the meaning, what God was teaching through the story. Mostly use open questions for these questions to explore the meaning. Try to ask follow up questions to help people explore their answers more deeply.
 - Ex. What does this detail teach us about man? How do we see God's love when Jesus does such and such?
 - **APPLICATION- WHAT IS IT SAYING ABOUT MY LIFE TODAY?** / also called **GUNIA* (gunny sack – i.e. take home) QUESTIONS:** Open questions leading to personally applying the meaning to our lives today. Use (*you, we, in your life, today* etc.)
 - I.e: If God is so powerful, what do you need to trust Him with in your life today?
- **PRACTICE** as a GROUP making up observation, interpretation, and application questions.
 - ***NOTE: JEMBE/MIWANI/GUNIA questions.**
 - Sometimes instead of calling these questions observation, interpretation, and application questions we describe them as jembe (hoe), miwani (eyeglasses), and gunia (gunny sack) questions. We have people imagine that the story is like a plot of land that someone is using to benefit himself and his family. First they use a jembe to begin digging up the ground. With the jembe they may dig up many different items - bones, sticks, insects, gems, stones, etc. . With a jembe (observation) question we are just digging out all the details from the story. After digging up certain items, we examine them more closely with our miwani. As we examine them we are asking ourselves, "What does this mean?" or "What does this collection of details teach us?" So with miwani (interpretation) questions we explore the meaning behind some of the details. Finally, after we have examined the objects that we dig up with our miwani, we choose which ones to actually take home with us to use, so we put them in a gunia or gunny sack. So a gunia (application) question helps us know what the meaning or value is for me today? For some groups, it is easy enough to use the words *observation, interpretation,*

and *application*. But for some groups it might be helpful to use the word pictures of *jembe, miwani, and gunia*. Actually when I'm using these words, I sometimes also begin with one question about the actual context of the story. In other words, what happened before this story that will help us understand it better? Or is there any particular word or idea that I should explain before telling the story? So these would be a "context" question. Another way to describe it is as a *panga* or *machete* question. A machete would be used when first clearing a plot of land before beginning to dig.

UNDERSTANDING OPEN VS CLOSED QUESTIONS

- **Open questions are questions that promote dialogue and discussion.** They have a variety of answers, not just yes or no or a simple right or wrong answer. They encourage people to think and to share opinions. They help people learn.
- Examples:
 - **Open question:** Examples: 1) *Why is it important to know that God loves you?"*, 2) *When Jesus allowed the sinful woman to touch his feet, what did this show about his character and what was important to him?*
 - These are open questions because they requires discussion and can lead to meaningful conversation about important topics.
 - **Closed questions:** Examples: 1) *Can God live with those who rebel against Him?"* 2) *What did Moses say next?* 3) *Who were the characters in the story?*
 - These are closed questions because they only require straightforward answers and do not require discussion in order to be answered.
- Closed questions identify facts but have definite answers and do not promote discussion.
 - Note: Closed questions are good when first learning the details of a story. Open questions are most helpful for digging into the meaning and application of the passage.
- **Break into groups. Write three closed questions and three open questions** about a story. Then come together and listen to questions and discuss if they are open or closed questions.

<p>Tool Questions</p>	<p>Panga Questions (Preparation & Context Questions)</p>	<p>Jembe Questions (Observation Questions)</p>	<p>Miwani Questions (Interpretation Questions)</p>	<p>Gunia Questions (Application Questions)</p>
<p>Examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What happened before the story which helps us understand? -What info not included in the story could help us understand? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What did someone DO in the story? -What did anyone SAY? -What CHOICES did someone make? -What was the IMPACT of choices? Who? What? Which? When? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What does this detail(s) teach us? -What do we learn from what was said, done, chosen, etc.? -What truth or meaning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What does this mean for me, you, us? Now? -What change do I need to make in my life?
<p>Type of Answer</p>	<p>Outside Info Context</p>	<p>Details Facts Happenings</p>	<p>Truths Meanings Spiritual Observations</p>	<p>Take Home Message Personal Application Spiritual Application</p>

APPENDIX #6

TEACHING HOW to CRAFT BIBLE STORIES for TELLING

- Activity: Get everyone to open or share a Bible with a neighbor and read the full story. (Ex. Noah, Abraham, or Jacob stories)
 - Ask these questions to the group:
 - Why can we not always just use this story exactly as written?
 - *(sometimes too long, too many details for memory)*
 - What do we need to do to make it more useful for teaching through Bible story telling?
 - *Must keep it BIBLICAL!!! DO NOT CHANGE any facts!*
 - *Just make it SHORT enough to memorizing and telling to others easily!*
 - How should we shorten the story? What things should we remove or not remove?
 - In summary:
- **CHARACTERISTICS of a WELL CRAFTED BIBLE STORY** - A Bible story that is well crafted for telling is:
 - **True to Scripture!**
 - Only tell what is in the Bible. Don't add things that are not there. For some people this will be their main form of Scripture. It is important that it be accurate and true.
 - Always makes sure that people understand that your crafted stories are not Scripture themselves, but that they are derived **from** Scripture. It is important at various times to have people read the Biblical accounts. The Bible must be our final authority.
 - **Clear and Understandable.**
 - Test the story out with other people for understanding
 - **Focus on important points.** Keep in mind your teaching goals when crafting the story. (i.e. with different purposes will emphasize parts of the story)
 - **Memorable / Manageable to Learn.**
 - I.e. it must be **SHORT** enough for others to easily learn the story by heart.
 - **Leave out details that are not essential** to communicate the main meaning of the story at this time.
 - Remove less significant names of people and places (**proper nouns**).
 - Remove excessive **repetition** to help memorize more easily.
 - Make sure the story flows naturally just as it does in the Bible.
 - Identify **key quotations** and memorize them word for word.
 - Ex. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will bite his heel."

OTHER THOUGHTS about CRAFTING BIBLE STORIES for TELLING:

- Three different types of crafted Bible stories (with examples from this booklet):
 - **Word for word** - Ex. Sinful Woman Washes Jesus' Feet, Healing the Paralyzed Man
 - **Crafted**- with minor editing or shortening - Ex. Noah, Passover, Samaritan Woman
 - **Compiled**- multiple passages. Ex. Creation of Angels, Crucifixion, Resurrection
- Be sure you understand the story yourself before crafting it for telling.
 - Who are the characters? What happened before this event? What is the plot? What does the story teach or emphasize? Try to imagine why this story was told.

- Visualize the story and the characters in it.
 - Close your eyes and see the story as you listen to the characters speaking.
 - Pay attention to clues that identify characters. (Ex. Esau was hairy)
- Be aware of things, which may offend, or draw attention away or be confusing.
- Pay attention to where the story begins and ends. Identify parts that draw away focus from the story.
- Explain unusual or unknown things in the story before beginning the story.
- Homework: Craft a story for next week (review at the beginning of class)

APPENDIX 6-B

STEPS FOR CRAFTING YOUR OWN STORIES ORALLY (in a group)

(Same principles as above. A creative way to teach a group to craft stories)

- **PRAY for preparation**
 - It is God's Word and must be communicated clearly and accurately
- **READ SCRIPTURE PASSAGE**
 - Read Scripture passage aloud to self or in group two times (Do not take notes)
 - Close Bible
- **TELL STORY ALOUD**
 - Tell story out loud - as a group helping each other or taking turns. No notes, no reading!
 - Do not memorize or worry if it is not exact.
- **READ SCRIPTURE PASSAGE AGAIN**
 - Read passage again, checking for details you left out that perhaps should be added. Talk about any details that may be skipped (no writing yet!).
 - Aim to make stories they can be told in about four minutes or less.
- **TELL STORY AGAIN as GROUP**
 - In your group tell story in circle. Each person tells part of story, and then hands off to next person. Go through story two times this way.
 - After telling it twice in this way, talk together about different decisions you made about what to include and omit from the story.
 - Finally, have one or more persons tell the whole story.
- **PRESENT**
 - Practice telling the story with good gestures, acting, volume, and eye contact.
- **RECORD**
 - After teaching the story to more people, you may want to write down a simple outline (NOT word for word) to help you recall the story for future teaching or you may write it word for word, but don't try to memorize it that way!

APPENDIX #7

USEFUL ACTIVITIES for LEARNING a STORY in a GROUP SETTING

- **Drama** (Acting out a story can help people who learn by seeing, hearing, and doing!)
- **Songs** (are sometimes easier to remember because of a tune)
- **Learn and Switch** (if each person learns a small part, they can tell the story together, then they can switch parts or teach each other their parts to put the story together.)
- **Fill in the Blank** (telling the story leaving easy blanks for the group to fill in)
- **Objects & Pictures** (drawing pictures or finding objects to represent things in the story can help jog our memory when someone gets stuck).
- **Games** (can add fun, excitement, competition and help refresh ones memory.) Give incentive to learn. Examples:
 - **Choose Who is Next**- One person starts, at the pause choose a person to go next.
 - **Team A vs. Team B** -Two teams tell the story back and forth. Make a friendly competition of it.
 - **Questions**- Start by asking one team a question. If they get it right, that person gets the chance to ask a question to the opposing team about the story. If they are wrong the leader asks.
 - **Pass the Rungu**- Pass a rungu or other symbolic object around the circle while someone begins telling the story. When the storyteller suddenly stops talking, the person holding the rungu at that moment must continue the story from where it was left off.

APPENDIX #8

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TRAINING TOPICS to improve understanding and skills in Bible storying.

Note: When training a group of church leaders over a period of time to use chronological Bible storying in training their church members, you may occasionally interject some of these brief topics before or after teaching a particular story/lesson. These topics will deepen your trainees' understanding of the foundations of Bible storying and of the skills required to be a strong Bible story trainer. In many of these topics, we **have included questions that may be used to help teach about the topic**. Remember that whenever you are teaching in this methodology it is always good to try to first teach by asking helpful questions so that listeners may discover answers on their own. This is better than simply lecturing them to transfer information to them. There is also sometimes included a possible homework assignment to use with your students.

TOPIC #1- ADVANTAGES of using whole STORIES in TEACHING rather than isolated verses

- "What two methods did I use?" Told/memorized Bible story, discussed with questions.
- "Let's talk about the advantages of learning a Bible story together. What are some?"
 - It gives a plan to follow as you move through chosen stories. Keeps you on target.
 - People identify with stories. You don't have to make many explanations.
 - Building stories in order and gives time for understanding the big picture.
 - It gives the opportunity to look at God's character qualities in each story.
 - Helps people to relate their own stories and see how they fit into God's plan.
 - It attracts listeners, is non-confrontational, and easy to remember and share.

TOPIC #2 - ADVANTAGES OF USING DIALOGUE to TEACH instead of just lecturing or monologue.

- "Let's talk about the advantages of using questions to teach instead of just preaching. What are some advantages?"

- o You are modeling the method you want to teach! Participation, making it their own.
- o Self discovery leads to stronger learning than just being told something.
- o Shows respect and appreciation for each participant.
- o Gives the benefit of every participant's ideas and gifts as all listen to the Holy Spirit guiding them to examine the Bible passage together.

TOPIC #3 – EXAMPLES of the USE of BIBLE STORYING within the BIBLE ITSELF

- **What are some examples of Biblical characters using chronological Bible storying to share the truth about God?**
 - o Moses repeated the history of Israel in Deuteronomy.
 - o The prophet Nathan confronted David about Bathsheba and Uriah using a story.
 - o Jesus' many parables show the power of stories to help people relate to their own lives. .
 - o Jesus, on the road to Emmaus, taught the disciples. "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them everything that the Scriptures said about the Anointed One."
 - o Peter, when preaching to crowds in Acts 2 and 4, reminded them of God's work in the Old Testament through Abraham and David.
 - o Stephen when speaking to the Jewish leader in Acts, reminded them of the stories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon, showing them how God was working through history to bring a Savior.

TOPIC #4- USING BIBLE STORIES in DAY-to-DAY MINISTRY

- Discuss in your group different ways people could use stories in their various venues of ministry. Ask for ideas.
- Examples: Preaching, evangelism, discipleship, Bible study groups, ladies' groups, youth, children's Sunday School
- Each individual should write out a plan of action describing at least one specific way that he or she will use the story in ministry.
- Discuss these plans each time you meet. Encourage and hold each other accountable.

TOPIC #5 - ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Accountability** – want them to think about how to help each other use this method of teaching
 - o Is important to have accountability and opportunities to give testimonies to see how the stories are used.
 - o For encouragement, ideas to expand ministry, and accountability.
 - o Get a weekly testimony from your students to hold them accountable and hear what God is doing through storying as they teach weekly.
 - o What are some ways we can hold one another accountable to learning and telling the stories? What are some weekly goals we can set and check on with each other?

TOPIC #6 - MAKING STORIES REAL and ENGAGING

- If Bible storying is going to be successful, and ultimately continue, your church must be supportive and excited about the program.
- If you are to be successful in telling your stories, they must come alive in your telling.
 - o This is done by making the characters real and relatable; showing their characteristics, their strengths and flaws, and by making them applicable to our lives.
 - o Have people imagine themselves as characters in the story.
 - o Act out parts of the story as you tell them. Let them enjoy the process!
 - o Dramas are particularly good for this aspect of storying.

TOPIC #7 - FINDING a THEME for STORIES and QUESTIONS (* for other stories beyond CBS)

- How do we choose a theme if we are teaching about some topic outside of the normal CBS topics?
- Read the story 2-3 times. What does it focus on?
- Each story or passage of Scripture may have multiple themes that God may be communicating to us. But it is good to discern and teach the main or central theme the majority of the time.
- Pray, study, and ask God to show you what the main theme is and how it might be most relevant to your audience.
- Discuss potential themes for today's story.

APPENDIX #9

USING BIBLE STORYING in ONE-OFF EVANGELISM SITUATIONS

Certainly we as the Kenya Bible Storying Training Team strongly emphasize the need for people delving into Bible storying to learn and be trained through the full chronological set of stories so that they understand the full flow of God's story of bringing us a Savior in Jesus Christ. This is so valuable if you are discipling people in your church OR if you are reaching out evangelistically to a group of people in your community or church who will be able to meet with you repeatedly over an extended period of time.

However, we recognize that many times we are in situations in which we want to **share the Gospel with someone whom we will perhaps meet only one time** - whether on a bus or along the path or in an evangelistic outreach event like going door to door. In these situations **Bible storying can also be a very effective** way to help people hear God's Word. Here are some basic ideas to consider when these opportunities arise.

- **Prayer:** It is so important that we don't consider this evangelistic encounter as something we are doing ourselves. We must plead for the Lord's help for ourselves. We ask for boldness, wisdom, sensitivity, a listening ear, and love for others. And we ask His help for the person with whom we are talking, that their hearts would be softened and their minds opened to the Spirit's leading. The goal is for the listener to be engaged by God's Word in the story so that the Spirit can do his work in the listener's heart.
- **Listening:** Know your listeners, at much as you are able, so that you can be sensitive to their experiences and feelings, and so you can sense what story might be helpful for them to hear. It is so important in discussion to truly listen and take note of what you can learn about the person. And when you're telling the story or asking them questions, don't just sit there impatiently trying to figure out your next answer or argument. Listen to them. People can tell if you're not really respecting and valuing them enough to listen.
- **Understanding your setting:** Know your purpose and the length of time available. Are you talking to someone for only a short time? In this case your desire may be to simply introduce them to one or two Bible stories to help make them hungry to learn more about God? Or are you meeting with someone who is very interested and would be willing and able to listen to a brief telling of many of the key stories from biblical history so that they see the big picture of what God was doing to bring us a Savior. These things will affect the story (-ies) you choose, how long of a story you can use, and how many or what questions you could focus on to help stimulate thought and conversation. Or perhaps you have a chance to share with a group? Will you or will you not have a chance with them to ask questions to discuss the story?
- **Telling the story:** The goal in this situation is not for the listener to memorize the story as we like to do when we are using stories to disciple believers and equipping them for ministry. We just want them to be familiar enough with the story that you can have a brief conversation about it.

Kinds of Questions to Start a One-on-One Discussion:

- **Questions that build trust:**
 - The purpose of these questions is to help your listener feel comfortable with the idea of discussing the story. You don't want to start out with a question that is too difficult and might lead to embarrassment if they can't answer. Nor do you want to ask a question that is overly personal, at least until you've gotten to know them a little bit. Here are a couple of examples:
 - What is your favorite part of the story? Why?
 - When I told about _____, what picture did you see in your mind?
 - When I talked about birds (plants, animals), which birds did you picture in your mind?
 - When I talked about _____, what did you imagine he looked like?
 - Questions like these stimulate the listener's imagination. Also they feel safe for a shy person to answer because there is no right or wrong.

- **Questions that help us notice the content of the story:**
 - These are just to help review the points that will be most important to discuss. Elsewhere we call these "observation" questions.
 - Even in brief evangelism encounters, one or two well place observation questions can help focus what you really want to ask them about.

- **Questions that help them understand some main points that God is teaching:**
 - about God, man, relationship
 - **Main Things Questions:** A similar approach is just to be aware of one or two of the strongest teaching points in any particular story that you are telling and ask about that in order to help your friend understand the story. See below for examples.

- **Questions that help us apply the story:**
 - Especially use questions that might connect your listeners' life with the lives of characters in the story. Use these to help them think about how they might have responded in the same situation.
 - Examples:
 - What would you have done if you were in _____'s situation?
 - Is anyone in the story like you?
 - Has anything similar ever happened to you? How did you respond? How might your response have been different if you had known this story?
 - How easy is it to continue doing the right thing when people around you are mocking or belittling or questioning you as perhaps Noah was doing? What according to this story can help you persevere?
 - Can you talk about a time when you, like Abraham in Egypt, failed to trust God? What about a time when you did trust God?

- **Examples of “Main Things” Questions:** (see notes above)
 - **Creation: Genesis 1 & 2**
 - What is most amazing to you about the creation and how God did it?
 - If God created everything from nothing by the power of his Word, including man, what does this say about your relationship to him?
 - What do we learn about marriage from Genesis 2?
 - How are people different from animals? What does it mean to be made in the image of God? Why is this important in the way we live and relate to one another?
 - **Rebellion: Genesis 3**
 - Who was the serpent? What was his purpose? What were his methods to tempt Adam and Eve?
 - What is sin? What do we learn about sin in this story?
 - What do we learn about God from the way he punished Adam and Eve? What was the end result for all mankind?
 - What hope did God give even in the middle of his punishing Adam and Eve?
 - **Noah: Genesis 6-9**
 - What are two different ways to live according to the examples in this story? What were the results of those choices?
 - Is the majority always right? How easy is it to be in the minority? When could it be best to be in the minority? What could encourage you to do what is right when your friends are laughing at you?
 - The story tells us that Noah was a "righteous man." What do you think this means? Does it mean he was perfect? (See Gen 6:9)
 - What helped Noah obey God?
 - **Abraham: Genesis 12-25:**
 - What was hard about what God told Abraham to do at the beginning? What about when God told him to sacrifice Isaac? What excuses could he have made for disobeying?
 - When did Abraham show faith in God and when did he show doubt? How did God respond? Why did God count Abraham as righteous?
 - What is something you struggle to trust God with?
 - What helped Abraham to trust him?
 - **Moses and the Exodus: Exodus 1-12**
 - Why do you think God allowed the Israelites to suffer in slavery?
 - Why do you think God sent all the plagues? What could the Israelites (or the Egyptians) learned from these plagues?
 - Why is the way that God brought the Israelites on the night of the Passover important for us today?
 - **Mt. Sinai & the Tabernacle: Exodus 19, 20, 32; Leviticus 16**
 - Why did God give the people the Ten Commandments? What were the most important commandments? Why were the commandments helpful? How were they difficult?

- Why did God want the Israelites to build the tabernacle and celebrate festivals? What was the purpose of the tabernacle? Why was it built the way it was?
- **Jesus' Birth: Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2**
 - If you were arranging for the arrival of the creator, how would you have arranged it? What kind of family and situation would you have chosen? Why do you think God arranged it the way he did?
 - What are some of the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled at this time? What does this tell us about God?
- **Jesus Ministry: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**
 - Specific questions you ask will depend on which story you are discussing. here are examples:
 - Why might Jesus have done this miracle?
 - What were the various responses to the miracle? Why did different people respond differently? What might each of the observers learned from this situation
 - What was the most important part of what Jesus taught in thi?
 - Why did Jesus focus on this particular person or group of people in this story?
 - What was Jesus preparing his followers for in this story?
- **Jesus' Death:**
 - Did Jesus have the power to save himself from the cross? Why did he not choose to do so?
 - Remember some of the sacrifices in the Old Testament. How are these like Jesus' death on the cross?
 - What do you think the people thought and felt when the sky was dark from noon to 3 pm?
 - Why did the temple curtain split in two? What did this mean?
 - What was Jesus teaching Peter through his betrayal of Jesus?
- **Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension:**
 - What evidence is there in the Bible for Jesus' resurrection? Who were the witnesses?
 - What if Jesus had not risen from the dead? Why is His resurrection essential for the Christian faith?
 - If Jesus did indeed rise from the dead, how does that change the world?
 - What did Jesus' final command to his disciples mean?
 - What difference does it make that Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth and lived and died and rose again?
 - Since Jesus will return to judge everyone, how should this change your life?

APPENDIX 9 - B
TWO SIMPLE QUESTION SETS for BASIC ONE-OFF EVANGELISM

Set 1: KEY WORDS

You, as the storyteller, can memorize some of these seven key words to possibly use after telling the story. You don't always need to ask all of these. Sometimes you might just use one or two.

- **FAVORITE** part:
 - What do you like best about this story? Why?
- **CHALLENGING** part:
 - People sometime find parts of this story to be challenging. Is there anything you don't like or struggle with or do not understand in the story? Optional: What questions do you have about the story? (+/- b/c don't want to set self up as the expert)
- **GOD:**
 - What is something you learn about God from things that happen or are said in this story?
- **PEOPLE:**
 - What is something you learn about people?
- **RELATIONSHIP:**
 - What is something you learn about how God and people relate to each other? Or about how man can please God?
- **YOUR LIFE** (So what?):
 - If this story is true, what might you need to change in your life?
- **OTHERS LIVES**
 - Who else needs to hear this story?

Set 2: TRUTHS

- **Truths:**
 - What truths do you see in this story?
- **Truths in Your Life:**
 - Which truth most impacts you? How could this truth lead to change in your life?
- **Truths for Who else?**
 - Who else needs to hear this story?

WHAT STORIES to USE in ONE OFF EVANGELISM?

Clearly there are many different Bible stories that you may use when sharing the Gospel. What is most important is to make sure that you know at least two or three stories completely so that you are ready to share them at any time along with a few questions to stimulate conversation. In addition to all the stories that you have already learn in the CBS program, here are some others from the four Gospel accounts that you could consider to add to your ministry toolbox! Many of these are shorter than some of our CBS stories. This can be helpful when sharing with strangers.

- Matthew 8:5-13 - The Faith of the Centurion
- Matthew 8:23-27 - Jesus Calms the Storm (also Mark 4:35-41)
- Matthew 9:18-26 - Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman
 - (also Mark 5:21-43)
- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 - Parable of the Sower (also Mark 4)
- Matthew 14:22-36 - Jesus Walks on Water
- Matthew 15:21-28 - The Faith of the Canaanite Woman
- Matthew 18:10-14 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep
- Matthew 25:1-13 - The Parable of the Ten Virgins
- Matthew 25:14-30 - The Parable of the Talents
- Mark 5:1-20 - The Healing of a Demon Possessed Man
- Mark 6:45-56 - Jesus Walks on Water
- Mark 10:46-52 - Bartimaeus' Sight Restored
- Luke 7:11-17 - Raising the Widow of Nain's Son
- Luke 15:1-7 - Parable of the Lost Sheep
- Luke 16:19-31 - The Rich Man and Lazarus
- Luke 17:11-19 - Ten Lepers Healed
- Luke 18:1-8 - The Parable of the Persistent Widow
- Luke 18:9-14 - The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector
- Luke 19:1-10 - Zachaeus
- John 2:1-11 - Jesus Changes Water to Wine
- John 4:43-54 - Jesus Heals the Official's Son
- John 5:1-15 - The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda
- John 9:1-12 - Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

Obviously, there are many other great stories to use in evangelism from the Old Testament and the Book of Acts as well.