

# TWOS LEADER'S GUIDE

## CONTENTS

- Introduction to *The Story for Little Ones* Curriculum
- Components of the Twos Curriculum
- Using *The Story* in Different Teaching/Learning Formats

## INTRODUCTION TO *THE STORY*

Your church is embarking on a wonderful adventure. Children, youth, and adults will enter into God's story, the Bible, in new and life-changing ways. The Bible is, after all, a book of stories. The Bible is a book of stories where God is the main character. The Bible is a book of stories given to us by that same God in order to transform our lives.

As you move chronologically through the Bible children, youth, and adults will engage creatively and interactively with each story walking away with one point to remember from each story. Families will have the opportunity to talk around the same Bible story each week and everyone in your church who participates will have a basis of discussion with other members of your church. Each week a different Bible story will come alive for all ages in your congregation.

This twos curriculum was developed to allow for maximum flexibility. You can use it for mid-week programming or Sunday programming but it is not necessarily limited to use at those times. The curriculum will work in a variety of teaching/learning formats and time frames.

This guide will introduce you to tips for using the children's curriculum in a variety of educational formats and help you to use the parts and pieces of the curriculum to their best advantage for your particular setting and group.

Entering into God's story in creative and meaningful ways is an important piece of the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults. This curriculum is a wonderful tool for introducing your church members to the amazing stories of God's entry into the lives of men and women and reminding them that God is in the midst of their lives, too. Godspeed on this adventure.

## THE STORY AND TWO-YEAR OLDS

Each lesson for twos includes several components. Some of these parts are essential for the efficacy of each lesson and the use of other parts of the curriculum is at your discretion which may be dependent upon your time frame and teaching/learning format.

## The Bible Story

The stories for twos are designed to engage the young child in the story through movement, simple songs, and other uses of the five senses. It is important to use these activities in the stories because they will help the young children enter into a Bible in a way that will engage their attention and aid in retention of the story.

## The Teaching/Learning Activities

Each twos lesson includes two teaching/learning activities other than the Bible story. The first is called "Come Together." Each of these activities is designed to capture and focus the child's attention on the theme and the Bible story of the day. No matter what your time frame, it is important to use the "Come Together" activities. They help the children to ease into the lesson time and separate from what they were doing prior to the class beginning. These activities require little or no supplies.

Each lesson includes four "Explore More" activities. These are to be used after the Bible story has been told. These activities are designed to help the young children enter into a part of the Bible story in an active and creative way. You do not need to do all of these activities. You may choose to do one that is most appropriate to your group, meeting space, and volunteer's abilities. If you have time and space to engage the children in more activities you are certainly free to do so.

Please be aware that many of the "Explore More" activities require supplies and/or advance preparation. Be sure to plan accordingly.

## USING THE STORY IN DIFFERENT TEACHING/LEARNING FORMATS

We realize that churches use a variety of classroom teaching/learning formats. *The Story* curriculum is designed with enough flexibility to be able to work in most of those formats.

## All Age Preschoolers Together

Your church may not have enough preschoolers to create separate age-level groups. For groups ranging in age from two to five, it is recommended that you use *The Story for Little Ones: Preschool* curriculum as long as you remember a few things. There is a world of difference between the abilities of a two year old and a five year old, so as you look over the learning activities you may need to pick and choose according to the average age in your group from both the preschool and the twos curriculum. You also might want to allow some free playtime with a group of very young children. Feel free to experiment as you try to discover the right mix of activities for your particular group. That's OK. You'll get it right.

Even if your group of preschoolers is small you should always plan to have two teachers or a teacher and a helper with your group each week. If you have teachers and helpers who job share, make sure they know each other and talk with each other about issues of classroom management. This consistency in the classroom is important for all preschoolers' sense of safety and trust and will ensure an environment that is conducive to their spiritual development.

## Age-level GRADED PRESCHOOL CLASSES

Your church might have enough preschoolers to divide them into age-level groups: 2's & 3's; 4's & 5's or even classes for 2's, 3's, 4's, and 5's. *The Story for Little Ones: Twos* curriculum may be used in classes comprised of 2's only, or in a 2's and 3's classroom.

## Learning Center Model

In this model your volunteers have different kinds of responsibilities in the classroom. Each volunteer has only one job to do during the lesson. This model will work with the two formats discussed above. You may have volunteers who have the responsibility of being shepherds or guides with the two-year olds. Their major responsibility is to be with the children—talking with them, playing with them, and helping them with their learning activities. The shepherds would also be responsible for the “Come Together” part of each lesson. Your other volunteers have the responsibilities of storyteller and “Explore More” activity leader. So the storyteller tells the story each week and the “Explore More” activity center leader leads one or all of the “Explore More” activities each week.

If you have all your preschoolers together in one group as described above, volunteers might double up on some of the jobs. For example, your storyteller might also be the person who or leads the “Explore More” activity. One of your shepherds or guides might also be the “Explore More” activity center leader.

If you have age-level graded preschool classes this model will work differently. Each age level group will have its own shepherds or guides who stay with the young children for the whole meeting time. They are there to greet the children as they arrive and see that they are properly picked up when it is time to go home. They sit with the children during story and skits, helping to keep order and the children's attention focused on the activity. They are also available to remove a child from the group if that should become necessary. Your activity center leaders move from group to group leading them in their particular learning activity on a particular schedule. This may mean that some children do the “Explore More” activities before they hear the story. Young children do not think and learn in a linear way so as long as connection is made to the point of this lesson you can involve them in activities in any particular order. However, if you really feel they need the story before they are involved in any of the other activities simply start your time together with all your preschoolers in one room so they all hear the story at the same time. Then rotate your activity leaders through the various age levels. The other option is to recruit more than one storyteller for each week.

## Large Group/Small Group

This is a teaching/learning format that involves the young children in both large group and small group activities. Your volunteers either help lead the group in large group activities or are responsible for leading a small group of two-year olds in other activities. As the children enter your meeting space they immediately sit down with their small group leader. It is at this point the small group leader leads them in the “Come Together” time as a way of focusing the children on the point of the lesson. Then the large group leaders might take over. It is time for “Hear the Story.” The storyteller leads the large group in the day's Bible story. After the Bible story, the children return to their small groups where their small group leader leads them in one or all of the “Explore More” activities.

## LESSON PLANNING

Be prepared before your class begins! That is a very important rule for any teacher of any subject, but teaching faith can be extra challenging. There are questions that can be asked that do not have easy or immediate answers, but children, especially young ones, demand answers. Formulating a lesson plan can help in this.

Seasoned teachers as well as new ones can find a plan very helpful. Information from the lesson pages can be summarized into keywords and a glance at the plan will help if you get distracted. A lesson plan is also helpful for the volunteers or helpers in your classroom, so they are as aware as you are what the intentions are for the day's lesson.

As a teacher of preschoolers, you already know this ... young children are very literal and they want answers!

- Be sure to stick to facts. Ask questions that are about the facts and details of the story you are teaching on a given day.
- Relate things right back to them; children are naturally egocentric and love it when things are related back to them.
- Take into consideration that there are many learning styles. Some children love to listen to stories being read, others love moving around and participating in the telling. Still others want to be creative and draw or sculpt Bible characters or ideas. Make use of the variety of options that are provided in the lesson pages. And be sure to add your ideas onto your lesson plan template.
- Review, review, review. Go over the Bible Point and verse many times. Dance, sing, clap, shout, and whisper the words and ideas so that your class can more easily remember the details.

# IN THE BEGINNING

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 12

**Bible Verse:** Adapted from Genesis 5:1: "God made me."

**Bible Point:** God made everything.

## STEP 1 | COME TOGETHER

**Stuff you need:** animal story pictures, printed and cut apart (included at the end of this lesson)

- Say, **Let's listen to some animal sounds and see if you can guess the animal.** Call up one volunteer and show an animal picture card. Instruct the child to make that animal's sound. Allow the other children to call out that animal's name. Repeat with different volunteers until all cards have been used.
- Say, **God made all these animals, and he made you too. Today we'll hear a Bible story that tells how God made everything.**

## STEP 2 | HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff you need:** six pieces of construction paper labeled with large outlined numbers, markers, glue stick, cotton balls, blue tissue paper, leaves (real or artificial), star stickers, fish-shaped crackers, feathers, animal stickers, ink pad, baby wipes

- Display the numbers 1–6. Have the children count aloud with you as you point to each paper. Say, **When God made everything in the world, it took him six days. Let's see what God did on each day.**
- Say, **On the first day, God made light. He called the light day and the darkness night.** Color the top half of the number 1 yellow and the bottom half black. Say, **Show me what you do at night.** Children should pretend to sleep.
- Say, **On the second day, God made air and water.** Glue cotton balls to the top of the number 2 and crumpled tissue paper to the bottom to represent air and water. Say, **Show me how you breathe air.** Children should inhale and exhale deeply.
- Say, **On the third day, God made land, plants, and trees.** Add leaves to the number 3. Say, **Stretch your arms up in the air like the branches of a tree.**
- Say, **On the fourth day, God made the sun, moon, and stars.** Add star stickers to the number 4. Lead children in singing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" while you add stickers.
- Say, **On the fifth day, God made fish and birds.** Add fish-shaped crackers and feathers to the number 5. Ask, **Who owns fish as pets? Who owns a bird?**

- Say, **On the sixth day, God made all the land animals. Then he made people.** Add a few animal stickers to the bottom of the number 6.
- Say, **On the seventh day, God rested. He was happy with all he created.**
- Say, **God made the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. He also made every person on earth. He made you, and you are special to God.**
- Pray, **Thank you, God, for making the whole world. Thank you for making each one of us special. Amen.**
- Call children up one at a time to touch one finger to the ink pad and press a fingerprint onto the number 6. As they do so, have them repeat today's verse: "God made me." Immediately wipe each child's finger with a baby wipe.

### STEP 3 | EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

#### Option 1: God Made Everything

**Stuff you need:** blue construction paper, glue sticks, items from "Hear the Story," "God made everything" strips (one per child)

**Preparation:** photocopy the "God made everything" strips, cut them apart

- Point to the six numbers you decorated during "Hear the Story." Say, **God made everything in the world, including you! Let's make our own pictures of God's creation.**
- Help children glue a "God made everything" strip to the top of their paper. Help children decorate their papers by adding stickers and gluing cotton balls, tissue paper, leaves, feathers, and fish.

#### Option 2: God Made Me

Lead the song (sung to the tune of "A-Hunting We Will Go") and demonstrate the actions.

|                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| God made the sun,          | (hold hands overhead in a circle) |
| And God made the sea,      | (mime swimming)                   |
| God made all the animals,  | (flap arms at sides)              |
| And God made me!           | (point with two thumbs to chest)  |
| Thank you for the sun,     | (hold hands overhead in a circle) |
| Thank you for the sea,     | (mime swimming)                   |
| Thank you for the animals, | (flap arms at sides)              |
| And thank you for me!      | (point with two thumbs to chest)  |

### OPTION 3: THANK YOU, GOD!

**Stuff you need:** items you can thank God for (e.g., piece of clothing, box of cereal, picture of family, Bible, etc.)

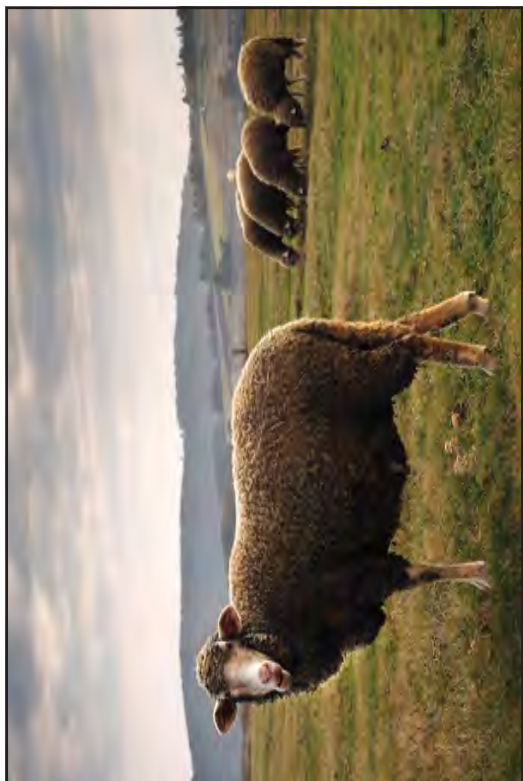
- Say, **God created so many good things! Let's thank God for all he created.**
- Sit in a circle. Have a volunteer hold up the first item. Explain, **God made food. Let's thank God for giving us food.** Lead all children in repeating with you, "Thank you, God!"
- Continue with each item, choosing a different volunteer each time.

### OPTION 4: COPY CATS

**Stuff you need:** animal story pictures from "Come Together"

- Say, **God created every animal on land, in the sky, and in the water. Let's pretend to be some different animals that God created.**
- Show the first volunteer an animal card (or have the volunteer think of his or her own animal), and have the child act it out. Instruct the other children to copy the leader's sounds and actions. Ask, **What animal was that?** Allow the children to answer.
- Continue until every child has had a turn as leader.

## STORY PICTURES



## STORY PICTURES



God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

God made everything.

# PRESCHOOL LEADER'S GUIDE

## CONTENTS

- Introduction to *The Story for Little Ones* Curriculum
- Components of the Preschool Curriculum
- Using *The Story* in Different Teaching/Learning Formats
- Using the Parents' Page
- Launch Activity Idea—Meet the Author Day
- Preschool Parent Letter
- Lesson Plan Template

## INTRODUCTION TO *THE STORY*

Your church is embarking on a wonderful adventure. Children, youth, and adults will enter into God's story, the Bible, in new and life-changing ways. The Bible is, after all, a book of stories. The Bible is a book of stories where God is the main character. The Bible is a book of stories given to us by that same God in order to transform our lives.

As you move chronologically through the Bible children, youth, and adults will engage creatively and interactively with each story walking away with one point to remember from each story. Families will have the opportunity to talk around the same Bible story each week and everyone in your church who participates will have a basis of discussion with other members of your church. Each week a different Bible story will come alive for all ages in your congregation.

This preschool curriculum was developed to allow for maximum flexibility. You can use it for mid-week programming or Sunday programming but it is not necessarily limited to use at those times. The curriculum will work in a variety of teaching/learning formats and time frames.

This guide will introduce you to tips for using the children's curriculum in a variety of educational formats and help you to use the parts and pieces of the curriculum to their best advantage for your particular setting and group.

Entering into God's story in creative and meaningful ways is an important piece of the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults. This curriculum is a wonderful tool for introducing your church members to the amazing stories of God's entry into the lives of men and women and reminding them that God is in the midst of their lives, too. Godspeed on this adventure.

## **THE STORY AND PRESCHOOLERS**

Each lesson for preschoolers includes several components. Some of these parts are essential for the efficacy of each lesson and the use of other parts of the curriculum is at your discretion which may be dependent upon your time frame and teaching/learning format.

### **The Bible Story**

The stories for preschoolers are designed to engage the young child in the story through movement, simple songs, and other uses of the five senses. It is important to use these activities in the stories because they will help the young children enter into a Bible in a way that will engage their attention and aid in retention of the story.

### **The Teaching/Learning Activities**

Each preschool lesson includes two teaching/learning activities other than the Bible story. The first is called "Come Together." Each of these activities is designed to capture and focus the child's attention on the theme and the Bible story of the day. No matter what your time frame, it is important to use the "Come Together" activities. They help the children to ease into the lesson time and separate from what they were doing prior to the class beginning. These activities require little or no supplies.

Each lesson includes several "Explore More" activities. These are to be used after the Bible story has been told. These activities are designed to help the young children enter into a part of the Bible story in an active and creative way. You do not need to do all of these activities. You may choose to do one that is most appropriate to your group, meeting space, and volunteer's abilities. If you have time and space to engage the children in more activities you are certainly free to do so.

Please be aware that many of the "Explore More" activities require supplies and/or advance preparation. Be sure to plan accordingly.

### **SKITS**

An age-appropriate skit illustrating the point of the Bible story is included with each preschool lesson. The script can be used as either a live drama or as a puppet show. The use of these skits is dependent upon your time frame and volunteer staff. If it is possible to recruit a drama team for your preschoolers, they could be responsible for presenting the skits to the preschoolers each week. The proper place to insert the skits in the lesson will be discussed later. If you choose to use the skits during your teaching/learning time with young children remember to help them connect the theme of the skit back to the point of the Bible story. Young children may be unable to do this on their own.

## **USING THE STORY IN DIFFERENT TEACHING/LEARNING FORMATS**

We realize that churches use a variety of classroom teaching/learning formats. *The Story* curriculum is designed with enough flexibility to be able to work in most of those formats.

## **All Age Preschoolers Together**

Your church may not have enough preschoolers to create separate age-level groups. You can use *The Story* curriculum with your preschoolers as long as you remember a few things. There is a world of difference between the abilities of a two year old and a five year old, so as you look over the learning activities you may need to pick and choose according to the average age in your group. Or, you may find that you need to adapt the activities slightly in order to make them fit the developmental abilities of your group. If your group is mostly made up of younger preschoolers you might choose to do only one of the “Explore More” options because it takes them longer to complete activities. You also might want to allow some free playtime with a group of very young children.

Feel free to experiment as you try to discover the right mix of activities for your particular group. That’s OK. You’ll get it right. Just remember, if you use the skits it is recommended they be added to the lesson time at the end—perhaps before the “Going Home” activity.

Even if your group of preschoolers is small you should always plan to have two teachers or a teacher and a helper with your group each week. If you have teachers and helpers who job share, make sure they know each other and talk with each other about issues of classroom management. This consistency in the classroom is important for all preschoolers’ sense of safety and trust and will ensure an environment that is conducive to their spiritual development.

## **Age-Level Graded Preschool Classes**

Your church might have enough preschoolers to divide them into age-level groups: 2’s & 3’s; 4’s & 5’s or even classes for 2’s, 3’s, 4’s, and 5’s. *The Story* curriculum may be used in this type of preschool classroom format. You may need to think about simplifying some of the activities for the younger preschool groups.

Your teachers may walk through the lesson with the preschoolers the way it is laid out in the curriculum, choosing to use one or all of the “Explore More” activities. If you use the skits it is recommended they be added to the lesson time at the end, before the “Going Home” activity.

## **Learning Center Model**

In this model your volunteers have different kinds of responsibilities in the classroom. Each volunteer has only one job to do during the lesson. This model will work with the two formats discussed above. You may have volunteers who have the responsibility of being shepherds or guides with the preschool children. Their major responsibility is to be with the children—talking with them, playing with them, and helping them with their learning activities. The shepherds would also be responsible for the “Come Together” and “Going Home” parts of each lesson. Your other volunteers have the responsibilities of storyteller, “Explore More” activity leader, and skit leader (if you choose to use the skits). So the storyteller tells the story each week. The “Explore More” activity center leader leads one or all of the “Explore More” activities each week. And the skit leader works to pull a team together to present the skits each week.

If you have all your preschoolers together in one group as described above, volunteers might double up on some of the jobs. For example, your storyteller might also be the person who produces the skits each week or leads the “Explore More” activity. One of your shepherds or guides might also be the “Explore More” activity center leader.

If you have age-level graded preschool classes this model will work differently. Each age level group will have its own shepherds or guides who stay with the young children for the whole meeting time. They are there to greet the children as they arrive and see that they are properly picked up when it is time to go home. They sit with the children during story and skits, helping to keep order and the children's attention focused on the activity. They are also available to remove a child from the group if that should become necessary. Your activity center leaders move from group to group leading them in their particular learning activity on a particular schedule. This may mean that some children do the "Explore More" activities before they hear the story. Young children do not think and learn in a linear way so as long as connection is made to the point of this lesson you can involve them in activities in any particular order. However, if you really feel they need the story before they are involved in any of the other activities simply start your time together with all your preschoolers in one room so they all hear the story at the same time. Then rotate your activity leaders through the various age levels. The other option is to recruit more than one storyteller for each week.

### **Large Group/Small Group**

This is a teaching/learning format that involves the young children in both large group and small group activities. Your volunteers either help lead the group in large group activities or are responsible for leading a small group of preschoolers in other activities. As the children enter your meeting space they immediately sit down with their small group leader. It is at this point the small group leader leads them in the "Come Together" time as a way of focusing the children on the point of the lesson. Then the large group leaders might take over. It is time for "Hear the Story." The storyteller leads the large group in the day's Bible story. After the Bible story, the children return to their small groups where their small group leader leads them in one or all of the "Explore More" activities. When those activities are finished the children might move back into the large group for the skits. The "Going Home" activity is best done in the small groups as the children wait to be picked up by their parents.

## **USING THE PARENTS' PAGE**

Christian parents do want to nurture their children in God's stories in the Bible but often they feel they don't know how to do it. *The Story* curriculum includes a "Parents' Page" for each lesson which offers parents lots of ideas for interacting with their entire family around the week's Bible story.

Each Parents' Page offers ideas for how to use these pages in the family. The points for the Bible story are included and families are given "Table Talk" questions that can be adapted for each age level. These questions can be used to explore the Bible story at the dinner table, in the car, or at other times when the family is together. Each Parents' Page includes a "Living the Faith" activity. This also might be a game, art project, or other fun activity the whole family can engage in around the Bible story. And, lastly these pages include an "Extra Mile" activity for those families who still crave more learning activities around the week's Bible story.

Families do not have to do all the activities in the Parents' Page. Some weeks they may only get to the "Table Talk" questions while other weeks they may find they have time to do more of the activities and spend more time engaging with the Bible story.

## LAUNCH ACTIVITY IDEA—MEET THE AUTHOR DAY

To inspire the children and their families to participate in *The Story* campaign, here is an exciting launch event idea. It is sure to generate interest in what the families will be participating in within their church as well as home.

**Meet the Authors Day** is an event when the church is visited by Bible characters that have written books of the Bible. During this event, Bible authors will tell about their lives, answer questions that have been drafted by staff as well as questions from the children, and even autograph pages from the Bible book they wrote. Small groups will rotate between the many authors, listening and participating in the presentations. Equipped with the knowledge that these are authors of the books of the Bible that they will be studying throughout the coming church year, children are sure to be attentive and want to know more.

Get volunteers to participate in the presentation. Adjust the roles based on how many volunteers you have. You may need to have fewer teams or each team can just include an author and stage manager.

### BASIC STEPS FOR PLANNING

1. Set your date and location, making sure you have sufficient time and space for small groups of children and adults to visit each character and participate in a story and Q&A time.
2. Get volunteers or other staff to participate in the presentation. Each team needs members to do the following responsibilities:

#### The Author

- Knows 3–4 different “stories” that he can tell about his or her life.

#### Understory Character

- Prepares a 1–2 minute “story” concerning their involvement with the author/character. Obeying God’s will, thanking God, or beseeching God should be paramount.
- **Possible Ideas:** David’s great-grandmother Ruth, pregnant Sarah with Abraham, the mother of the baby saved by Solomon, the three sailors who threw Jonah overboard, the gospel writers, Paul’s convert Lydia, or Cornelius.

#### The Stage Manager

- Is responsible for everything that goes on “the stage.”
- Makes sure that all costumes are secured.
- Controls the conversational flow and the props for the stage.
- May address the central actor, the understory actor, the facilitator or the crowd.

### The Facilitator

- Controls the people who are around the area – asks if they want an autograph, do they have questions, etc. Communicates to stage manager.
1. Choose these teams well in advance and give them time to prepare what will be needed. This could take a week or two of meetings. Sets, costumes, and scripts need to be prepared.
  2. Have a dress rehearsal, making sure you give sufficient time for each presentation and allow transition time from each station. People will be rotating from author to author.
  3. Create excitement and buzz about this great event!

### POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHORS

- What parts of the Bible did you write?
- How long did it take you?
- What language did you use when you wrote?
- Tell us about a time when God showed you something about himself.
- Of all the important things God had you write in our Bible, what is one important message you want us to know?
- Do you think your message from a long time ago is still useful for us today?
- Was it hard to get people to listen and understand that you were working with God to help them?
- How did you feel when you first realized that God was going to use you as a helper to his people here on Earth?
- Did you want to help God right away or was it hard to obey his Word and message?
- Did your family understand the reasons behind your work and writing?

### Preschool Extensions

When you gather into your classes/age groups, be prepared for the children to have questions and comments about meeting the Bible authors. Discuss with them the importance of knowing something about these great and wise church leaders that God used to communicate his Word to us and to the people of Bible times.

- Talk about the names of the people. Are the names a little unusual?
- Talk about the main ideas of the writings.
- Choose one author and have the children draw a picture of him or her, labeling it with the name of the character. Talk about this one message.
- Have the children design and draw thank you notes for the Bible characters or have one large card folded and ready for the class to decorate and sign.
- Have volunteers pretend to be an author and tell the class what they remember about the one they choose.

## THE STORY FOR LITTLE ONES: PRESCHOOL PARENT LETTER

Parents should be well aware by now that *The Story Campaign* is taking place within your church. They should already understand that church leadership would like the involvement of everyone in the church family, from the youngest to the oldest.

It is suggested that you send home a letter to the parents of the children in your group to familiarize them with the curriculum program and its highlights for their child's age/grade level. If you think it necessary, be sure to include the fact that the curriculum uses as an additional resource the storybook Bible, *The Story for Little Ones*. If your church does not provide a copy for your class, it may be helpful and fun for children to have one onhand at home.

The letter on the following page, or a version of it, can be cut and pasted onto church letterhead or whatever you might use to send home communications to members. Be sure to encourage parental involvement in the children's program and follow-through at home. These two things are key to the formation of their child's faith as they move forward in the campaign.

*Dear Parents:*

*Blessings to all of you and your families! Welcome to The Story for Preschoolers! We are pleased and honored that your child is with us and going to be participating in The Story for Little Ones Curriculum.*

*As you may know, this program has thirty-one lessons, thirty-one beautiful messages of God's love and care for his children. Each lesson is designed so that your child will be made completely aware of God's message in each one through the Bible verses, Bible Points, the stories, and various activities.*

*While we as a class explore God's Word, we encourage you to extend that exploration to your homes. Share your own love of his Word with your child, talk about what you are learning in your adult classes, allow your child time to freely talk about and ask questions about what is being learned. Be sure to encourage sharing of the activity sheets or have your child tell you the Bible story that has been highlighted each week. Even allow him to teach you movements and responses he has learned in class to help bring the stories to life! Look for the weekly Parents' Page. Read and do some of the activities that will be a part of the Parent Page sent home each week.*

*This is a family experience. God is the all-loving Father; we are his children. As The Story unfolds for all of us here at \_\_\_\_\_ share the experience with your child. We have been blessed with this incredible story! Let's help make our children incredible and faith-filled storytellers.*

*God's blessings,*

---

## LESSON PLANNING

Be prepared before your class begins! That is a very important rule for any teacher of any subject, but teaching faith can be extra challenging. There are questions that can be asked that do not have easy or immediate answers, but children, especially young ones, demand answers. Formulating a lesson plan can help in this.

Seasoned teachers as well as new ones can find a plan very helpful. Information from the lesson pages can be summarized into keywords and a glance at the plan will help if you get distracted. A lesson plan is also helpful for the volunteers or helpers in your classroom, so they are as aware as you are what the intentions are for the day's lesson.

As a teacher of preschoolers, you already know this ... young children are very literal and they want answers!

- Be sure to stick to facts. Ask questions that are about the facts and details of the story you are teaching on a given day.
- Relate things right back to them; children are naturally egocentric and love it when things are related back to them.
- Take into consideration that there are many learning styles. Some children love to listen to stories being read, others love moving around and participating in the telling. Still others want to be creative and draw or sculpt Bible characters or ideas. Make use of the variety of options that are provided in the lesson pages. And be sure to add your ideas onto your lesson plan template.
- Review, review, review. Go over the Bible Point and verse many times. Dance, sing, clap, shout, and whisper the words and ideas so that your class can more easily remember the details.

***THE STORY FOR LITTLE ONES: PRESCHOOL LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE***

**Week** \_\_\_\_\_

**BIBLE POINT TO TEACH:**

**General Goal(s):**

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

**STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURES:**

**COME TOGETHER**

**HEAR THE WORD**

**EXPLORE MORE**

**SUGGESTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT/AT HOME PRACTICE:**

**CLOSURE (SKIT?):**

**ADAPTATIONS (FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES):**

**EXTENSIONS (FOR GIFTED STUDENTS):**

# IN THE BEGINNING

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 1:1–2:5, 18–25

**Bible Verse:** “When God created man, he made him in his own likeness.” —Genesis 5:1, NIV

**Bible Point:** God made everything. God made you, too.

**Resource:** *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 1: “In the Beginning”

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Say, **“What is the name of one animal?”** Let one child answer. **“Good. Let’s act like that animal.”** (Act like that animal. Repeat until you have acted out an animal for each child. Duplicate animals are okay.)

Ask:

- How is a cow different than an elephant? A cat than a dog? A snake than a horse?
- How is a cow different than you? An elephant? Cat? Dog? Snake? Horse?

Say, **“God made everything. In our Bible story today, we’re going to hear about how he did that.”**

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

First, read aloud Chapter 1, “In the Beginning,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Say, **“In the beginning, there was nothing. Then God said, ‘Let there be light.’ How did God make light? God spoke.”**

Repeat your question and have children shout, “God spoke.”

Say, **“And there was light. God said the light was day and the darkness was night. He said light was good.”**

Have children cheer, “Hurray for light!”

Say, **“Then God told air to go between the water in the sky and the water on the Earth. How did God separate the water? (God spoke.) And the water was divided. God said the water on either side of the air was good.”**

Have children cheer, “Hurray for air and water!”

Say, "Then God spoke again. He told land, plants, stars, the sun, the moon, birds, and animals to appear. How did God make them? (God spoke.) And there were land, plants, stars, the sun, the moon, birds, and animals. God said that they were all good."

Have children cheer, "Hurray for everything!"

Say, "Then God did something different. He made people out of the dust on the ground. He also made people in his likeness. This means they resembled God. They were similar to him, like when someone tells you that you look like your mom or dad. God breathed life into the people. He made people in a different way than he made everything else. How did God make everything but people? (God spoke.) And then he made people. The first people's names were Adam and Eve. God said that what he made was good. Turn to the child next to you and say, 'God did a good job when he made you.'" (Give children time to do this.)

Say, "On the last day of Creation, God rested. He did not make anything new. The world was ready, and he had made people who could know and enjoy him. God rested because his creation work was done."

After the Bible story, ask:

- **How did God make light? Water? Air? Land? Plants? The sun? The moon? Stars? Birds? Animals?** (*He spoke.*)
- **How did God make people different?** (*God made them in his image and breathed life into them.*)

Pray with the children, thanking God for making everything, including all of you.

### STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

#### OPTION 1: GOD CREATED ANIMALS

Say, "Today we're learning that God made everything. God made all the animals, including birds! What are some of the birds God created? (various answers) We are going to play a game using the names of some of the birds God created!"

Play a simplified game of "Duck, Duck, Goose." All the children sit in a circle and one person is "It." That child taps each child on the head and says, "Duck," until It chooses one child as the "Goose." The "Goose" chases "It" around the circle and tries to tag "It." Whether or not the "Goose" makes the tag, it is that person's turn to be "It." Do not use the "mush pot" in the middle. You can use a different animal pair in each round, such as Fish and Dolphin or Cow and Horse.

Close the game by saying, "God made everything, including all the birds and animals. He made you and me in his likeness."

## Option 2: In His Likeness

Have children spread out so they have plenty of space around them. Then act out Genesis 5:1 together:

**"When God created man, he made him in his own likeness."**

**When God** (*Point to the sky.*)

**Created** (*Cup hands as if you are forming a mud ball in them.*)

**Man** (*Point to yourself and those around you.*)

**He** (*Point to the sky.*)

**Made him** (*Cup hands as if you are forming a mud ball in them.*)

**In his own likeness** (*Act like you are holding up a hand mirror and then point to the sky.*)

**Genesis** (*Put flattened hands, palms up, together, as if they are a book.*)

**5** (*Hold up hand with five fingers splayed*

**1** (*Hold up one finger .*)

Repeat the actions together until children have learned Genesis 5:1. After the memorization activity, discuss these questions.

- Whom did God make?
- How did he make people different than animals?

Say, "God made you special. God made everything. He made you, too!"

## Option 3: God Made Me Special

**Stuff you need:** paper, finger paint, white cardstock, hand wipes

Say, "When God made you, he made you special. No one else has the same handprint as you. Let's celebrate that right now by making a print of your special hand."

Coat the children's hands in finger paint and press onto the paper, making a print of their very own special handprint. Immediately use the hand wipes to wipe off extra paint.

## Option 4: God Made the Stars and Sky

**Stuff you need:** foil star stickers, blue construction paper, white crayons

Say, "It's amazing to think that God created the sky and stars! Let's celebrate God's creation by thinking about the night sky."

Help the children create a nighttime sky scene. Put the star stickers on the paper, and use the white crayon to create a moon and clouds.

**Option 5: "Thank You, God!"**

Say, "God created so many good things! Let's thank God for all he created."

Sit in a circle. Have a leader walk around the outside of the circle and randomly tap children on the head. When a child is tapped, that child gets to jump up and say, "Thank you, God, for \_\_\_\_." (The child can fill in the blank with anything they'd like.) The child then sits back down when their turn is done. Try to make sure each child gets a turn.

**Option 6: In His Likeness**

**Stuff you will need:** clothespins (not the pinch type; the wooden type with the round top), chenille craft stems in a variety of colors cut in half, markers in a variety of colors

Say, "Earlier we talked about how God made people in his likeness. That means we are similar to God, just as you are similar to your mom or dad. We are going to make clothespin people that look similar to you."

Give each child a clothespin and a chenille stem that is the same color as the shirt they are wearing. Help them twist the chenille stem around the clothespin to create arms. Then help them draw eyes and hair on the clothespin that match their own hair and eye colors.

**STEP 4: GOING HOME**

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 1*.

Say, "The front of this card will remind you that God made everything. Show your parents the back and tell them that God made you in his likeness." Have them practice doing this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.



**CREATION**

# IN THE BEGINNING

**Timeless Truth:** Humans are God's crowning creation.

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 1:1–2:5, 18–25

**Key Verse:** When God created man, he created him in his own likeness. —Genesis 5:1 NIV

**Resource:** *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 1: "In the Beginning"

## PARENT TIPS

Read chapter 1 in *The Story for Little Ones* several times this week and talk about the key point. Reading the story several times will help your preschooler to remember it. Use the Table Talk questions to talk about the lesson. Use the questions anytime throughout the week, not just at the table. The Living Faith activity is designed to help your child experience the joy of creation and know that he is perfectly created by God. The Extra Mile ideas give you more ways to help your child remember the lesson.

## GET THE POINT

God made everything. He made you, too.

## TABLE TALK

- What animal is your favorite? Why do you like that animal the best?
- What is your favorite thing that God created? Why do you like it best?
- How are you different from a flower? A rock? A bird? Add other things that God created to compare with humans. This question will help your child see how God made people different than the rest of creation.

## LIVING FAITH

This week's lesson focused on God creating everything. Let your child explore what this means by making a creation out of play dough and other decorative items such as feathers, pompoms, small rocks, and sticks. Say, **God created everything. Create means to make something out of nothing. Only God can make something out of nothing, but we can create with things God has given us. Can you create a new animal from our things?** Work with your child, asking questions about the

creation. If you want, you can let the creation dry as a reminder that God created everything, or save the play dough to make more creations.

When you are done with your creation, look in a mirror. What do you see? Remind your child that God made us like him. He created us perfectly, just the way he wanted. Name some of the things you love about your child and the way God created him.

## EXTRA MILE

As you travel in the car this week or while at home reading a picture book, play "I Spy" with things that God created. Always end with, "I spy God's treasured creation." God's treasured creation is your child.

Look at an age-appropriate book on the human body to discover some special ways that God created people.

Look through family pictures of times you have been in God's creation. Have fun remembering your trip and talking about God's wonderful creation.

Act out the Key Verse using the same motions that your child learned in class.

**When God** (*Point up.*)

**Created** (*Cup hands as if you are forming a mud ball in them.*)

**Man** (*Point to yourself and those around you.*)

**He** (*Point up.*)

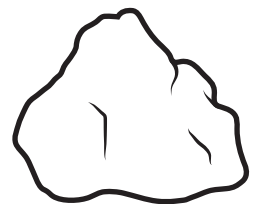
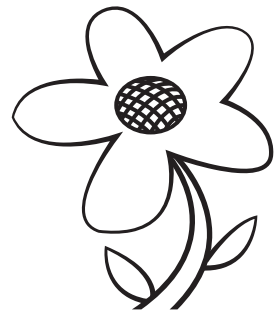
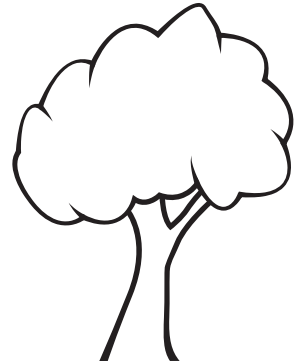
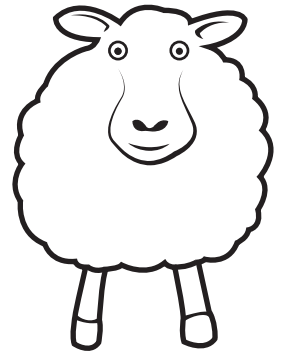
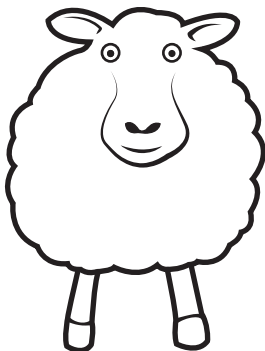
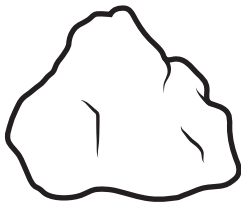
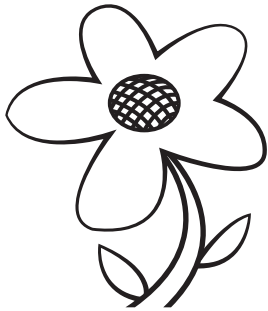
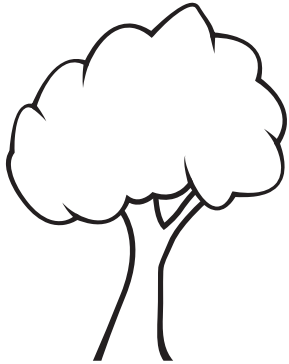
**Made him** (*Cup hands as if you are forming a mud ball in them.*)

**In his own likeness** (*Act like you are holding up a hand mirror and then point up.*)

**Genesis 5:1** (*Open hands like a book.*)

# GOING ON A TRIP

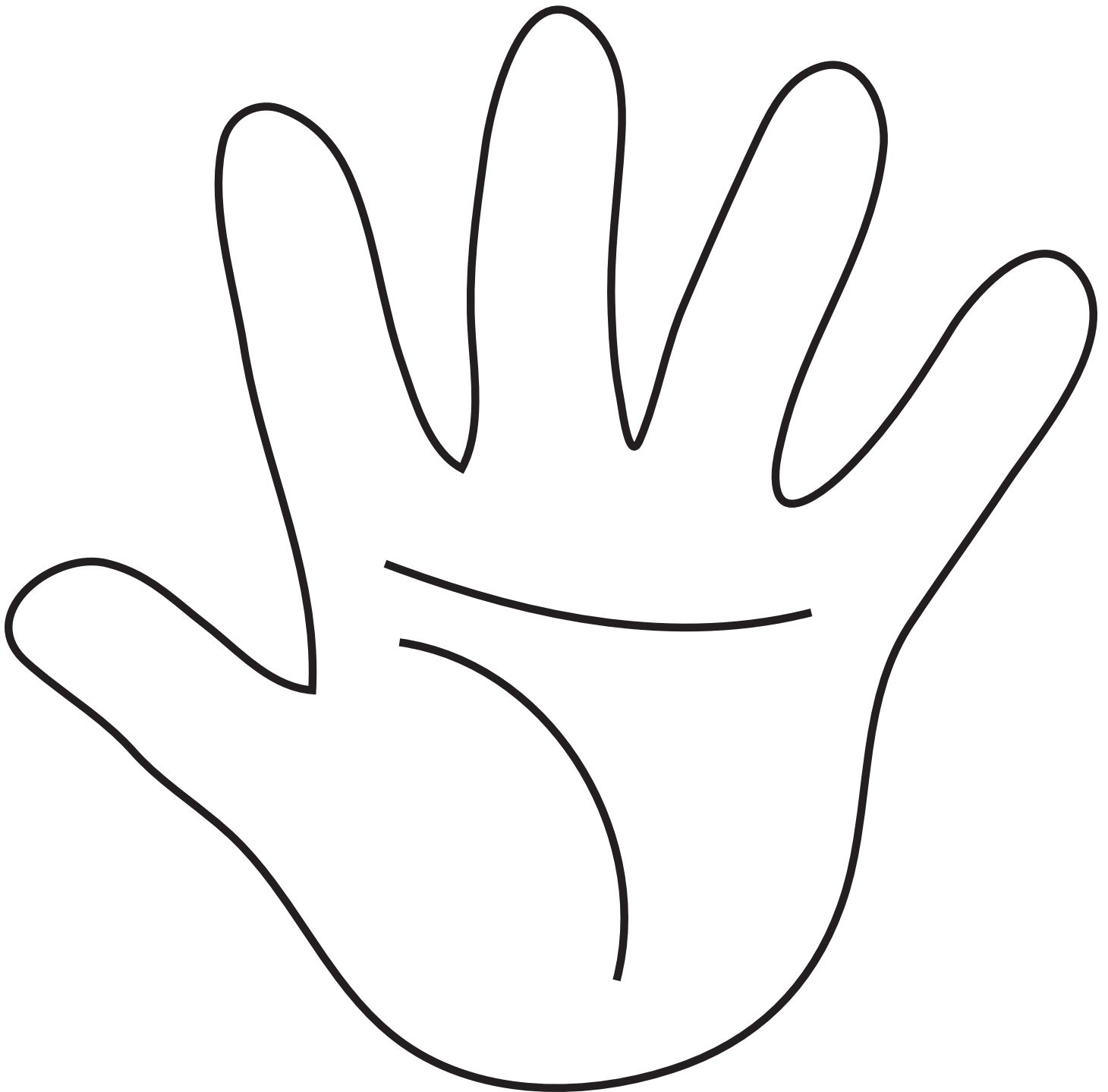
Abraham and Sarah obeyed God and went on a long trip! They saw many interesting things on their trip. Match the objects in the left column with the same object in the right column.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# GOD GIVES US A HAND

When we obey and trust God, he will help us. He is always ready to give us a hand!



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# EARLY ELEMENTARY LEADER GUIDE

## CONTENTS

- Introduction to *The Story for Children* Curriculum
- Components of the Early Elementary Curriculum
- Using *The Story* in Different Teaching/Learning Formats
- Using the Parents' Page
- Launch Activity Idea—Meet the Authors Day
- Early Elementary Parent Letter
- Lesson Plan Template

## INTRODUCTION TO *THE STORY*

Your church is embarking on a wonderful adventure. Children, youth, and adults will enter into God's story, the Bible, in new and life-changing ways. The Bible is, after all, a book of stories. The Bible is a book of stories where God is the main character. The Bible is a book of stories given to us by that same God in order to transform our lives.

As you move chronologically through the Bible, children, youth, and adults will engage creatively and interactively with each story, walking away with one point to remember from each story. Families will have the opportunity to talk around the same Bible story each week and everyone in your church who participates will have a basis of discussion with other members of your church. Each week a different Bible story will come alive for all ages in your congregation.

This curriculum was developed to allow for maximum flexibility. You can use it for mid-week programming or Sunday programming but it is not necessarily limited to use at those times. The curriculum will work in a variety of teaching/learning formats and time frames.

This guide will introduce you to tips for using the children's curriculum in a variety of educational formats and help you to use the parts and pieces of the curriculum to their best advantage for your particular setting and group.

Entering into God's story in creative and meaningful ways is an important piece of the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults. This curriculum is a wonderful tool for introducing your church members to the amazing stories of God's entry into the lives of men and women and reminding them that God is in the midst of their lives too. Godspeed on this adventure.

## ***THE STORY AND EARLY ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN (GRADES 1–3)***

The lessons in the curriculum for early elementary-age children are divided into several parts.

### **The Bible Story**

The Bible stories in the curriculum are designed to be told in kinesthetic and interactive ways. It's important that you plan to tell the stories this way as this will engage the children in the story in ways that will help them vividly remember the story. Each story ends with a debriefing time. This debriefing time is most effective when used with *The Story* Elementary Trading Cards recommended in the lesson plan. The debriefing time helps children make sense of the story in their present-day circumstances and helps them to remember the Bible Point.

### **The Learning Activities**

Each lesson begins with the “Come Together” learning activity. This activity is designed to focus the children's attention on the point and the facts of the Bible story.

After the Bible story is told the children are invited into the “Explore More” activities. These activities engage the children in the Bible story in creative and interactive ways. The lesson plan offers several “Explore More” activities. You may choose one activity which best suits your group and meeting space or you may choose to do all of the activities. Please be aware that many of the “Explore More” activities require an abundance of supplies, so please plan your use of these activities ahead of time so you have plenty of time to gather the supplies and prepare the activity.

### **Skits**

Each lesson is accompanied by an age-appropriate skit focusing on the point of the Bible story. These skits may be used each week, some weeks, or not at all. The use of the skits depends on the duration of your meeting time and your ability to produce the skits effectively for the children. The skits might be best used at the end of the lesson, after the “Explore More” activities. They can also be used at the opening of a lesson to introduce themes to a large group setting. Make sure you offer the children a debriefing time after the skits so they are able to make the connection between the skits and the Bible story point.

In order to use the skits as part of your lesson time you might recruit a team to perform these skits each week for the children or perhaps you could use some of your older children or middle schoolers to perform the skits each week.

## ***USING THE STORY IN DIFFERENT TEACHING/LEARNING FORMATS***

We realize that churches of different sizes and styles will want to use *The Story* curriculum. The curriculum has been designed to be flexible in its ability to be used effectively in a variety of teaching/learning formats.

## One Room Schoolhouse

You may not have enough grade school-aged children to divide into age level classes so you must put all the ages (grades 1–4 or 1–6) in one classroom together. You can use *The Story* curriculum in this teaching/learning format. You will need at least two teachers or a teacher and a helper. They will be responsible for telling the story and leading each of the activities.

You will need to use the Early Elementary age level of the curriculum and you may need to experiment a bit to find the right mix of activities. You always need to keep in mind the different developmental levels of the children in the class realizing, for example, that it may take longer for a first grader to complete an activity requiring manual dexterity than it will a third grader. And if you have a couple of older grade school children in the group, you will need to offer them classroom opportunities to keep them interested as the weeks go by. You might check out the “Explore More” activities in the Older Elementary curriculum and have one of your volunteers lead these children in that activity. You might enlist them as helpers with the younger children or give them other jobs like setting out the supplies or performing the skits each week. If it seems that the older kids in your group are resisting any attempt to integrate them into the classroom with the younger children (give this a few weeks before you decide this is the case) you may want to see if you could integrate them into your youth group.

You may choose to use one or all of the “Explore More” activities. How many you use really depends on the length of your meeting time. If you choose to use only one of the “Explore More” activities choose the one that seems most suited to the ages and energy level of the children represented in your group.

Please be aware that the activities do require a variety of supplies. This is what helps make them effective with the children. Allow yourself enough planning time to be able to collect the supplies you need.

## Age Graded Classrooms (1–2 teachers per room)

You may have enough children to divide them into age-segregated classrooms (first grade, second grade, etc., or first/second grade, third/fourth grade, etc.) with six to twelve children in each classroom. You’ll need two teachers or a teacher and a helper with each age group. If your groups are age-specific (first, second, third grades, etc.) use the Early Elementary curriculum for grades 1–4 and the Later Elementary curriculum for grades 5–6. (In some circumstances, you may use the Later Elementary curriculum for fourth grade. You need to decide this given the maturity level of your fourth-graders.)

Depending on your meeting time you may choose to involve the children in one or all of the “Explore More” activities. If you choose to use only one of these activities, choose the one that is the most suitable for the age, interests, and energy level of each group. Please be aware that the activities do require a variety of supplies. This is what helps make them effective with the children. Allow yourself enough planning time to be able to collect the supplies you need.

If you choose to use the skits appropriate for each age level, you may need to recruit a group of volunteers who will present the skits to each class each week. You’ll need to schedule the skits into each classroom at different times, have more than one skit team, or bring the children together in one meeting area or classroom for the skits.

## **Age-Graded Classrooms (2 or more age-specific classes with their own teachers, in one room)**

You may have enough children in specific age groups to have, say, a first- or second-grade department (12 or more kids of the same age in one classroom) where kids are divided into smaller groups, each with their own teacher. There may also be someone in the classroom who oversees these teachers and classes, such as a department leader.

With this type of setting you have some choices in how you facilitate the lesson plan. You may do the “Come Together” activity either in the separate groups or as a large group. Some of the “Come Together” activities require more floor space than might be available to each smaller class. You might choose to sometimes do this activity in the large group and sometimes in the small groups depending on the activity itself. If you choose to do the activity in the large group it could be led by a teacher or the department leader.

Many of the Bible stories require movement by the children as part of hearing the story and this may require lots of classroom space. We recommend doing the Bible story in the large group setting. This could be led by the department leader or one of the other volunteers who has a talent for storytelling.

After the Bible story the children would form into small groups and complete the “Explore More” activities. Depending on your time frame, the classes may do one or all of these activities. If you choose to do only one of the “Explore More” activities you may allow your teachers to choose which one they would like to do with their particular group or you may choose the one activity for the whole group.

If you choose to use the skits, plan to have them performed after the “Explore More” activity as a way of reinforcing the point of the Bible story. Bring the children into the large group for the skits.

After this send the children and volunteers back to their small groups for the wrap-up activities.

## **Learning Center Model**

(Use the Early Elementary curriculum with this model.) In this teaching/learning model you’ll have the children in age-graded groups guided by volunteers who might be called shepherds, small group leaders, or some other name of your choosing. The job of these volunteers is to guide the group through all the activities, building relationships, and managing and modeling behavior. These volunteers are only responsible for leading the “Come Together” and wrap-up activities with the children. You, then, have another group of volunteers who are the activity center leaders. These volunteers are responsible for leading the Bible story, “Explore More” activities, and skits.

The children may be involved in these activities in two ways. You may set up classrooms or meeting spaces as learning centers, meaning you would have a “Bible Story” space, an “Explore More” space, and a skit space. The children then move with their guides from one center to the next according to a set schedule. If it is important to you that all the children hear the Bible story first, all the children can go to the “Bible Story” space first and then spread out to the other centers. This format gives you the option of decorating the rooms to reflect the weekly Bible story if you should choose to do that.

The other option is for the activity center leaders to move from space to space while the children stay in the same place.

It is good to remember that with this teaching/learning format the more children you have the more activity centers and leaders you will need. You may need more than one leader at each activity center.

## Large Group/Small Group

(Use the Early Elementary curriculum for this model and separate out your fifth- and sixth-graders.) In this teaching/learning format the children are in either age-level groups or mixed-age groups. How you do this depends on how many children attend your program. Each group is shepherded by one or two small group leaders. To use *The Story* curriculum in this format the children should start out in their small groups for the “Come Together” activity. Then, the large group would come together for the story time. A designated Bible story leader would then lead the children in the interactive Bible story. Then the children once again form their small groups where the small group leaders lead them in one or all of the “Explore More” activities. Whether you do one or all of these activities depends on the length of your meeting time. Be aware that some of the “Explore More” activities require a variety of supplies and adequate floor space. Please make sure you plan far enough ahead to have the necessary supplies and room for each activity. If you choose to use the skits included in *The Story* curriculum the best time to use them is after the “Explore More” activities. Bring the children back in the large group to enjoy the skits. Remember to alert the small group leaders to ways to connect the skits to the point of the day’s Bible story. Send the children back into their small groups for any wrap-up activities you choose to do.

Note that the Later Elementary curriculum is most appropriate for older children (typically grades 4-6).

## USING THE PARENTS’ PAGE

Christian parents want to nurture their children in God’s stories in the Bible but often they feel they don’t know how to do it. *The Story* curriculum includes a Parents’ Page for each lesson which offers parents ideas for interacting with their entire family around the week’s Bible story.

Each Parents’ Page offers ideas for how to use these pages in the family. The points for the Bible story are included and families are given “Table Talk” questions that can be adapted for each age level. These questions can be used to explore the Bible story at the dinner table, in the car, or at other times when the family is together. Each Parents’ Page also includes a “Living the Faith” activity. This might be a game, art project, or other fun activity the whole family can engage in around the Bible story. And, lastly, these pages include an “Extra Mile” activity for those families who still crave more learning activities around the week’s Bible story.

Families do not have to do all the activities in the Parents’ Page. Some weeks they may only get to the “Table Talk” questions while other weeks they may find they have time to do more of the activities and spend more time with the Bible story.

## LAUNCH ACTIVITY IDEA—MEET THE AUTHORS DAY

Inspire children and their families to participate in *The Story* campaign with an exciting launch event—**Meet the Authors Day**. This event will generate interest in what families will participate in and learn at church and at home.

**Meet the Authors Day** is an event that brings Bible characters who wrote books of the Bible to your church. During this event, Bible authors will tell about their lives, answer questions, and even sign autographs. Small groups will rotate between the many authors, listening and participating in the presentations. Equipped with the knowledge that these authors wrote the books of the Bible they will be studying throughout the year, children are sure to be attentive and want to know more.

Get volunteers to participate in the presentation. Adjust the following roles based on how many volunteers you have. You may need to have fewer teams or each team can just include an author and stage manager.

### BASIC STEPS FOR PLANNING

1. Set your date and location, making sure you have sufficient time and space for small groups of children and adults to visit each character and participate in a story and Q&A time.
2. Get volunteers or other staff to participate in the presentation. Each team needs members to do the following responsibilities:

#### The Author

- Knows 3–4 different “stories” that he can tell about his or her life.

#### Understory Character

- Prepares a 1–2 minute “story” concerning their involvement with the author/character. Obeying God’s will, thanking God, or beseeching God should be paramount.
- **Possible Ideas:** David’s great-grandmother Ruth, pregnant Sarah with Abraham, the mother of the baby saved by Solomon, the three sailors who threw Jonah overboard, the gospel writers, Paul’s convert Lydia, or Cornelius.

#### The Stage Manager

- Is responsible for everything that goes on “the stage.”
- Makes sure that all costumes are secured.
- Controls the conversational flow and the props for the stage.
- May address the central actor, the understory actor, the facilitator or the crowd.

### The Facilitator

- Controls the people who are around the area—asks if they want an autograph, do they have questions, etc. Communicates to stage manager.
1. Choose these teams well in advance and give them time to prepare what will be needed. This could take a week or two of meetings. Sets, costumes, and scripts need to be prepared.
  2. Have a dress rehearsal, making sure you give sufficient time for each presentation and allow transition time from each station. People will be rotating from author to author.
  3. Create excitement and buzz about this great event!

### POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHORS

- What parts of the Bible did you write?
- How long did it take you?
- What language did you use when you wrote?
- Tell us about a time when God showed you something about himself.
- Of all the important things God had you write in our Bible, what is one important message you want us to know?
- Do you think your message from a long time ago is still useful for us today?
- Was it hard to get people to listen and understand that you were working with God to help them?
- How did you feel when you first realized that God was going to use you as a helper to his people here on Earth?
- Did you want to help God right away or was it hard to obey his Word and message?
- Did your family understand the reasons behind your work and writing?

### EARLY ELEMENTARY EXTENSIONS

When you gather into your classes/age groups, be prepared for the children to have questions and comments about meeting the Bible authors. Discuss with them the importance of knowing something about these great and wise church leaders that God used to communicate his Word to us and to the people of Bible times.

- Talk about the names of the people. Are the names a little unusual?
- Talk about the main ideas of the writings.
- Choose one author and have the children draw a picture of him or her, labeling it with the name of the character. Talk about this one message.
- Have the children design and draw thank-you notes for the Bible characters or have one large card folded and ready for the class to decorate and sign.
- Have volunteers pretend to be an author and tell the class what they remember about the one they choose.

- Have the children work in pairs to write two or three more questions to give to the author(s) of their choice. Pass these questions on and when the author revisits the classes, have the questions addressed.
- Talk about the experience of meeting these authors. Why is it nice to meet people like this? What can you learn?
- Discuss other stories of the Bible that the children would like to meet the author of, and why. Design invitations for that author.

## ***THE STORY FOR CHILDREN: EARLY ELEMENTARY PARENT LETTER***

Send a letter to the parents of the children in your group to familiarize them with *The Story For Children* curriculum program and its highlights for their child's age/grade level. If you think it necessary, be sure to include the fact that *The Story for Children: Early Elementary* curriculum uses the storybook Bible *The Story for Children* as an additional resource. If your church is not providing the storybook Bible for your class, it may be helpful and fun for children to have it on hand at home.

The letter on the following page, or a version of it, can be cut and pasted onto church letterhead or whatever you might use to send communications home to members. Be sure to encourage parental involvement in the children's program and follow-through at home. These two things are key to the formation of their child's faith.

Dear Parents:

*Blessings to all of you and your family! Welcome to The Story for Children! We are pleased and honored that your child is with us and going to be participating in The Story for Children Curriculum.*

*As you may know, this program has thirty-one lessons—thirty-one beautiful messages of God's love and care for his children. Each lesson is designed so that your child will be made completely aware of God's message in each one through the Bible verses, Bible Points, the stories, and various activities.*

*While we as a class explore God's Word, we encourage you to extend that exploration to your home. Share your own love of his Word with your child, talk about what you are learning in your adult class, allow your child time to freely talk about and ask questions about what is being learned. Be sure to encourage sharing of the activity sheets or have your child tell you the Bible story that has been highlighted each week. Even allow him to tell you about some of the discussions that have taken place and continue them at dinner or family reflection time! Look for the weekly Parents' Page. Read and do some of the activities that are part of the Parents' Page sent home each week.*

*This is a family experience. God is the all-loving Father; we are his children. As The Story unfolds for all of us here at \_\_\_\_\_ share the experience with your child. We have been blessed with this incredible story! Let's help make our children incredible and faith-filled storytellers.*

God's blessings,

---

## LESSON PLANNING

Prepare in advance for your class. When you prepare in advance, you will be more comfortable, which will allow children to get the most from the lesson. Children can and do ask questions that do not have easy or immediate answers. In your preparation, try to prepare for questions your class may ask. If you do not know the answer, do not make up an answer. Share with your class that you do not know and either look for the answer together or find the answer after class.

Seasoned teachers as well as new ones may find a lesson plan very helpful. Information from the teacher lesson pages can be summarized into keywords and a glance at the plan will help if you get distracted. A lesson plan is also helpful for the volunteers or helpers in your classroom, so everyone is aware of the intentions for the day's lesson.

As a teacher of young elementary-age children you already know this: Young children are very literal and they want answers!

- Elementary children are starting to think beyond the facts and details to understand there is more to the story than what they can see. Help them distinguish between the facts of the story and the assumptions we make.
- Challenge children to think about how the verses could apply to their daily lives. Children can rewrite verses or points in their own words or perform Bible stories as skits, songs, or raps.
- Relate things right back to them; children are naturally egocentric and love it when things are related back to them.
- Take into consideration that there are many learning styles. Some children love to listen to stories being read, others love moving around and participating in the telling. Still others want to be creative and draw or sculpt Bible characters or ideas. Make use of the variety of options that are provided in the lesson pages. And be sure to add your ideas onto your lesson plan template.
- Review, review, review. Go over the Bible Point and verse many times. Dance, sing, clap, shout, and whisper the words and ideas so that your class can more easily remember the details.

***THE STORY FOR CHILDREN: EARLY ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE***

**Week** \_\_\_\_\_

**BIBLE POINT TO TEACH:**

**General Goal(s):**

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

**STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURES:**

**Come Together**

**Hear the Word**

**EXPLORE MORE**

**SUGGESTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT/AT HOME PRACTICE:**

**CLOSURE (SKIT?):**

**ADAPTATIONS (FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES):**

**EXTENSIONS (FOR GIFTED STUDENTS):**

# THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 1:1–3:24

**Key Verse:** So God created man in his own likeness. He created him in the likeness of God. He created them as male and female. —Genesis 1:27, NIV

**Bible Point:** God made everything there is. He made me to know him.

**Resource:** *The Story for Children*, Chapter 1: “The Beginning of Life as We Know It”

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Get children’s attention by pacing around the room clapping your hands slowly. With each clap name an item that you see in the classroom. This can be anything as big as a whiteboard or as small as a paper clip. Children will try to figure out what you’re going to look for next. As children watch you, invite them to join in. Ask individual children to name something they see as you all clap together. Then ask:

- If we were going to name everything there is, how long would the list be?
- How many things do you think there are that we don’t even know about?

Say, **In our Bible story today, we’re going to hear about some of the amazing things God made—including you and you and you!** Point to children as you say this.

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff You Need:** copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 1*

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 1. You can also have children find Genesis 1 and mark it in their Bible. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

Follow the directions to present the Bible story. Then gather to debrief.

### In the Beginning

As you begin Bible story time, have children spread out so they have plenty of space to move. If possible, dim the lights. (Some young children may be frightened by complete darkness.) Begin the story in dim light, and turn on the lights when indicated. Explain that they should watch what you do and follow your example. Ask children to crouch with you as you begin the story.

**In the beginning, everything was dark. But God’s Spirit was there. God said, “Let there be light.”** Jump up and have someone flip on the lights. **God called the light “day.” He called the darkness “night.”**

*Spread your arms wide and lift them up. Next, God created a huge space that he called “sky” with water underneath. Stomp in place. Then, God made the dry ground that holds us up.*

*Punch your arms upward repeatedly and twinkle your fingers. And then came the stars and the sun and the moon in the sky. Pretend to swim. Then God filled the water with living things—fish and whales and starfish and everything else that lives in the water. Pretend to fl as you turn in a circle. And God made birds that fly through the sky—eagles and robins and swallows and every other kind of bird. Gallop in place. Then God made all kinds of animals—wild animals and livestock, big animals and small ones, friendly ones and scary ones.*

*Have everyone be still. All of this took six days of work for God. In six days, he made the whole world except for one thing. What do you think was missing? Pause for responses. People! So God did one more thing on the sixth day. He made people! Grin and point to your cheeks. But the people were not like the animals. God said, “Let us make man in our image.” He wanted people to know him and be like him. He called the first people “Adam” and “Eve.”*

*Read Genesis 1:31a; 2:1–2. Our amazing world was finished and ready for us to live in. God was ready for people to know him and enjoying being with him.*

Early elementary children will enjoy retelling the story themselves with some prompting. You might tell the story again and ask children to suggest new motions for each creation event. Or you might demonstrate the same actions and encourage children to tell you the part of the story each action represents.

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 1*. Ask children to describe the picture on the card and tell what part of the story the picture shows. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **Of all the things God created, why do you think people are the best?** (*Because we can know God and be like him.*)
- **Tell me some things you know about God.**

Collect the cards for now. You’ll send them home with the children later.

## STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

### OPTION 1: WHAT GOD MADE

Have children stand along one wall, facing you. Explain to children that you will name an object. If they think God created that object, they should take one step forward. If they think God did not create the object, they should stay still. Play until a child reaches where you are standing. Children might enjoy being the leader and naming objects God created.

## Option 2: This I Know

**Stuff You Need:** beanbag or other small item to pass, open floor space

Invite kids to join you in a circle on the floor. Say, **God made us in his image so we can know him and be like him. I'm going to toss the beanbag to someone. If it's you, tell me something you know about God and toss the beanbag back to me.** After everyone has had a chance to tell something they know about God, play again. This time, ask children to tell you one way they can be like God (loving, kind, creative, generous, and so on). If you have time, you can play again and this time let one of the children take the role of choosing whom to toss the bag to. After the game, have a brief discussion on these questions.

- **Of all the things we've named, what do you think is the coolest thing about God?**
- **Tell me one way you'd like to be more like God this week.**

Say, **Our great God, who made everything in the universe, wants us to know him and be like him! Totally cool!**

## Option 3: God Is So Good

**Stuff You Need:** God Is So Good Activity Sheet, markers or crayons

**Optional:** tissue paper, glitter glue, fabric scraps, foam shapes, watercolor paint and brushes

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about the special things that God provided in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve. Say, **What do you think Adam and Eve liked the best? What part of God's creation do you like the best?** Instruct children to color the picture. Consider offering the optional supplies so children can give texture and dimension to the coloring page.

## Option 4: Creation Mobile

**Stuff you need:** plastic disposable plates, ribbon or string, hole punch, construction paper, crayons, markers, glitter, etc.

1. Ahead of time, cut the plastic plates in half. Each student will need one half, so two students can share a plate.
2. Punch eight holes along the bottom (straight) edge of the plate. Some holes may be higher than others. Punch one hole at the top in the middle to help hang the mobile.
3. Have students draw and color a small picture to represent each day of creation.
4. Punch a hole at the top of each of the creation pictures.
5. Cut eight pieces of ribbon of varying lengths.
6. When they are done decorating help students thread ribbon through the pictures and the holes in the plate. Tie securely in place.
7. Thread a ribbon through the top hole and tie in a loop. This will allow you to hang the mobiles around the room.

**STEP 4: GOING HOME**

---

At the end of the lesson, pray together praising God for his creation and asking God to help you know him better. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 1*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

# FAMOUS FAMILY

[Scooter walks on stage wearing a wild, colorful outfit.]

**Scooter:** [pulls out a pocket mirror and admires himself] Wow! I look good!

**Beth:** Hey, Scooter! [sees Scooter's crazy outfit] Whoa! What happened to you

**Scooter:** Hi, Beth! What do you mean "what happened?"

**Beth:** Um, well, your outfit is ... INTERESTING. I don't really have the words to describe it.

**Scooter:** [strikes a silly pose] That's because it's so awesome!!!

**Beth:** What happened to your regular clothes? I think they looked great.

**Scooter:** [frowns] Well, no one ever noticed me because my clothes were boring.

**Beth:** Scooter, you don't have to wear crazy clothes for people to notice you.

**Scooter:** I don't?

**Beth:** No, people notice you because you're Scooter. You have a kind heart and a big smile.

**Scooter:** Sometimes I don't feel like ANYONE notices me. Mom is always busy with my baby brother, Huey, and my dad has to work a lot.

**Beth:** Everyone feels unnoticed sometimes, but there's someone who ALWAYS notices you.

**Scooter:** Who?

**Beth:** The same someone who created the land and the oceans and the distant galaxies!

**Scooter:** Wow! That sounds like a really important someone!

**Beth:** He is! God created the land and the oceans and the galaxies. And he created you and me, too! People are his most special creations and he always notices us. He even wants to be our friend!

**Scooter:** I never thought about that before. I guess I am special just being Scooter. I don't have to wear these crazy clothes for someone to notice me.

**Beth:** No way! But if you keep wearing them, I know someone who WILL notice you ...

**Scooter:** Who?

**Beth:** The circus!

[Both laugh and exit.]



**GOD**

# THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

**Timeless Truth:** Humans are God's crowning creation.

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 1–3:24

**Key Verse:** When God created man, he made him in his own likeness. —Genesis 5:1 NIV

**Resource:** *The Story for Children*, Chapter 1: "The Beginning of Life as We Know It"

## PARENT TIPS

Read the key point from the Sunday school class your child(ren) attended. Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table at some point this week. The Living Faith activity is designed to help your child know that he's perfectly created by God. The Extra Mile idea will help your family spread God's love in the community.

## GET THE POINT

God made everything there is. He made me to know him.

## TABLE TALK

- If you could live a day as any animal, what animal would you be? What are some of the good and bad things about living as that animal?
- What are some ways people and animals are different?
- Are people or animals more important to God?

Explain that people are worth more than animals, because we're the only part of creation made in God's image. We were made to have a relationship with God. Even Jesus said in Matthew 10:31 that we're "worth more than many sparrows."

## LIVING FAITH

Spend a few moments one evening going on a family treasure hunt around your house. You can write your own clues or use the ones given. End your hunt at a mirror (either handheld or in a bathroom) so your family can discover God's greatest creation—you!

### Clue No. 1

I'm no simple box with doors and a light.  
I will keep your food cold, both day and night.

**Clue No. 2 (hide in refrigerator)**

Yawn. If you're tired, you're coming to me.  
For safety and warmth, I'm the place to be.

**Clue No. 3 (hide in a bed)**

I'm pretty and make oxygen for you.  
Give me water—it's the right thing to do.

**Clue No. 4 (hide in a plant)**

With four wheels and an engine, I go fast.  
But without any gas, I cannot last.

**Clue No. 5 (hide in car)**

Your search is almost over, so be glad.  
You wipe your eyes with me when you are sad.

**OPTION 1—TAKES YOU TO BATHROOM****Clue No. 6 (hide in tissue box)**

This is the last clue. Hope it has been fun.  
Always wash your hands in here when you're done.

**OPTION 2—TAKES YOU TO COUCH WHERE YOU'VE PUT A MIRROR UNDER THE CUSHIONS****Clue No. 6 (hide in tissue box)**

Come to me when you want to sit around.  
Lift up my cushions and treasure you've found.

When you find the mirror, ask your children to identify the treasure. (They should say it's them.) Remind your children that they are created in God's image. Let them know how proud you are of them. Talk about some of the things you appreciate about them and tie that into how those characteristics are from God. Tell them you expect a lot from them and have high standards because they are God's perfect creation. Encourage them to always follow God and his will for their lives.

**EXTRA MILE**

For added emphasis on this week's themes, try one of these activities.

1. Grab a family photo album that has some shots of you enjoying the outdoors. Ask:

- **What do you remember most about this experience?**
- **What are some of your favorite things about God's creation?**
- **How can you see God's handiwork in the outdoors?**
- **Where are some places you'd like to visit?**

If the conversation leads, plan a fun family outing or your next family vacation.

2. Remind your children that all people are important to God by taking some food to a local food bank or going through your closets and making a donation to a homeless shelter. Remind your kids that helping the less fortunate shows them God's love.

# GOD IS SO GOOD

God's creation is so good! Color this picture. Make it beautiful and bright.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# LATER ELEMENTARY LEADER GUIDE

## CONTENTS

- Introduction to The Story for Kids Curriculum
- Components of the Later Elementary Curriculum
- Using *The Story* in Different Teaching/Learning Formats
- Using the Parent Pages
- Launch Activity Idea—Meet the Author Day
- Later Elementary Parent Letter
- Lesson Plan Template

## INTRODUCTION TO “THE STORY”

Your church is embarking on a wonderful adventure. Children, youth, and adults will enter into God’s story, the Bible, in new and life changing ways. The Bible is, after all, a book of stories. The Bible is a book of stories where God is the main character. The Bible is a book of stories given to us by that same God in order to transform our lives.

As you move chronologically through the Bible children, youth, and adults will engage creatively and interactively with each story walking away with one point to remember from each story. Families will have the opportunity to talk around the same Bible story each week and everyone in your church who participates will have a basis of discussion with other members of your church. Each week a different Bible story will come alive for all ages in your congregation.

This curriculum was developed to allow for maximum flexibility. You can use it for mid-week programming or Sunday programming but it is not necessarily limited to use at those times. The curriculum will work in a variety of teaching/learning formats and time frames.

This guide will introduce you to tips for using the children’s curriculum in a variety of educational formats and help you to use the parts and pieces of the curriculum to their best advantage for your particular setting and group.

Entering into God’s story in creative and meaningful ways is an important piece of the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults. This curriculum is a wonderful tool for introducing your church members to the amazing stories of God’s entry into the lives of men and women and reminding them that God is in the midst of their lives, too. Godspeed on this adventure.

## THE STORY AND LATER ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN

Later elementary-age children find themselves in an in-between state. While emotionally they still may feel like children, they have an outside sophistication that belies that. They have a desire to be thought of as older and mature but don't yet have the inner resources to cope with all that comes with that hoped-for maturity. If they have a sense they are being asked to participate in something younger children are doing they may fight against it. The later elementary Story curriculum is written with these "tweeners" in mind.

While this curriculum can be used in a variety of teaching-learning formats it's important, if at all possible, for these children to be separated from the younger children.

### The Bible Story

The Bible stories are designed to be told interactively. They are designed to help the children enter and engage in the Bible story in a creative and active way. Make sure the story is told the way it is written in order to provide the best experience of the story possible for the children. After the Bible story is finished, the children are directed back to the other "Hear the Word" activities to help them debrief the Bible story together. Each Bible story also has an extender activity. This is an extra activity and not necessary to the flow of the story time. Use of the extender activity will be discussed in the next section.

### The Teaching/Learning Activities

Each lesson includes three learning activities other than the Bible story. Each lesson begins with an introductory activity called "Come Together." These activities are designed to introduce the children to the theme of the lesson and hook their attention. These activities call for a variety of tools and supplies so please make sure you plan ahead in order to have what you need on hand. After the Bible story the children are invited into two or more "Explore More" activities. These activities are designed to offer the children a chance to enter into the Bible story and explore it in creative ways. These activities may call for many and varied supplies, so make sure you plan ahead so you have everything you need on hand. You may use one or all of the "Explore More" activities, depending on your time. Each lesson includes a "Lesson Extender" activity. This activity is also designed to help the children engage creatively with the Bible story. This activity is optional. You can use it if you have extended classroom time or even in place of one of the "Explore More" activities. Later elementary school children have varied interests and attention levels. Evaluate the use of these teaching/learning activities in terms of your particular group of children.

### SKITS

Skits emphasizing the theme of the Bible story are included with each lesson. Generally, it's good to use the skits after the children have heard the day's Bible story. Older children love to perform in skits so, if you have time, you might want to gather a group of your older-age children during the week to learn the skit in order to present it to the rest of their group. Or you might recruit a skit team to present the skits each week to the younger children.

## USING THE STORY IN DIFFERENT TEACHING/LEARNING FORMATS

### **One Room Schoolhouse (all grade-school ages together)**

Unless you have a very small group of children or small group of older elementary age children avoid using this format with older children. Generally they resent being put in a class with younger children and may act that out in unacceptable ways. Directions for this format in the Early Elementary guide will offer you suggestions for involving older children in this type of format.

### **Age-Graded Classrooms (1 or 2 teachers per room)**

In this format you have a group of 6–10 older elementary age children in a room with one or two volunteers. With this format all the activities are done with the whole group at the same time. Begin with the “Come Together” activity. Move to telling the Bible story using *The Story Trading Cards* and involve the children in the discussion that goes with it. Then move to the “Explore More” activities. If you choose to use the skits integrate them into the other lesson activities in the places that seem to fit best for your classrooms.

### **Age-Graded Classrooms/Several Classes (with several teachers per room, each with their own class)**

In this format you have several small groups (6–10 children) each with its own teacher in one room. Begin with the “Come Together” activity. Teachers can involve children in this activity in their separate groups or in the large group or it can vary from week to week. Some of these activities involve the use of computers and other technology. If you choose to use the technology suggested in the activity it is better to do the activity in a large group. Then move to the Bible story using *The Story Trading Cards*. This activity can be done in a couple of ways. Each teacher may tell the story to her class or one teacher may tell the story to the large group. As you make this decision be aware that the storytelling is done in an active way and may need more room than the small group areas allow. After the story, move the children into the “Explore More” activities. These are best done in the separate small groups or classes. Be aware that the “Explore More” activities may call for a lot of varied supplies. Plan well ahead so that the volunteers have everything they need. Depending on your class time and children you may choose to do the “Lesson Extender” activity. This may be done in the smaller class groups. If you choose to use the skits integrate them into the lesson plan and classroom time in the places they seem to fit best.

### **Learning Center Model (Shepherds/Activity Centers)**

With this teaching/learning format the children are divided into small groups who are guided by a small group leader. The small group leaders are in charge of shepherding their groups through all of the activities. The other volunteers are the Activity Center leaders. These volunteers are responsible for the various parts of the lesson. They lead the story time. The small groups move from room to room or area to area as they move through the parts of the lesson plan. If you use this format, it might be best to have the groups do the “Come Together” activity and the Bible story at the beginning of your meeting time in the larger group of children. Then have them move through the activity centers. The skits become their own activity centers. If you have a lot of children and use this format you may need to double or triple up on activity leaders and activity space.

## Large Group/Small Group

In this teaching/learning format the children are divided into small groups led by a small group leader. All the small groups meet in one large meeting space. Large group leaders lead the whole group of children in some of the learning activities and the small group leaders lead their group in some of the activities. If you use this format with your younger age groups it might be best to separate out the older elementary-age children into another room so you can use the curriculum especially written for them and their interests. Then, the “Come Together” activity might be done in a combination of large group and small group with the small-group leaders turning to their small groups with the discussion questions. Another large-group leader may be the Bible story leader who leads the large group in the telling of the Bible story. The children turn back to their small groups and the small-group leaders to enter into the discussion questions around the story and to use *The Story Trading Cards*. The “Explore More” activities are entered into within the small groups. The skits are another part of the large group time and are best done toward the end of the meeting time.

## USING THE PARENT PAGES

When you use *The Story* curriculum all the ages and generations in your church are learning about the same Bible story. This offers the families in your church an opportunity to take each week’s Bible story home with them and engage with it during the week. Christian parents do want to nurture their children in God’s stories in the Bible but often they feel they don’t know how to do it. *The Story* curriculum includes “Parent Pages” for each lesson which offer parents lots of ideas for interacting with their entire family around the week’s Bible story.

Each “Parent Page” offers ideas for how to use these pages in the family. The points for the Bible story are included and families are given “Table Talk” questions that can be adapted for each age level. These questions can be used to explore the Bible story at the dinner table, in the car, or at other times when the family is together. Each Parent Page includes also a “Living the Faith” activity. This might be a game, art project, or other fun activity the whole family can engage in around the Bible story. And, lastly these pages include an “Extra Mile” activity for those families who still crave more learning activities around the week’s Bible story.

Families do not have to do all the activities in the Parent Pages. Some weeks they may only get to the “Table Talk” questions while other weeks they may find they have time to do more of the activities and spend more time engaging with the Bible story.

## LAUNCH ACTIVITY IDEA—MEET THE AUTHOR DAY

To inspire the children and their families to participate in *The Story* campaign, here is an exciting launch event idea. It is sure to generate interest in what the families will be participating in within their church as well as home.

Plan a **Meet the Author Day**. This is an event when the church is visited by Bible characters that have written books of the Bible. During this event, Bible authors will tell about their lives, answer questions that have been drafted by staff as well as questions from the children, and even autograph

pages from the Bible book they wrote. Small groups or classes will have a schedule and rotate between the many authors, listening and participating in the presentations. Equipped with the knowledge that these are authors of the books of the Bible that they will be studying throughout the coming church year, children are sure to be attentive and want to know more.

This is the perfect introduction to these authors. “Inviting” them to visit classes again, during the actual studying of their books, will also be helpful for reinforcement of the message.

### **BASIC STEPS FOR PLANNING:**

1. Set your date and location, making sure you have sufficient time and space for small groups of children and adults to visit each character and participate in a story and Q&A time.
2. Get volunteers or other staff to participate in the presentation. Each team needs members to do the following responsibilities:

#### **The Author**

- Knows 3–4 different “stories” that he can tell about his or her life.

#### **Under Story Character**

- Prepares a 1–2 minute “story” concerning their involvement with the author/character. Obeying God’s will, thanking God, or beseeching God should be paramount.
- **Possible Ideas:** David’s great-grandmother Ruth, pregnant Sarah with Abraham, the mother of the baby saved by Solomon, the three sailors who threw Jonah overboard, the gospel writers, Paul’s convert Lydia, or Cornelius.

#### **The Stage Manager**

- Is responsible for everything that goes on “the stage”
- Makes sure that all costumes are secured
- Controls the conversational flow and the props for the stage
- May address the central actor, the under story actor, the facilitator or the crowd

#### **The Facilitator**

- Controls the people who are around the area — asks if they want an autograph, do they have questions, etc ... Communicates to stage manager.
1. Choose these teams well in advance and give them time to prepare what will be needed ... this could take a week or two of meetings. Sets, costumes, and scripts need to be prepared.
  2. Have a dress rehearsal, making sure you give sufficient time for each presentation and transition time from each station. People will be rotating from author to author.
  3. Create excitement and buzz about this great event!

**POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHORS**

- What parts of the Bible did you write?
- How long did it take you?
- What language did you use when you wrote?
- Tell us about a time when God showed you something about himself?
- Of all the important things God had you write in our Bible, what is one important message you want us to know?
- Do you think your message from a long time ago is still useful for us today?
- Was it hard to get people to listen and understand that you were working with God to help them?
- How did you feel when you first realized that God was going to use you as a helper to his people here on earth?
- Did you want to help God right away or was it hard to obey his word and message?
- Did your family understand the reasons behind your work and writing?

**LATER ELEMENTARY EXTENSIONS**

When you gather into your classes/age groups, be prepared for the children to have questions and comments about meeting the Bible authors. Discuss with them the importance of knowing something about these great and wise church leaders that God used to communicate his word to us and to the people of Bible times.

- Have the children work in pairs to write two or three more questions to give to the author(s) of their choice. Pass these questions on and when the author revisits the classes, have the questions addressed.
- Talk about the experience of meeting these authors. Why is it nice to meet people like this? What can you learn?
- Discuss other stories of the Bible that the children would like to meet the author of and why. Design invitations for that author. Write questions that you might ask the author.
- Are there people today that are the equivalent of these Bible time authors? Name them and explain why they would be considered similar. Do people today need the guidance that God gave through the original authors of the Bible? Why?
- Pair up the class or form small groups. Have the children write an introduction paragraph or two for a book that is filled with messages from God specifically for children today. Share with the class.

**THE STORY FOR KIDS: LATER ELEMENTARY PARENT LETTER**

Parents should be well aware by now that *The Story* Campaign is taking place within your church. They should already understand that church leadership would like the involvement of everyone in the church family, from the youngest to the oldest.

It is suggested that you send home a letter to the parents of the children in your group to familiarize them with the Story For Kids Curriculum program and its highlights for their child's age/grade level. If you think it necessary, be sure to include the fact that The Story For Kids: Later Elementary uses as an additional resource the book *The Story for Kids*. If your church is not providing that for your class, it may be helpful and fun for children to have that on hand at home.

The following letter, or a version of it, can be cut and pasted onto church letterhead or whatever you might use to send home communications to members. Be sure to encourage parental involvement in the children's program and follow-through at home. These two things are key to the formation of their child's faith as they move forward in the campaign.

*Dear Parents:*

*Blessings to all of you and your families! Welcome to The Story for Kids! We are pleased and honored that your child is with us and going to be participating in The Story for Kids Curriculum.*

*As you may know, this program has thirty-one lessons, thirty-one beautiful messages of God's love and care for his children. Each lesson is designed so that your child will be made completely aware of God's message in each one through the Bible verses, Bible points, the stories, and various activities.*

*While we as a class explore God's Word, we encourage you to extend that exploration to your homes. Share your own love of his Word with your child, talk about what you are learning in your adult classes, allow your child time to freely talk about and ask questions about what is being learned. Be sure to encourage sharing of the activity sheets or have your child tell you the Bible story that has been highlighted each week. Even allow him to Tell you about some of the discussions that have taken place and continue them at dinner or family reflection time! Look for the weekly Parent Page. Read and do some of the activities that will be a part of the Parent Page sent home each week.*

*This is a family experience ... God is the all-loving Father. We are his children. As The Story unfolds for all of us here at \_\_\_\_\_ share the experience with your child. We have been blessed with this incredible story! Let's help make our children incredible and faith-filled storytellers*

*God's Blessings,*

---

## LESSON PLANNING

Be prepared before your class begins! That is a very important rule for any teacher of any subject, but teaching faith can be extra challenging. There are questions that can be asked that do not have easy or immediate answers, but children, no matter what age, demand answers. While often they will accept the idea of coming back to a question or comment, it is best if you plan for as many contingencies as you can. Formulating a lesson plan can help in this.

Seasoned teachers as well as new ones can find a plan very helpful. Information from the teacher lesson pages can be summarized into keywords and a glance at the plan will help if you get distracted. A lesson plan is also helpful for the volunteers or helpers in your classroom, so they are as aware as you are what the intentions are for the day's lesson.

As a teacher of elementary-age children you already know this ... children are very literal and they want answers but the older they get the more they want to stretch their imaginations and challenge you as the teacher with their ideas and questions!

- Be sure to skew your first lessons to facts. Ask questions that are about the facts and details of the story you are teaching on a given day.
- As children get older they are able to think beyond the facts and details and understand there is more to a story than what they can see. When you are planning discussion ideas be sure to put more challenging options for thought in these ... have the children thinking beyond facts to evaluating and predicting. Help them to see how Bible events have changed who we are and continue to change us.
- Try to challenge these older students to apply the Bible point or verse to their lives; have them analyze the verses and think about how this could possibly be applicable to today's world or a certain situation in their lives; have them rewrite the verses or points in their own words or perform the Bible stories as skits or songs (even writing rap verses); challenge the children to evaluate the choices made by Bible characters and how different choices could have impacted the outcome ... these are just a few ways to add to the lesson plan!
- Relate things right back to them; children, no matter what age, are naturally egocentric and love it when things are related back to them.
- Take into consideration that there are many learning styles. Some children love to listen to stories being read, others love moving around and participating in the telling. Still others want to be creative and draw or sculpt Bible characters or ideas. Make use of the variety of options that are provided in the lesson pages. And be sure to add your ideas onto your lesson plan template.
- Review, review, review. Go over the Bible point and verse many times. Don't stick to just the activity options that are here, but be creative. Dance, sing, clap, shout, and whisper the words and ideas so that your class can more easily remember the details. This works for students of every age!

## THE STORY FOR KIDS LATER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**Week** \_\_\_\_\_

**BIBLE POINT TO TEACH:**

**General Goal(s):**

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

**STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURES:**

**COME TOGETHER**

**HEAR THE WORD**

**EXPLORE MORE**

**SUGGESTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT/AT HOME PRACTICE:**

**CLOSURE (SKIT?):**

**ADAPTATIONS (FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES):**

**EXTENSIONS (FOR GIFTED STUDENTS):**

# THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 1:1–3:24

**Key Verse:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. —Genesis 1:1, NIV

**Bible Point:** God made everything there is. He made me to know him.

**Resource:** *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 1: “The Beginning of Life As We Know It”

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

**Stuff You Need:** Optional: PowerPoint slide entitled Space View, computer and projection equipment

Say, **Let me ask you some challenging questions and see what you know.** Display the Space View slide and invite kids to tell you what they see. Then ask these questions. (If you’re not using the slide, go straight to the questions.)

- **What is the speed of light?** (186,286 miles per second)
- **Which planets can you see without a telescope?** (Depending on the time of year—Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.)
- **What is the largest object in the universe?** (Abell 3266, a comet-like ball of gas that is a thousand million times bigger than the sun.)
- **How many stars do scientists think there are?** (70 sextillion; for added effect, write the number on the board—70,000,000,000,000,000,000.)

After the questions, wrap up with a brief discussion:

- **How do you feel when you think about how huge and amazing the universe is?**
- **What’s the most amazing fact about the universe that you know?**

Say, **We are such a small part of the universe God created, but we are the part he cares about the most. He created us to know him and be like him.**

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff You Need:** copies of *The Story for Kids*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 1*

Tell the story from *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 1. You can also have the children find Genesis 1 and mark it in their Bible. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

## In the Beginning

The Bible story has three parts, each with a different interaction from the children. Begin the Bible story by explaining that the children will do an “anti-echo.” You will whisper a word, and they will shout it back to you. Practice with any word you choose, then begin the story.

**God made the world in six days. He made the *(whisper)* light and darkness. *(Pause for kids to echo.)* He made the *(whisper)* seas and the sky. *(Echo.)* He made the *(whisper)* dry ground and plants. *(Echo.)* He made the *(whisper)* stars and sun and moon. *(Echo.)* He filled the water and the sky with *(whisper)* living things. *(Echo.)* God made every kind of creature on the Earth. But he had one more thing to create.**

In the second part of the story, children will mirror your actions.

Stand facing the children. If you move your right arm, they will move their left. If you turn to your right, they will turn to their left. Choose any actions you like for kids to reflect. Have a child read *Genesis 1:26–27*.

**He created Adam and Eve and gave them the Garden of Eden to live in. God wanted people—us—to reflect his glory. We can have many of the same qualities God has—like love, kindness, creativity, and generosity. Let’s practice being mirrors to remember that we are made in God’s image and reflect God’s glory.**

In the final story section, the children will respond to cue words by saying, “Oh no!”

**The time came when Adam and Eve had to make some choices. When I say, “Was that a good choice?” You answer, “Oh no!”**

**God told Adam and Eve they could eat from anything in the garden except one tree. But the serpent hated God and wanted Adam and Eve to think God lied. He told Eve she could eat from that tree and she did. Was that a good choice? *(Oh no!)* Then Eve offered Adam some fruit. Was that a good choice? *(Oh no!)* Then Adam ate the fruit. Was that a good choice? *(Oh no!)* Then Adam and Eve tried to hide from God because they knew they had disobeyed. Was that a good choice? *(Oh no!)***

**God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden after that. But he never stopped loving them, and he never wanted them to stop reflecting his glory. Even now, we still reflect God’s glory, and every day we can choose to be more like him.**

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 1*. Ask children to describe the picture on the card and tell what part of the story the picture shows. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **How did God feel about Adam and Eve?**
- **What does it mean that God made us in his own image?** *(We reflect his glory; we have the ability to be like God in our characteristics.)*

Collect the cards for now. You’ll send them home with the children later.

## STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose any or all of these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

### OPTION 1: RIGHT AND WRONG

**Stuff You Need:** index cards

Before class, write one true or false sentence about today's lesson on each card, or you can have children write their own true or false sentences in class.

In class, have the children stand in the middle of the room. Explain to the children that you will read one card at a time. If they think the statement is true, they should move to the right. If they think the statement is false, they should go to the left. If children get the answer incorrect, take time to look up the answer in the Bible. For more of a challenge, add sentences about the Bible passages covered in *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 1.

### OPTION 2: GARDEN OF EDEN

**Stuff You Need:** construction paper in a variety of colors, paper plates, glue, tape, scissors.

Optional: toothpicks, paper clips, other small tactile items

Say, **God created the Garden of Eden as the perfect place for Adam and Eve to live. Let's make our own 3-D versions of the Garden of Eden.** Give each child a paper plate. Challenge them to cut shapes from paper to represent items in the Garden of Eden and stand them up in a three-dimensional picture on the plate. One method is to fold paper and cut the shape out of two layers at once, leaving the fold uncut at the top of the shape. Bend the bottoms into short tabs that can be taped to the plate to make the figure stand sort of like a pyramid. As the group works, engage them in discussion.

- How do you think the world might have been different if Adam and Eve had not disobeyed God?
- What will you remember most about today's Bible story?

As you wrap up, say, **Our God created an exciting world for us to live in. He made us to be like him in many ways. No matter how many stars are in the universe, they can't know God the way we can.**

### OPTION 3: MY GARDEN OF EDEN

**Stuff You Need:** My Garden of Eden Activity Sheet, crayons

**Optional:** poster board, art supplies, markers

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about the idea of a perfect world. Brainstorm the types of things that might be in a perfect world. Have the children draw a version of their perfect world, created by God, not man! Send home to share with their family.

**OPTION 4: CARING FOR CREATION**

**Stuff You Need:** poster board, art supplies

God gave the world and all creation to us to use and care for the best we can. What are some parts of creation that you use daily, that you feel you cannot live without?

How do you care for that creation?

How do you show God your appreciation?

Can one or two people make a difference?

Break the group into smaller groups of three or four students. Have each group choose one part of God's creation that needs more of humanity's care and concern. Challenge each group to write up a plan to present to God—showing him how they would protect creation.

Direct the group to describe the creation, name how and why it might need our attention, and three to four ways they plan to carry out their plan.

Use poster board, markers, or other art supplies if needed to help illustrate their project. Present the projects to the larger group.

**STEP 4: GOING HOME**

At the end of the lesson, pray together, praising God for his creation and asking God to help you know him more. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 1*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

# MY GARDEN OF EDEN

Think about the gift of a perfect world from God. What would be a part of your perfect world? Draw and color a picture of this world. Share with your family.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# CHOICES

[Scooter is sitting on a chair looking discouraged. Beth enters.]

**Beth:** Hey, Scooter! I've been looking all over for you. We were supposed to ride bikes. Remember?

**Scooter:** Oh, yeah. Sorry, Beth. I forgot.

**Beth:** That's OK. What's up?

**Scooter:** Well, I have a choice to make. You know my birthday is next Wednesday?

**Beth:** Yeah.

**Scooter:** Well, Mom said I could have my birthday party at our house or at the bowling alley.

**Beth:** Cool! Which one did you choose?

**Scooter:** That's the thing. I REALLY want to have my party at MR. PARTY'S, but Mom said no.

**Beth:** Oh. Those parties are really expensive.

**Scooter:** I know. But Jake and Ben and everyone cool has their party at MR. PARTY'S. I think my mom is just being mean.

**Beth:** Do you really think your mom doesn't want you to have fun on your birthday?

**Scooter:** No, I guess not. [pause.] She just doesn't understand.

**Beth:** Maybe she understands better than you think. After all, she's known you for almost 12 years!

**Scooter:** Yeah....

**Beth:** Remember how she surprised you with laser tag for your birthday last year?

**Scooter:** Yeah! That was awesome! [Scooter jumps up and relives his stealth laser tag tactics.] Jake didn't even see me coming! I was the terminator! I was like [mimes sneaking around a corner] and he was like [mimes putting hands in the air and running for cover]. It was awesome!

**Beth:** See?!

**Scooter:** I guess my mom really does know what I like.

**Beth:** You know, Scooter, it's the same thing with God. He knows us best and wants only good things for us.

**Scooter:** Yeah, but sometimes it doesn't seem like it. Like when I sit on the bench in basketball...

**Beth:** [smiling] Or your mom doesn't give you the party you want?

**Scooter:** You make a good point, Beth. Let's go ride bikes!

[Both exit.]

# THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

**Timeless Truth:** Humans are God's crowning creation.

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 1–3:24

**Key Verse:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. —Genesis 1:1, NIV

**Resource:** *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 1: "The Beginning of Life As We Know It"

## PARENT TIPS

Read and discuss the key point from the class your child(ren) attended. Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table at some point this week. The Living Faith activity is designed to help your child know that he's perfectly created by God. The Extra Mile idea will help your family spread God's love in the community.

## GET THE POINT

God made everything there is. He made me to know him.

## TABLE TALK

- **What are some things you really like about yourself?** (Encourage your family to list more than just physical attributes.)
- **Hollywood actors and models always talk about how they'd like to change their appearance, yet they're considered the pretty people. Is there anything you'd change about yourself?**
- **Do you think God would change anything about you? Why?**
- **Why do you think culture is so consumed with looks and fame?**

## LIVING FAITH

Spend some time going on a walk in your neighborhood or nearby park. As you walk, point out and talk about the things God created. Challenge your family to see if they can find one thing God created for each letter of the alphabet.

- **What do you know about each of these things that God created?**
- **Why do you think God created it?**
- **What is your favorite part of God's creation? Why?**

End your walk at a mirror or a place where you can see your reflection. What you see is God's crowning creation. Remind your children that they are created in God's image. Let them know how proud of them you are. Talk about some of the things you appreciate about them and tie that into how those characteristics are from God. Tell them you expect a lot from them and have high standards because they are God's perfect creation. Encourage them to always follow God and his will for their lives.

## EXTRA MILE

For added emphasis on this week's themes, try one of these activities.

1. Grab a family photo album that has some shots of the family enjoying the outdoors. Ask:

- **What do you remember most about this experience?**
- **What are some of your favorite things about God's creation?**
- **How can you see God's handiwork in the outdoors?**
- **Where are some places you'd like to visit?**

If the conversation leads, plan a fun family outing or your next family vacation.

2. Remind your children that all people are important to God by taking some food to a local food bank or going through your closets and making a donation to a homeless shelter. Remind your kids that helping the less fortunate shows them God's love.