THE BIGGEST STORY

CURRICULUM

STUDENT WORKBOOK

CROSSWAY®
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

The Biggest Story Curriculum, Student Workbook

Text © 2026 by Crossway

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Published by Crossway
1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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Published in association with the literary agency of Wolgemuth & Wilson.

Illustration and Cover Design: Don Clark for Invisible Creature, Inc.

First Printing 2026

Printed in China

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Some of the material in this volume is adapted from *The Biggest Story Curriculum*.

Contents from the part introductions in this volume are adapted from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook* by Kevin DeYoung.

All emphases in Scripture quotations have been added by the contributors.

ISBN: 979-8-8749-1073-0

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers

RRD 35 34 33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26
14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Introduction

Dear Friend,

Crossway is committed to publishing resources that bear witness to God's truth, beauty, and holiness and that help men, women, and *children* grow in their understanding of God's word. We've spent the last seven years developing a brand-new multimedia suite of children's resources designed to creatively retell God's story in Scripture. We partnered with award-winning artists, pastors, curriculum developers, Sunday school teachers, animators, and software developers in an effort to create the most comprehensive and integrated curriculum for Sunday school and homeschool use.

What you have in hand is our newest volume, *The Biggest Story Curriculum, Student Workbook*. It is designed to be used alongside the Bible and *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook* by Kevin DeYoung. Our hope and prayer is that this book will help you to know and love God's story so that you might better know and love God.

THE CROSSWAY TEAM





How to Use This Workbook

The Biggest Story Curriculum, Student Workbook includes 104 stories—based on the stories in *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook* by Kevin DeYoung—designed to help you understand God's plan to redeem the world through his Son, Jesus.

COMPONENTS

Each day includes all the tools you need to help you understand a Bible story and how it fits into the grand narrative of the Bible. Below is a description of each component within this book.

THE BIG PICTURE

This section will help you understand how the story you are reading connects with previous stories and the overarching story of the Bible.

THE STORY

You will learn the Bible story in one of three different ways: (1) Read the Bible passage by yourself or with others; (2) read the relevant story from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*; or (3) watch the relevant animated video for that particular story (found at TheBiggestStory.com).

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

This section helps you understand more fully the story you just learned by explaining the details and main points of the Bible story.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

This section will help you understand how the story you covered connects to the Bible's big story of redemption through Christ. You will learn how the story points to Jesus—the Snake Crusher—and his plan to save people from their sin.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

At the end of the lesson, you will find a Personal Reflection section that includes several questions to help you think through the Bible story further and how it applies to your life. Take several minutes to think about each question and write your answers in the spaces provided.

BIG TRUTH

In the margin next to Personal Reflection section, you will find the Big Truth—a short sentence summarizing the main point of the Bible story. Take some time to think about the Big Truth throughout the remainder of the day and before you turn to the next lesson.

MEMORY VERSE

In the margin below the Big Truth, you will find a Memory Verse for the lesson. These verses reinforce the main point of the lesson and are short enough for you to memorize in a day. Learn more about the Verse Cards at TheBiggestStory.com.





PART 1

THE PENTATEUCH

GENESIS–DEUTERONOMY

The Bible was originally written in two different languages. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew (okay, there's a tiny bit of Aramaic in there too), and the New Testament was written in Greek.

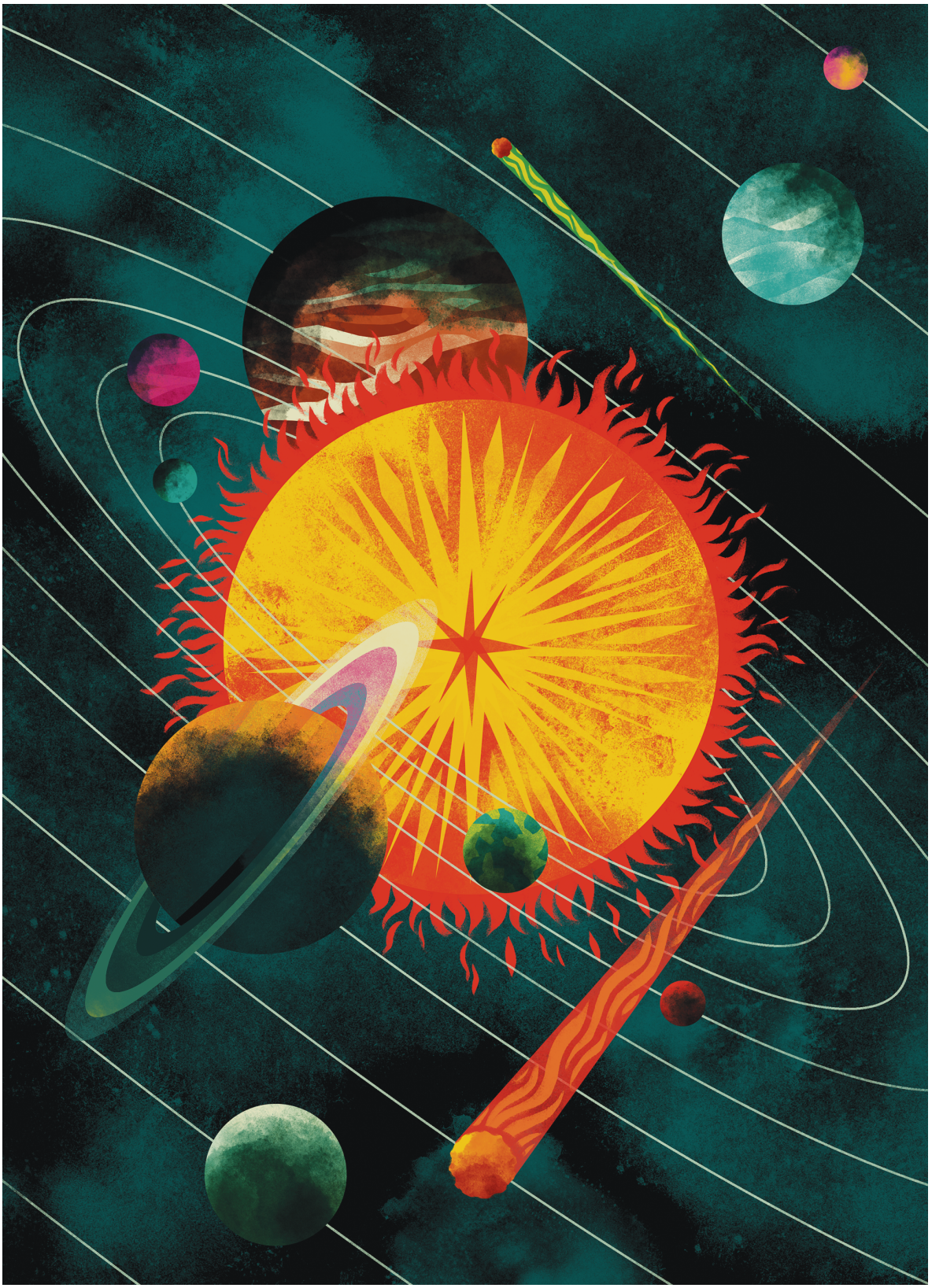
The books of the Hebrew Bible are separated into three categories: *Torah* (Teaching), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). Some people take the first letter of these three Hebrew words and call the Hebrew Bible the Tanakh.

The books in the Tanakh are the same books in what Christians call the Old Testament, but the order is different. Moreover, the three categories (Teaching, Prophets, and Writings) don't neatly line up with the way most Christians think of the books and divisions of the Old Testament. To avoid confusion, then, our sections will stick with the more familiar categories: Pentateuch, History, Poetry, and Prophets.

The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses and are sometimes called the Torah, which, as we've seen, means "teaching" or "law." The other name for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy is the Pentateuch (the prefix *penta* means "five").

If we are going to make sense of the storyline of the Bible, we must take time to understand how the story begins. Knowledge of the Pentateuch is essential for being mature, biblically literate Christians. In the first five books of the Bible we discover not only how the universe came into being, how we came into being, and how sin entered the world, but we also learn about God's plan to set his people free and set them on a path of obedience and blessing.

Many of the Bible's most famous stories can be found in the Pentateuch. In this first part we will work through twenty different Bible stories. Our aim is not only to understand and enjoy these amazing stories but also to understand how each story fits in with the Biggest Story.



STORY 1

And So It Begins

GENESIS 1–2

THE BIG PICTURE

The Bible is a big book made up of sixty-six smaller books. Genesis is the first book, one of the oldest books, and it is important for understanding everything that follows. Like most of the Old Testament, it was originally written in Hebrew. Can you imagine trying to read the Bible in a language you can't read? We should be so thankful people have translated the Bible into English. We can thank God that we have the Bible in our own native tongue. The Old Testament has four different parts. The first part is called the Pentateuch. Does that sound like a strange word? *Penta* means "five," and *teuch* means "book." So, the Pentateuch is just the first five books of the Old Testament. God used Moses to write them, and Moses is the main human character. However, God is the main character in all five books.

Genesis begins with God: "In the beginning, God" (Gen. 1:1a). That's the first line of the Bible! Before "God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1b), God was. He always was. But what did he do before he created everyone and everything? Was he lonely? No. Bored? Of course not. Scared? Certainly not. Why? God is one God in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity have always been marked by love, and it is out of this love that he created every person, place, and thing.

THE STORY

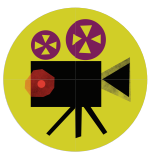
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 1–2



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

Out of nothing God creates everything. Amazing! He created everything in the heavens and on the earth in six days. He didn't need six days or even six seconds to create everything. He could have done it with one word or in one second. So why did he do it that way? He did it to give us an example of how to live our lives: Six days of work. One day of rest. Now, God doesn't get tired, so he doesn't need rest. But we need rest because our bodies get tired, and we also need to spend a day worshiping our Creator God. Oh how God cares for us and knows what we need most!

Now, let's get back to the six days and go through them one by one. On day one, God created light, and he separated the light from the darkness. The light he called day, and the darkness night. On day two, he separated the sky from the seas, the clouds above from the oceans below. On day three, he created the land with plants yielding seed and trees bearing fruit. Can you see the apple trees and orange trees, smell the roses, and feel the cactuses? Ouch! (Maybe don't touch the cactuses.) On days four, five, and six, he filled what he made with more amazing creations: the sun, moon, and stars for the sky; fish for the sea and birds for the sky; and animals and insects on the earth. The North Star was created. The White Tiger. The Bald Eagle. The Black Widow. The Hammerhead Shark. (Watch out for his sharp teeth too!)

God is good. His creation is good.

On the sixth day, God's good creation got even better. God (Father, Son, and Spirit) said, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26). God created people: Adam and Eve. A man and a woman. A husband and a wife. And he put these beautiful people in a beautiful place called the garden of Eden. Paradise. Their job, as people made in God's image, was to show what God was like (sort of like a mirror shows you what you look like) and to grow a family that would go everywhere and also show what God was like ("be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth," 1:28). What a perfect beginning to the beginning.

God is very good. And so, people are very good. Just like a mirror, we show how very good God is. So tremendously terrific!

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The story of creation is just the first story of the Biggest Story. In Genesis we will learn that, because of sin, people aren't very good mirrors. We don't reflect God very well. But "the Word" (John 1:1) came as "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). He perfectly showed what God is like, and he made a way for our broken mirrors to be repaired so that we could again do the job God created us to do.

But the Word isn't just our Savior. He, with the Father and the Spirit, created everything. This is why, when John begins his Gospel, he uses words like the ones in Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1–3). Paul also says of the Son of God that "all things were created, in heaven and on earth, . . . through him and for him" (Col. 1:16). The sun, moon, and stars? Yes! The sea and sky? Yes! The land and plants? Yes! The fish, birds, animals, and humans? Yes! Everything!

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What's something cool you've created recently? What did you use to create it? God created the whole world with his *words*. What does this tell you about God?

2. Can you imagine what the world would be like if God had made it in black and white without color? What would it be like if God made all our food taste like dry crackers? What does this colorful creation show you about God?

3. What did God do on the seventh day after he created the world? What are some ways Sunday should be different from the other days of the week? What are some things you or your family do on Sunday to rest and worship God?

BIG TRUTH

A very good God makes a very good world, with humans as his very good image bearers.

MEMORY VERSE

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

GENESIS 1:1



STORY 2

A Very Bad Day

GENESIS 3

THE BIG PICTURE

Last time, we explored how our amazing God created everything out of nothing. He created the sun, moon, and stars. The land and waters. The animals, birds, insects, and fish. It was good day after good day. Then, on the sixth day, God made man and woman. That was a very good day!

Next, our very good God placed his very good people in a very perfect place: the garden of Eden. This is the special place that Adam and Eve would work, play, and raise their family. It was the most beautiful place you can ever imagine. There was a clear blue river that flowed throughout the garden and watered all the trees. The trees grew. And each tree was amazing to look at and had delicious fruit. Maybe Adam and Eve ate coconuts, apples, and oranges. Yum! There was a special tree in the garden called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord God gave Adam one command: "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:16–17). This tree was off-limits. Do you think Adam will keep this command? Let's find out.

THE STORY

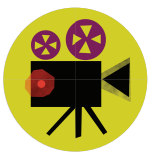
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 3



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

Remember all the trees in the garden? Remember the off-limits tree? Remember God's command to Adam? "You can eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Remember the warning? "For if you eat of that tree you shall surely die" (see Gen. 2:16–17). This special tree was a testing tree. God put it in the garden to see if Adam and Eve would obey and trust him to tell them right from wrong.

But did Adam and Eve listen to God? No. They listened to Satan. One day Satan, in the form of a snake, slithered into the garden. Adam and Eve were not afraid of snakes because all God's creatures were created good. Adam named a snake "snake," just like he named a dog "dog," a beaver "beaver," and a Rasberry crazy ant, well, "Rasberry crazy ant." That's a real bug!

The snake slithered around Eve. He wanted to trick and deceive her. He asked, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?' " She replied, "We may eat of the fruit of all the trees except the tree in the middle. Because if you even touch that tree you will die" (see Gen. 3:1–3). The snake hissed, then laughed. "Ha!" He said, "You won't die. God just wants to keep good things from you!"

But is that true? Did God lie? She looked at the tree. She was tempted. Tricked. Adam was too. In fact, he was there with her. He should have said, "Stop, Eve! Trust God." But he said nothing. He wanted knowledge like only God had. He wanted to be more than God's image bearer. He wanted to be God. He had believed Satan's lie. The fruit looked so beautiful and so good. Too good not to touch, taste, and eat. Eve grabbed the fruit from the off-limits tree. She bit it. She gave Adam a bite too. They had disobeyed God's one command. Right away, Adam knew it. Eve knew it. God knew it.

God sent them out of the garden. And he cursed his perfect world. The ground would be hard. Work would be hard. Marriage would be hard. Having babies would be hard. And death would soon come to everyone. It was a very bad day.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

It was a very bad day. God cursed the snake, the man, and the woman. He promised that hardship and death would come to every human. (And it has!) But he also promised a new start. A fresh start. Adam and Eve would die, but not right away. Eve would have children. More than that (much more than that!), one of her offspring—a child that would come from her children's children's children's children—would deal with the snake. Let's call him the Snake Crusher. We know him as Jesus.

Jesus fulfilled the mysterious promise God made:

> I will put enmity between you [Satan]
> and the woman,
> and between your offspring and her
> offspring;
> he shall bruise your head,
> and you shall bruise his heel.
> (Gen. 3:15)

Satan would hurt Eve's offspring. He "bruised" Jesus. Jesus died. And yet, the Bible tells us that when Jesus died, he destroyed Satan. He crushed the snake! And God kept his amazing promise to Adam and Eve. Yes, Jesus's worst day was our best day.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. If you had been in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, what would you have said when the snake tried to trick them?

2. Think about a time when you were tempted to do something wrong—even though you knew it wasn't right. What did you do? How do you think God wants you to respond next time?

3. God promised that one day someone would come to crush the snake (Satan). That someone is Jesus! How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus took the punishment for our sin—even Adam and Eve's sin—so we could one day live with God forever?

BIG TRUTH

Sin, suffering, and death came into the world because Adam disobeyed God.

MEMORY VERSE

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

GENESIS 3:15



STORY 3

From Bad to Worse

GENESIS 3–4

THE BIG PICTURE

Life outside Eden was not good. Sin was now in the world—people were disobeying God. Genesis 4 shows that sin was everywhere and in everyone. Because of sin, death came into the world too. Genesis 5 tells us about that. Adam dies. His son Seth dies. Six more people die. One generation after the other. Adam and Eve have made quite a mess of the world! Sin and death. A cursed planet.

And there was no turning back. Even if Adam and Eve wanted to return to the garden of Eden, they couldn't. They couldn't get to the beautiful trees and the tasty fruit, including the live-forever tree, because there was a mighty angel with a flaming sword guarding the entrance. So they lived outside Eden. Life was hard. Adam had to work the ground, hour after hour, day after day. The earth was filled with thorns and thistles. Farming wasn't easy. He sweat a lot in the hot sun. Having children and raising children wasn't easy either. Giving birth was painful! (Ask your mom.) What was also painful was that their children had bad hearts like their mom and dad. Hearts full of evil thoughts, mouths full of hateful words, and hands full of evil actions.

THE STORY

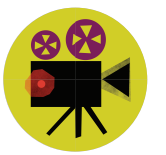
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 3–4



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

After Adam and Eve sinned, God sent them out of Eden. But he still loved and cared for them. Remember he promised to send the Snake Crusher to crush, well, the snake! To rescue them from Satan. That Snake Crusher would come from one of Adam and Eve's descendants (one of their children's children's children's children). Well, Genesis 4 begins with a birth announcement: Eve is pregnant! And one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine months later, she gave birth to a boy. Do you see God's promise beginning to take place? Adam and Eve had seen amazing creatures—hummingbirds, cheetahs, penguins, and kangaroos. But nothing was so amazing as this first baby.

Then God gave them another baby! The first they named Cain; the second Abel. Cain enjoyed making things grow, so he became a farmer. Abel loved animals, so he became a shepherd. Perhaps Adam and Eve taught their boys how to grow crops and protect flocks, as well as about God, their sin, the curse, and the promise. And they taught them to bring God a gift—an offering—from their work.

One day Cain brought an offering from the ground; Abel brought his firstborn sheep. God accepted Abel's sacrifice but not Cain's because Abel trusted God and his promises while Cain did not (see Heb. 11:4). This made Cain angry. Red-in-the-face angry. God said, "Why are you angry? Do what is right, and I will accept your gift. Don't let sin grab hold of your heart" (see Gen. 4:6–7).

Cain didn't listen. He let sin grab hold of his heart even more. One day, when he and his brother were working in the field, Cain killed Abel. He murdered his little brother. How terrible. Wicked! Sad. God saw this terrible, wicked, sad thing and punished him. "Now, when you are farming," God said, "it will be really, really hard. And," God said, "you shall be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth" (see Gen. 4:12). Which meant he would be without a home and without his mother and father. How very sad. He wandered away, farther east of Eden.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Wouldn't you like to live in the garden of Eden? The refreshing river. The amazing animals. The delicious food. Getting to live with God. How amazing! I'm sure Adam and Eve missed it. They wished they had not disobeyed God's word so they could still live with him. They wished they didn't have to live with sin and death. They saw their son Cain kill their son Abel. How awful!

The days that followed their very bad day (remember last week!) were also very bad. What hope did they have? What hope do we, as their children, have? Could they just fight the mighty angel and return to Eden? No. Could they fly to heaven to be with God? Of course not! All they could do was trust God's promise. Remember the Snake Crusher? God would not leave his people in this curse forever. He so loved us that he sent Jesus. And Jesus so loved us that he paid for our sins by dying on the cross. Now, if we believe in him, we can walk with God and talk with God. A return to Eden! Better than Eden. What good news!

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How did Cain's disobedience ruin his life? Can you describe a time when your sin caused everything to go wrong?

2. What sin do we see inside us? What sin do we see around us? What are some of the bad things that happen when we sin?

3. God didn't give up on Adam and Eve, even after they sinned. And he doesn't give up on us. In love, God sent Jesus, the Snake Crusher, for people like them—and people like you. Why is this good news?

BIG TRUTH

Sin was everywhere and in everyone.

MEMORY VERSE

Just as sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

ROMANS 5:12



STORY 4

Rain, Rain, Go Away

GENESIS 6–9

THE BIG PICTURE

Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Good. Very Good. Remember those words? God said them at creation. But ever since Adam and Eve ate from the off-limits tree, we might say that the words *bad*, *bad*, *bad*, *bad*, *bad*, *bad*, and *very bad* best describe what has happened. It was bad that Eve got tricked by the serpent. Bad that Adam disobeyed God. Bad that Cain killed his brother. Bad that Cain had to live away from family. And what happens next is very bad.

Adam and Eve continued to have children—Seth and many others. Cain too had lots of kids. Now there were people all over the earth. The only problem was that most people did not love God and each other. This "grieved God to his heart" (see Gen. 6:6). The Bible tells us that "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that . . . his heart was only evil continually. . . . So the LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, . . . for I am sorry that I have made them'" (Gen. 6:5–7). Wow! It does not look good. How will God keep his promise to crush the snake?

THE STORY

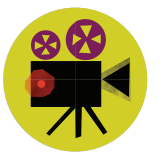
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 6–9



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

God loved the world he made. It was so good. But he didn't love what man had become. Most people had bad thoughts, spoke mean words, and were very naughty—all the time. God saw this. He didn't like it, and he did something about it. God decided to send a flood to destroy everything he had made. Everything except one family and one pair of every living creature. But why only one family? Because only one man, Noah, listened to God and did things God's way.

God told Noah he was going to destroy the earth with a flood. He also said that Noah and his family would be rescued. How would God protect them? God had a plan. He told Noah to build an ark. A really big boat. It would be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. It wasn't as big as the Titanic, but it sure was big! Noah believed everything God told him, so he obeyed. It took Noah over one hundred years to build such a huge boat. What patience! What hard work! What obedience!

At last, the boat was finished. Noah and his family, along with at least two of every kind of animal, were safe in the ark. God sealed the door. Two peacocks peeked out the window. Two giraffes stretched their necks. Two aardvarks did whatever aardvarks do. Then, God kept his promise. It started to rain. The Bible says, "On that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen. 7:11–12). Can you imagine that much rain? Everything and everyone outside the boat was destroyed.

Months later, when the people and animals came out of the ark to live on the land, God made a covenant—a special promise—with Noah that he will never again destroy the world with water. Then God gave a sign to remember his promise: a rainbow. The world had a new beginning.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Have you ever heard a Christian say, "I'm saved"? What does someone mean when they say that? Some people think of being saved from a sickness or breaking a really bad habit. God can and does save people from these things. But when the Bible talks about salvation, it teaches that God saves us from sin and Satan—and also from God's coming judgment, when God will punish and destroy all that is not good.

The New Testament teaches us about Jesus, who was raised from the dead and whom God sent to save us from the punishment to come. Today is not so different from Noah's day. Some people ignore God. Other people hate God. And lots of people hate one another. God does not like this, and he has promised to judge all sin. He will not destroy people with a flood. Remember the rainbow? But he will punish and destroy with fire all that is not good ("the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly," 2 Pet. 3:7). But here is the good news. If we come to Jesus, we will be saved from the coming judgment. Just like Noah was saved! And we too will have a new beginning.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How does it make you feel to know that God can see everything you do and think? Happy? Scared? A bit of both? What did God do when he saw the wickedness of people?

2. Why did God save Noah and his family? What does this tell us about God? How has God provided us with a way to be saved from judgment?

3. What would have happened if Noah had disobeyed God and refused to build the ark? In what ways does our obedience to God keep us safe from harm?

BIG TRUTH

God sent a flood to judge all the wickedness on earth.

MEMORY VERSE

Rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

GENESIS 7:12



STORY 5

A Table and a Tower

GENESIS 10–11

THE BIG PICTURE

What country are you from? The United States of America? England? India? South Africa? Do you know anyone from other countries? Maybe someone from Iceland? Cuba? Kenya? Mars? (Wait, that's not a country. It's a planet.) Anyway, you likely have not met a Martian from Mars, but maybe you have met a Canadian from Canada. And do you know what language Canadians speak? Some speak French, but most speak English. Oui? Yes!

Why are there so many nations? And why are there so many languages? Over six thousand today! And why do so many Chinese people speak Mandarin, so many Russians speak Russian, and so many Saudi Arabians speak Arabic? Do you know? The Bible shares a story about how God created the nations, gave people different languages, and scattered them around the world. It might sound like a fun story. But it's actually another sad story. Or, it starts fun and ends sad. It starts with God's image bearers' keeping God's command to be fruitful and multiply (start lots of families!). But it ends with God's image bearers' wanting to make themselves as great as God, instead of showing how great God is.

THE STORY

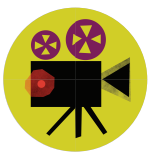
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 10–11



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

The Bible is a big book made up of many books—like Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Each of those books has lots of little stories that are all telling the Biggest Story. We also learn the Biggest Story from the songs, laws, letters, and lists we find in the Bible. The lists are called genealogies (family trees). Have you ever seen your family tree? It has lots and lots of names. Like your mom, your cousin, and your grandpa.

Well, Genesis 10 records a list of seventy names. Do you see them? This list is sometimes called the Table of Nations. The word *table* is just another name for *list*. This table starts with the sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. How would you like to be called Ham? "Hey, Ham, can you make me a ham sandwich?" Ham (the person, not the sandwich) had lots of children. So did his brothers. From them came all the nations—tribes that spread across the earth after the flood.

All these different nations, who all spoke the same language, came up with a brilliant idea. (Or they thought it was.) "Let's stay in one place and build a great city and a tall tower!" There is nothing wrong with building something great and tall. Noah built something really big. The problem is that God told them to fill the earth—not stay in one place. Plus, they wanted to show off. "Look how amazing we are! We can create like God!" Well, God hates pride and disobedience. Do you know what pride is? These people showed us. They thought and acted like they were number one and God and everyone else were number two. But God destroyed their prideful plan by confusing their language. The place where it happened was called Babel, which means "confusion." And God scattered them from that place so they filled the earth.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Imagine building the Tower of Babel. One day you say, "Hey, Joe, can you get me more bricks?" And he does. But the next day, after God confused the language, Joe can't understand a word you say, and you can't understand a word he says. How can you possibly finish building a tower? You can't, and they didn't. The people back then were so frustrated that each tribe (the ones who spoke the same language) decided to spread over the earth and find a new place to live. Even this was part of God's good plan for his people to fill the earth.

When Jesus came, he saved not just his own tribe (the Jews) but people from every language and tribe and nation (the Gentiles). That is what happened. First, people from Jerusalem believed in him. Then, people from the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Then, people from the Americas and Asia. From the North Pole to the South! And it's still happening today. Someday, in heaven, God will be praised by people from every nation in languages that all God's people will understand. And, then and there, we will finally work together to show just how amazing God is.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. The people at Babel wanted to build a tower so everyone would know how great they were. Is it better to make ourselves look good or to show how great God is? What are some ways you could show others how great God is?

2. What would it be like to suddenly not understand your best friend because you're speaking different languages? How do you think the people at Babel felt when that happened?

3. God confused the languages at Babel, but one day, in heaven, we'll all worship him together in perfect unity. How does it make you feel to know that God's family includes people from every language, tribe, and nation?

BIG TRUTH

People wanted to be great, but only God is great.

MEMORY VERSE

Its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

GENESIS 11:9



STORY 6

The Father of Nations

GENESIS 11–13

THE BIG PICTURE

The flood showed us God's holy judgment. Remember the forty days and forty nights of rain? But God is also gracious. He saved Noah and gave people a new start. The Tower of Babel was also a holy judgment. Remember how God confused the languages and scattered people around the world? But God still had a plan for the nations.

Do you remember the first time we saw God's judgment, back in the garden with the snake? But God also had a rescue plan: the Snake Crusher, who would come from Eve! Soon enough, Seth was born. Later Noah. Then Noah's son Shem. And from Shem's family came Abraham. Abraham was from a place called Ur. That town's funny name sounds like *fur*, just as God's *plan* sounds like Abra*ham*. Abra*ham* would be God's *man* to carry out God's *plan*. The plan was awesome. God would give him a Promised Land. He would also give him lots of children. And through one of those children God's promise to save and bless people from every nation would come true. Sure enough, Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons, and one of them, Judah, would be the great-great-great-great-great- (you get the idea) grandfather of the Snake Crusher. He would crush Satan and save God's people from among all the nations.

THE STORY

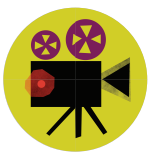
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 11–13



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

The story of Abraham starts in Ur. Remember Ur, the place that rhymes with *fur*? Ur was a long way from Eden. Yet God set his love on this person and his family. He came to Abraham and spoke to him: "Abraham, I want you to move from Ur to a land far away." God promised that he would make "a great nation" out of his children. This all must have surprised Abraham because he was seventy-five years old. His wife Sarah was also old. And they had no children. Do you know anyone who has a baby when they are older than your grandparents? No!

This is hard to believe, but Abraham *did* believe that God would give him both land and a baby. He believed that God would make his name great so that he would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. In faith, Abraham left Ur and journeyed with his wife and his nephew, Lot. When they arrived in the land of Canaan (which would later be called the Promised Land), the Lord appeared to him and said, "To your offspring I will give this land" (Gen. 12:7). Abraham was so amazed by God and his words that he stopped right there and worshiped.

Once Abraham arrived in the land, he realized that he and Lot had so many possessions that they needed separate land to fit everyone and everything. So Lot made a home in a beautiful place that was "well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD" (13:10), and Abraham found a *spot* west of *Lot*. (Hey, that rhymes too!) Once they settled, God spoke again (see 13:14–17): "Lift up your eyes." Abraham looked north, south, east, and west. "All the land that you see," God said, "I will give you. And you will have as many children and grandchildren and great-great-great grandchildren as there is dust on the earth." A few days later, God said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars. So shall your offspring be." Abraham looked up. He might have started counting "one, two, three . . ." and never stopped. How would God do it? But Abraham believed God's word and obeyed.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

God made some amazing promises to Abraham: "I will give you the Promised Land. I will give you a son. I will make you a great nation. I will bless all the families of the earth through your family" (see Gen. 12:1–3). Abraham believed, and then he obeyed.

Of course, at that time he had no idea how God would keep these promises. But the rest of the Bible tells us how. First, God gave Abraham a son, Isaac. Then Isaac had a son who had lots of sons. Soon, Abraham's children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren were a great nation called the people of Israel. God led Israel to the Promised Land and gave it to them, just as he said he would. But there's even more to the story. God kept adding people to the family. Here's how. When Jesus came, he made a way so that all the families of the earth, even people who weren't Israelites, could be part of God's family. They became known as Christians. And Jesus promised he was going to prepare a place for them—a new and better Promised Land. Abra*ham* was God's *man* to carry out God's *plan* to bless all nations through him. And that was just what God did!

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How do you think Abraham felt when God asked him to leave his home? How did Abraham respond to God? Describe a time when you followed God even though it was hard.

2. What promise did God make to Abraham? Do you think it was easy for Abraham to believe this promise? Are there any promises God has made in the Bible that are hard for you to believe? How could Abraham's example encourage you when you have doubts?

3. Jesus is the child whom God promised would come from Abraham's family to bless the whole world. What are some ways that Jesus has blessed you?

BIG TRUTH

God promises to bless the nations through Abraham.

MEMORY VERSE

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

GENESIS 12:2



STORY 7

Let's Make a Deal

GENESIS 15; 17

THE BIG PICTURE

Have you ever moved from one house to another? A move can be rough, can't it? Well, remember Abraham moved not just from one house to another (or tent, as the case may be) but also from one country to another. Why? Because God asked him to. And because God promised that if he did so, he would bless him. He would give him the Promised Land. He would give him as many children and grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren as the stars in the sky. And through his family, he would bless all the families of the earth. Remember Genesis 12:1–3? "The LORD said to Abram, 'Go . . . to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you . . . , and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." What amazing promises! A new people in a new place who would bless all peoples. In this lesson, the story of Abraham continues. How will God keep his promises? Will Abraham continue to trust God? Let's find out!

THE STORY

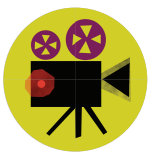
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 15; 17



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

In last week's lesson, God called Abraham to leave his home for the Promised Land when Abraham was seventy-five years old. And God promised him, if he did so, he would have both the land and a son. In today's lesson, Abraham is in the land, but his family lived in only a small part of it. And he had his wife, but he still had no son. Abraham was now much older, and he began to wonder, "Will God really keep his promise to do the impossible? How?"

God knew the doubts Abraham was having. So, one dark night, God brought Abraham outside and said, "Look up, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. I will give you as many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren as there are stars in the sky" (see Gen. 15:5). Abraham believed God. He took him at his word. Listen to this amazing verse: "[Abraham] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (15:6).

God was not done. He reminded Abraham of his promise to give him the land. Abraham replied, "Lord, how am I to know that you will give me the land?" (see 15:8). Then God did something strange. He had Abraham cut a bunch of animals in half. (Why? More on that in a minute!) After Abraham cut the animals, God had him fall into a deep sleep and showed Abraham the future: After four hundred years of slavery, Abraham's offspring would inherit the land. God could be trusted to keep his word. To show how sure his promise was, God made a covenant with Abraham. To understand this better, we have to go back to those animals Abraham cut in half. In those days, this act was part of a process of making a deal—or cutting a covenant. Whoever walked through the animals was promising to keep his end of the bargain, or else be torn apart like the cut-up goats and cows. Can you guess what God did? God walked through the cut-up animals! In other words, God was making a very serious promise. He would keep his word. What amazing grace!

After such an amazingly gracious promise, God asked Abraham to show that he believed. He asked him to show it through a special sign called circumcision. This special sign would remind all his family after him that they were chosen and loved. Do you know what Abraham did? He trusted God and obeyed.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Genesis 12:1–3 is very important because this passage includes God's big promises about his rescue plan. Genesis 15:6 is another really important verse because it tells us how we benefit from that rescue plan. Do you remember what it said? "[Abraham] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." What! Sinners like Abraham could be considered righteous? People under the curse that Adam and the snake unleashed could be made right with God? (This is what *right*eous means.) How could this be? The Bible is telling us that it is on the basis of belief. When Abraham believed God's promise, he was counted as righteous. He wasn't counted righteous because he was such a good person. He wasn't counted righteous because he was so religious. He was counted righteous because he believed God. To put it differently, he was saved by faith.

But wait, there's something more. We are sinners, too. We need to be made right with God, too. And like Abraham, the only way we can be perfectly holy in God's sight is to believe his promises, to receive his gift of salvation by faith. Is that something you want to do?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. With God's help, Abraham took God at his word and believed his promises. What does this story help you understand about faith?

2. What are some good deeds you did this week? Were all those good deeds enough to make you perfect ("righteous") in the sight of a perfect and holy God? Why not?

3. If everyone is sinful and no one is holy and perfect, how can you be righteous in God's sight?

BIG TRUTH

God can always be trusted.

MEMORY VERSE

He [Abraham] believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

GENESIS 15:6



STORY 8

The Judge Judges Justly

GENESIS 18–19

THE BIG PICTURE

God has made a lot of promises to Abraham. Has Abraham always trusted God? No. Sometimes he doubted. That's not good. But God didn't give up on Abraham. Each time Abraham doubted and disobeyed, God came to him and reminded him of their covenant. He would give him the Promised Land and the promised son. Shortly after God made the covenant, the Lord promised to Abraham, "This time next year, Sarah shall have a son" (see Gen. 18:10). Sarah was in the nearby tent. When she heard what God said, she laughed because she couldn't believe that she would have a child when she was so old. She doubted God's promise. God knew that Sarah was doubting him and asked why she laughed. Sarah grew afraid and lied, "I did not laugh" (18:15). Not only did she not believe God, but she also lied. God nevertheless kept his promise to give Sarah a son.

Sarah wasn't the only person in the land to sin. There was a whole city full of sinners. The city was called Sodom, and today's lesson focuses on what happened to that sinful city. It wasn't pretty! We will see that while God promises good things for his people, he also promises to punish his enemies, just like we saw when God sent the flood in Noah's day.

THE STORY

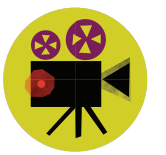
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 18–19



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

The city of Sodom was a bad city filled with people who did really bad things. The city of Gomorrah was also a bad city filled with people who did really bad things. They were selfish, proud, rude, mean, angry, and violent.

But then a cry went out to God to do something about all this evil. God listened because he cares when people are being treated badly! And he always hates evil. God is a good God. And as a good God, he cannot let people who do bad things keep doing bad things. God decided to destroy the cities as a punishment.

Before God punished the people, he told Abraham about his plan. Abraham asked God, "You wouldn't sweep away the good people with the bad, would you? You are the Judge who will judge justly. For the sake of fifty righteous people, would you change your plan?" Amazingly, God agreed. So Abraham tried again: "What about for the sake of forty-five?" It worked again! God is so merciful, he agreed even when Abraham went all the way down to ten. But even then, it wasn't enough (see Gen. 18:23–33). The only person who found favor in God's sight was Abraham's nephew, Lot. So God chose to destroy the cities but to save Lot and his family, just like he had saved Noah and his family. Everyone else would be destroyed.

God sent two angels who told Lot's family, "Run for your lives. Don't look back! God is going to rain down fire and sulfur. The town will be burnt to the ground" (see 19:14, 17). Lot and his family ran! But Lot's wife disobeyed. She loved Sodom more than God, so she turned around and looked back. And do you know what happened? She turned into a pillar of salt! God destroyed the evil cities. He took his broom of justice and swept up all the sin. Abraham saw God keep his promise to destroy the cities. He was reminded that God always keeps his promises—even his promise to judge the wicked.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

God knows our sins. God shows us our sins. God hates our sins. God judges our sins. And (this is the most important part!) God offers to forgive all our sins in Jesus. You may not come from a city that is filled with people who do bad things all the time. You may live in a town where a lot more than ten people love God and love their neighbor. And people may not call you selfish, proud, rude, mean, angry, and violent. But that does not mean you are perfect. In fact, there are many sins we all do every day. Just as we saw with Sodom and Gomorrah, God will judge all the earth justly. But God also gives us a way to escape—just like he did with Lot's family. God's word tells us the only way for us to escape is to believe in Jesus Christ. To believe that Jesus is the Snake Crusher, who crushed all our sin on the cross. He took on all of God's judgment for our sin when he died for us. What love! What sacrifice! What good news!

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Have you ever doubted one of God's promises, like Abraham or Sarah did? What happened—and what helped you believe again?

2. God is patient and merciful, but he also takes sin seriously. What do you think it means that God will "judge the earth justly"? Why is that both scary and good news?

3. Lot and his family escaped judgment—but only by listening to God's warning. Jesus gives us a way to escape too. What does it mean to believe in Jesus as your rescuer? How can you help others do the same?

BIG TRUTH

God is the Judge who judges justly.

MEMORY VERSE

It is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

PSALM 75:7



STORY 9

It's a Boy!

GENESIS 21–22

THE BIG PICTURE

We've learned a lot about God from the book of Genesis, haven't we? He is the powerful Creator, just Judge, merciful Savior, and promise keeper. Let's review some of the stories. True stories. God created everything—persons, places, and things. Solar systems and stars too! God put Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden on Earth. They loved God, and they loved each other. How lovely! When Adam disobeyed, God banished Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. How unlovely. Remember that terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day? But God still loved his people. He promised that the Snake Crusher would come from their offspring. His plan would take time. But God's timing is always perfect. Part of that *plan* involved God calling Abra*ham*. God promised Abraham that he would be a blessing to all the families of the world. That blessing would come through the birth of a son. Abraham waited and waited and waited for his son. Would the promised son ever come? That's where today's lesson comes in. Abraham did have a son, Isaac. And that son had a near-death experience. Will God keep his promise? Will he provide? Will he bless the world through Abraham's son's son and so on? Let's find out!

THE STORY

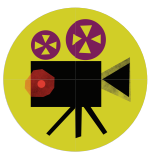
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 21–22



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

Do you remember when you were born? Of course not! I bet your parents remember though. Do you know how old Abraham was when his baby boy was born? One hundred! Let's count to one hundred. No, let's not! That's old, isn't it? Sarah, his wife, was old too. She was ninety.

Remember when Sarah laughed when God promised she'd have a baby? She thought she and her husband were too old to have a baby. But is anything impossible for God? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. When God makes a promise, he keeps it. The "father of a multitude of nations" (Gen. 17:5) finally had a son! But his timing is not always ours. The name Isaac means "he laughs." The perfect name. His name reminded his parents that God had kept an impossible promise. There was no longer laughter of disbelief, only laughter of surprise and joy.

Many years after Isaac was born, God asked Abraham to do something shocking: "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, . . . and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains [in the land of Moriah]" (Gen. 22:2). What a crazy command! Why would God ask him to sacrifice his only son? He gave this command to test whether Abraham would still believe that God would keep his promises to him. Abraham passed the test. He figured that if God's plan was to kill the promised child, then God must have another plan. Perhaps he would raise him from the dead! No matter what, Abraham believed God always keeps his promises. So Abraham took his beloved son to the mountain. Isaac carried wood for the sacrifice. Abraham tied up his son and prepared to sacrifice him. But guess what happened? Just when Abraham lifted his knife, God shouted, "Don't do it! I see that you love me and trust me" (see 22:12).

God provided a different sacrifice—a ram. Abraham sacrificed the animal. God was so pleased. He told Abraham, "Because you have obeyed my voice, I will surely bless you. Your offspring will be as the stars of heaven and through your family all the families of the earth will be blessed" (see 22:16–18).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The story of Abraham's (almost) sacrifice of his son, Isaac, is an amazing story. An even more amazing story is the story of God the Father's (actual) sacrifice of his son, Jesus. Isaac's story took place on a small mountain; Jesus's story took place on a hill. Abraham's beloved son would carry wood for the sacrifice; God's beloved Son would carry a wooden cross. Isaac's life was spared because God provided a ram (a male lamb) to be sacrificed in his place. But for Jesus, there would be no ram. Jesus was the sacrifice. Jesus was the Lamb. He carried the wooden cross on his back; he was nailed to the cross. He died. Just as God provided a ram so that Isaac wouldn't die, God provided Jesus so that we don't have to die. The promised child of Eve—the Snake Crusher—was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world and rescued us from death! Our Savior would die for a people who didn't seem to love God or trust him at all. Through Jesus's death on a cross, we can receive forgiveness for our sins. What good news. Do you believe this? How will you respond to Jesus? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all believed like Abraham?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What promise did God make to Abraham that made Sarah laugh? How do we see God keep this promise? What have you been learning about God and his promises?

2. When Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son, what happened to save Isaac's life? What does that teach you about God?

3. God provided the ram to save Isaac's life. Who did God provide to rescue us from death? What is the only way to escape God's punishment for sin? Have you placed your faith in Jesus?

BIG TRUTH

God provided a son and a sacrifice for Abraham, the man of faith.

MEMORY VERSE

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

PROVERBS 3:5



STORY 10

God's Tricky, Hairy, Blessed People

GENESIS 25; 27

THE BIG PICTURE

Do you remember a few weeks ago when we talked about family trees? A family tree is a picture of a tree that has names on it. On the trunk there might be the names of your great grandparents; on the first branches there might be your grandparents. Then, moving up the tree, there is your mom and dad and, above them, you and your siblings, if you have any. The book of Genesis, as we've seen, has its own family tree. But by the time we get to chapter 25, it's become quite twisted. Adam and Eve had three sons: Cain, Abel, and Seth. From Seth came Noah. Noah had three sons. From Noah's son Shem came Abraham. (You won't have to remember all these names for some test.) Anyway, Abraham, as you will certainly remember, married Sarah and they had a son, Isaac, who married a girl named Rebekah; and like Sarah, she had a hard time having a baby. Isaac prayed, and the Lord heard his prayer: Rebekah became pregnant with twin boys! Imagine how big her belly was! They named their first son Esau; they named their second Jacob. Let's learn about them next. And as we learn the strange stories about them, we'll learn that God blesses his people even when they keep getting things wrong.

THE STORY

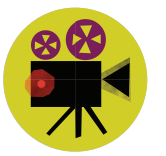
Read the Bible passage, read the story from the storybook, or play the animated video.



Read the Bible passage: Genesis 25; 27



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

Do you remember the twins' names? The first was Esau; the second was Jacob. When Esau was born, his body was red and hairy. The name *Esau* actually means "hairy." Jacob was born holding Esau's heel. His name means "he takes by the heel" or "he cheats." It was the perfect name because he grew up to be quite a trickster.

Esau became a skillful hunter. He loved the outdoors! Jacob was the opposite: He "was a quiet man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. 25:27). Isaac (the dad) favored Esau because he would hunt animals and serve him yummy meat to eat. But Rebekah (the mom) favored Jacob. One day, Esau came back tired from a long day of hunting. Exhausted Esau saw that his brother was cooking stew. "Give me a bowl!" he ordered. "Hmm," tricky Jacob thought, "sure. But I want something in return. Trade me your birthright!" "My birthright," Esau said, "who cares about that? I'm starving to death!" Esau wasn't thinking about how amazing his birthright was; he was just thinking about what he wanted right then. You see, the birthright means, when the dad dies, the firstborn son gets everything his father owned. But Esau was so foolish that he followed his belly and agreed to Jacob's sneaky offer. He gave away his amazing birthright.

Jacob's next sneaky move comes when his dad is about to die and nearly blind. Before he died, Isaac wanted to give his oldest son Esau a blessing. Rebekah's love for Jacob made her a trickster too. She dressed Jacob up in Esau's clothes and stuck dead, furry animals on his skin so, when Jacob brought his father a yummy meal (like Esau did after hunting), his father would think he was his hairy brother. It worked! The tricky twin cheated the hairy one yet again. Isaac gave Esau's blessing to Jacob. Amazing!

Want to hear something even more amazing? Even before Jacob and Esau were born, God had told Rebekah that the older son would serve the younger son. That is, God had chosen Jacob, instead of Esau, to receive his promise of blessing. Jacob's sin didn't stop God's plan to bless him and keep his promise to Abraham.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The Biggest Story isn't about God's people getting it right as much as it's about God blessing his people, even when they get things wrong. Abraham's family tree is a twisted mess. (Is your family any different?) There is Abraham's clueless son (Isaac), his sneaky daughter-in-law (Rebekah), and the twins—foolish Esau and sneaky Jacob. What can God do with such an awful family tree? Learn this lesson: God blesses the people of his promise. He makes even this twisted tree grow into something beautiful. Do you know how the New Testament begins? It begins with Jesus's family tree! "Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob" (Matt. 1:2). From that trunk comes over forty more names. And the final names listed? "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born" (1:16). The Snake Crusher came from sinners like Rebekah and Jacob. And he came, the Bible tells us, to "save his people from their sins" (1:21). In fact, do you know what the name Jesus means? "Savior"! What a perfect name, for Jesus is our perfect Savior. Through Jesus, God chooses to save and bless people like you and me, even though we sin and get things wrong. Just like Jacob. Isn't that beautiful?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Jacob made a lot of mistakes, but God still kept his promise to bless him. Can you think of a time you messed up and were surprised that someone forgave you anyway? How does it feel to know that God still loves and blesses us—even when we get things wrong?

2. Jacob's family was pretty messy—full of favoritism, lies, and trickery. Is there anything in your own family that feels messy? How does knowing that Jesus came from a messy family give you hope?

3. The name "Jesus" means "Savior." Why is that such a perfect name? How does Jesus show you that he's your Savior—even when you act like Esau or Jacob or Rebekah?

BIG TRUTH

God blesses his people even when they keep getting things wrong.

MEMORY VERSE

Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.

GENESIS 25:23

