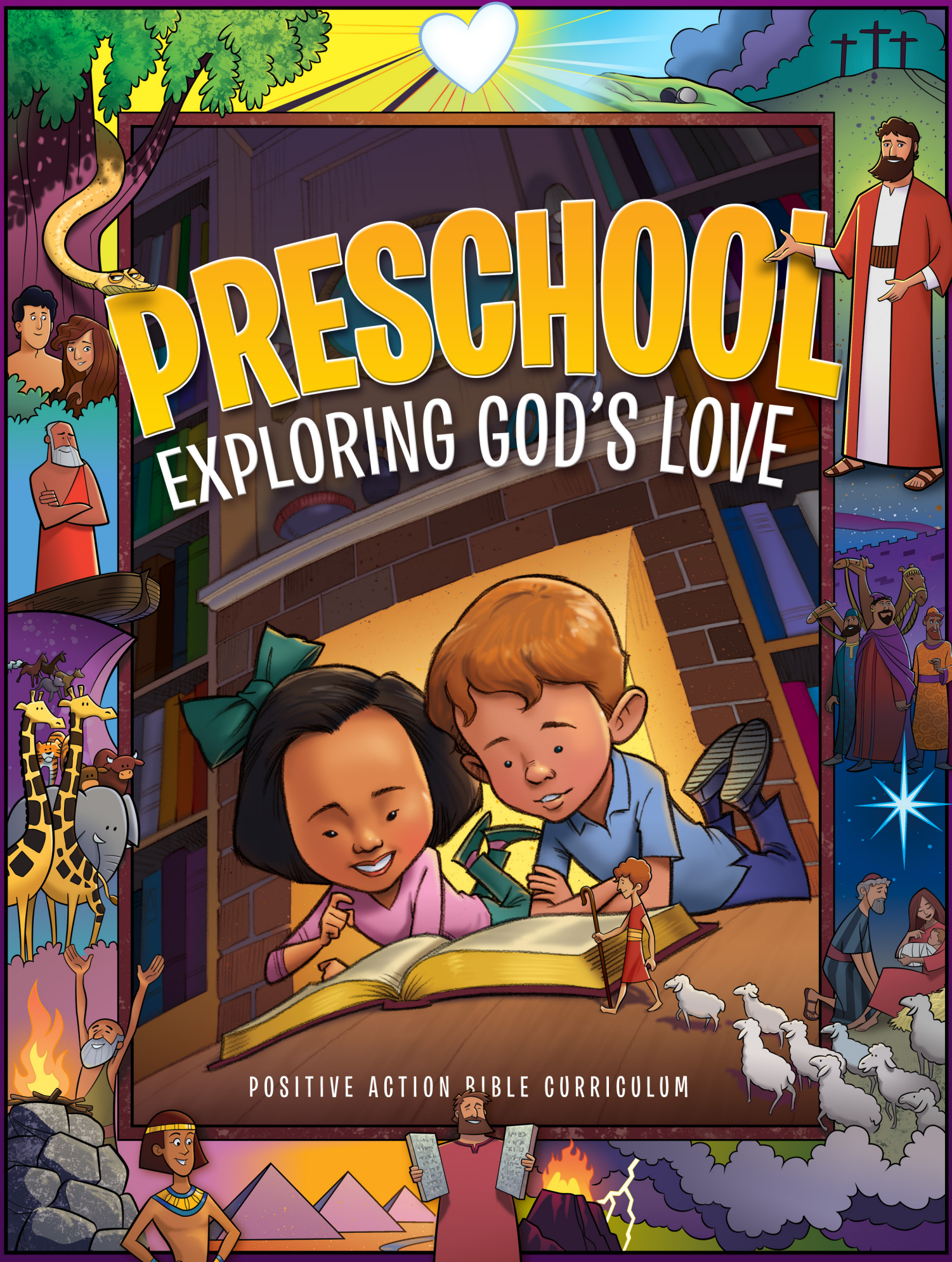

PRESCHOOL

EXPLORING GOD'S LOVE

POSITIVE ACTION BIBLE CURRICULUM

Exploring God's Love

Written by Champ Thornton with Kristi Houser and Mollie Whitley

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Dear Teacher,

Like a prism, the Bible displays every brilliant hue and shade of God's love.

From before creation, God's heart overflowed with love for the other members of the Trinity. And when He spoke the universe into existence, His love exploded into a kaleidoscope of shapes, sounds, smells, and tastes. Yet above all this beauty, we find the fullest and brightest expression of God's love in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

My hope is that *Exploring God's Love* will serve as a map for your students through the Bible's rich and varied landscape. Along the way, this curriculum will point them toward unique demonstrations of God's love, encouraging them to develop an awe for Him. Even as I've worked with the team at Positive Action to prepare this study, God has revolutionized my life and my understanding of His love.

To share what I've learned with you, I've written the **Note to the Teacher** at the beginning of each lesson as a personal word of encouragement from my heart to yours. Other supplemental elements include **Vocabulary**, **Scripture Memory**, **Catechism Questions**, as well as **Extra Activities** that engage and challenge your students in the first steps of their education.

We designed this lesson structure to adapt to your learning environment. Each of the forty lessons features separate Bible stories, which you can teach over the course of a week in your home or Christian school. Sunday school teachers can read the lesson's stories in one session or spread them over several weeks.

Each of the three story sections includes the following teaching tools:

- **Target Truths**—summarize the primary message of the story
- **The Big Picture**—provides the teacher with the historical and theological context for the story
- **Setting the Stage**—suggests engaging ways to introduce the story
- **In-text Notes**—present resources to add depth to the story
- **Review Questions**—encourage student attention and retention

Lastly, I hope your students will enjoy the **Student's Manual** and **Story Cards** available for this curriculum. The activities and illustrations reinforce the Bible stories in a beautiful, engaging format.

May the Lord use your ministry this year to open the eyes and hearts of your preschoolers to the glory of God's great love.

Let the adventure begin!

Champ Thornton

PREFACE

Preschool Goals and Objectives

This study will help your preschool students to…

- Study God's love and His salvation plan
- See God in His holiness and majesty, which will affect how they live
- Memorize Scripture so that they can learn to use the Word of God in their daily lives
- Understand simple Bible doctrines, laying the foundation for future learning
- Learn about prayer and its importance
- Develop a confidence in God so that they can rest in His care and provision
- Trust in the promises of God in His Word

This study has been designed to…

- Incorporate different learning styles—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic
- Employ all subject areas so that students will see that God is in all that we do
- Encourage language development by introducing vocabulary words in each lesson
- Develop hand-eye coordination, visual discrimination skills, and fine motor skills by starting the year with simple activities that gradually increase in difficulty
- Improve cognizant skills through memorization, review, and sequencing

How to Use the Teacher's Manual

Each lesson in this Teacher's Manual is broken into three main sections—an Introduction, the Bible Lessons, and the Additional Elements. These sections are composed of various subsections, each with distinct and purposeful features. Below is a detailed description of each subsection in the order in which they appear in the Teacher's Manual.

Introduction

Target Truths

Every lesson contains a set of three core objectives that correspond with each of the three stories—one objective per story. These truths summarize the emphasis of the story in one short sentence, helping you communicate the main points of the lesson to your students.

Vocabulary

Unfamiliar terms have been included as vocabulary words to enhance language development. These are defined in a way that preschoolers will understand and introduced in context during the stories. Not only will these new words stretch the minds of your students, but they will also increase comprehension and the ability to process words.

Note to the Teacher

This note is written for you, both to set the tone for the upcoming week and to encourage you with a devotional thought. As you prepare to teach, this section will provide you with the overarching theme of the week's lesson.

Bible Lessons

The Big Picture

This section introduces you to the historical and theological context of each story. Understanding this important background information will allow you to better convey the story's meaning to your students. At the end of this section, you will find an idea for showing your students how to apply the lesson's truths to their lives.

Setting the Stage

These attention-grabbing introductions will engage your students, preparing them for the day's story. Using a variety of activities—role-play, discussion, games, concept building—you will captivate your students' interest and hold it as you begin the story. A list of necessary materials is included, as well as a few transition sentences that lead into the story.

The Story

These biblically-based stories span from before creation to the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, revealing the great love of God and His plan for salvation. References are included so that you can study the scriptural account on your own. The following In-text Notes will heighten the listening experience of your students:

- **Spotlights**—highlight God's character
- **Questions**—provide discussion opportunities
- **Tips**—offer helpful information
- **Visuals**—aid the students' imaginations
- **Sounds**—enhance the storytelling
- **Actions**—encourage class participation
- **Flashbacks**—review past material

Review Questions

At the end of each story is a set of questions that relates specifically to that story. Not only do these questions reinforce the story, helping students remember what they've just heard, but they also test your students' listening skills and comprehension. Though most of the questions involve basic information recall, some require students to draw their own conclusions based on what they have learned.

Additional Elements

Scripture Memory

Each memory verse concentrates on one key theme that relates to the lesson. As your students are developing their memorization skills, they are also hiding God's Word in their hearts.

Music Curriculum

One song suggestion from *Wee Sing Bible Songs* is included for each lesson. Some songs correspond directly to the stories (e.g., "Only a Boy Named David," "God Made Me"), while others are basic choruses for fun (e.g., "My God Is So Great," "This Little Light of Mine"). These songs will help focus your students' attention on God in worship, as well as get them moving and ready to learn.

Catechism Questions

Included are short questions and answers that promote the retention of basic Bible knowledge—two per lesson. This rote memorization will lay the foundation for future learning. Though the questions may not relate directly with the content of each lesson, they do correspond with the overall content of the curriculum.

The catechism questions are adapted from *A Catechism for Little Children*, published by the Sunday School & Publication Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1864.

Extra Activities

Each lesson includes three optional activities that relate to the content. Some activities incorporate other subject matter (e.g., counting, observing nature, studying maps, decoding a message), while others are just for fun (e.g., special snacks, games, crafts, role-play). In addition, there are ideas specifically with you in mind (e.g., bulletin board suggestions, ideas for classroom centers, opportunities for teachable moments). If your class schedule does not permit time for extra activities, consider assigning some of them to be done at home with the rest of the family.

Reproducible Worksheets

Some lessons include reproducible worksheets which can be used in addition to the worksheets available in the *Exploring God's Love* student manual. The lessons where the worksheets are intended to be used will be marked with a grey banner under the stories' titles. Permission to copy is granted for use within the school, church, or home which purchased this manual.

Effective Teaching Strategies

Planning for Class Time

Typical class time may vary, thanks to a number of variables. The time that you spend teaching Bible will be affected by the number of students you have, their ages and skill levels, and the amount of time in your school day. The following suggested schedule provides you with a general idea of how much time each type of activity might take.

- Music Curriculum: 3–5 minutes
- Scripture Memory: 3–5 minutes
- Vocabulary: 3–5 minutes
- Setting the Stage: 5–10 minutes
- The Story: 5–7 minutes
- Review Questions: 3–5 minutes
- Student Manual or Reproducible Worksheet page: 5–10 minutes
- Catechism Questions: 1–2 minutes

Considering the short attention span of preschool students, it's important to move them from one activity to the next quickly. If you choose to follow the weekly lesson plans provided in this Teacher's Manual, you should allot thirty to forty-five minutes for Bible class.

Integrating a God-focus

At Positive Action for Christ, our mission is to equip Bible teachers to magnify the majesty of God. We believe that Bible is more than just a subject taught during the school day. Opportunities to see God's character and works abound, and it is a privilege as a teacher to point these out to your students throughout the day. Below are some ways to incorporate a God-focus into your classroom.

- **Pray for and with your students.** Prayer is an essential ingredient in both your life and the lives of your students. Make it a personal priority in your classroom ministry. Allow your students to see and hear you pray daily, taking time to teach them how to pray as well. Keep a journal of their requests so that you can rejoice together when God responds.

- **Look for natural opportunities to talk about God.** Each day is filled with chances to talk about God. Whether you are observing the intricate design of a snowflake, the meticulous way a spider makes its web, or the orderliness of math and phonics, God's attributes can be clearly seen. Because God created us to know and fellowship with Him, He has filled nature with phenomena that should naturally turn our eyes upward.
- **Help your students to connect Bible learning into their daily lives.** The principles that God teaches us through His Word are not just for church, Sunday school, or Bible class. They are to be developed in every area of our lives—in the classroom, on the playground, at home, and wherever we go. Look for natural opportunities to reinforce the biblical truths that you teach. Commend your students when they make right choices, act unselfishly, or obey with the right attitude. Remind them of how we are to serve others, wait patiently, and believe God's promises. Once you get started, you'll probably think of hundreds of ways to incorporate these biblical principles into even the most common events of your school day.
- **Design your classroom with Bible class in mind.** As you prepare to teach your Bible stories each week, think about ways you can use your classroom to emphasize the lesson content. For instance, add items to your play center that correspond with the stories you'll be telling. Then watch as the students reenact scenes from the stories on their own. Also, display artwork from the lesson on your walls, or create bulletin boards themed around lesson topics. Some of the Extra Activities sections include ideas to get you started.

Partnering with Parents

If you teach this curriculum in a Christian school or daycare, parents can be tremendous assets in reinforcing the lessons that you've been teaching. Look for ways to include them in their child's learning. If you send home a weekly newsletter, include the Scripture Memory verse and Catechism Questions so that the parents can practice them with their children. Encourage parents to ask about the Student Manual pages and artwork that their students bring home. Have them ask their children to recount the stories that they've heard during Bible class, or assign take-home projects and activities that require parental involvement. Including parents is essential to making a lasting impact in the home.

Understanding the Significance of Your Ministry

Never underestimate the importance of what you are teaching. You are planting seeds that can grow in the future. Don't be discouraged if you don't see any "fruit" this year. It doesn't mean that growth isn't taking place beneath the surface, deep within the hearts of your students. Entrust each of your children to God, knowing that His Word will never return void.

Weekly Lesson Plans

5-Day Week

Day 1	• Introduce suggested song from Music Curriculum • Introduce Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #1 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #1 • Read Story #1 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #1 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Introduce first Catechism Question
Day 2	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Review Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #2 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #2 • Read Story #2 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #2 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Review first Catechism Question
Day 3	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Review Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #3 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #3 • Read Story #3 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #3 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Introduce second Catechism Question
Day 4	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Review Scripture Memory verse • Complete one of the Extra Activities to reinforce the lesson • Review second Catechism Question
Day 5	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Check Scripture Memory verse for memorization • Complete one of the Extra Activities to reinforce the lesson • Review Catechism Questions

4-Day Week

Day 1	• Introduce suggested song from Music Curriculum • Introduce Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #1 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #1 • Read Story #1 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #1 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Introduce first Catechism Question
Day 2	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Review Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #2 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #2 • Read Story #2 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #2 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Introduce second Catechism Question
Day 3	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Review Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #3 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #3 • Read Story #3 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #3 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Review Catechism Questions
Day 4	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Check Scripture Memory verse for memorization • Complete one of the Extra Activities to reinforce the lesson • Review Catechism Questions

3-Day Week

Day 1	• Introduce suggested song from Music Curriculum • Introduce Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #1 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #1 • Read Story #1 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #1 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Introduce first Catechism Question
Day 2	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Review Scripture Memory verse • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #2 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #2 • Read Story #2 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #2 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Introduce second Catechism Question
Day 3	• Sing suggested song from Music Curriculum • Check Scripture Memory verse for memorization • Introduce Vocabulary for Story #3 • Use Setting the Stage to introduce Story #3 • Read Story #3 • Discuss Review Questions for Story #3 • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout • Review Catechism Questions

Suggested Schedule for Church Use

We recommend spreading each lesson over a two-week period when teaching only once per week. However, if you have both Sunday school and children's church, you may choose to do the material suggested for Week 1 in Sunday school and the material suggested for Week 2 in children's church.

Week 1	• Introduce suggested song from Music Curriculum • Introduce Scripture Memory verse • Read Stories #1 & #2 • Discuss Review Questions • Complete Student Manual pages or reproducible handouts for first two stories • Introduce Catechism Questions • Complete one of the Extra Activities
Week 2	• Review suggested song from Music Curriculum • Review Scripture Memory verse • Review Stories #1 & #2 • Read Story #3 • Discuss Review Questions • Complete Student Manual page or reproducible handout for the third story • Review Catechism Questions • Complete one of the Extra Activities

Elementary Curriculum Overview

- K–4: *Exploring God's Love*. Preschoolers will discover God's love from the wonders of Creation to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Scripture memory helps to reinforce basic doctrinal truths.
- K–5: *Learning About God*. By studying the lives of the major characters throughout the entire Bible, kindergarteners will learn about God's work and His character. Suggested activities help children understand and apply these Bible truths.
- Grade 1: *Enjoying God's Gifts*. First graders will explore the many gifts of love that God has given to us, focusing on aspects of creation, our families, friends, possessions, Jesus Christ, and God's care.
- Grade 2: *Finding God's Promises*. Studying the life of Moses in the Book of Exodus, students will discover and examine God's promises. They will see that both the Israelites and Moses experienced victory and hardship while learning about God.
- Grade 3: *Growing with God*. Third grade students will delve into the lives of Joseph in the Book of Genesis, and Daniel in the Book of Daniel, noting God's providence.
- Grade 4: *Building Life Castles*. This study engages students in the life of Christ from the Gospels and presents a study of the Holy Spirit from the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles. By also studying Paul's epistles and the life of Paul from Acts, students will examine how to develop Christian character.
- Grade 5: *Possessing the Land*. Surveying the Old Testament, students will see a pattern of God's work among His people as He displays His unchanging character.
- Grade 6: *Winning the Race*. Drawing from the entire Word of God, sixth grade students will learn how God's principles personally affect their lives. Students will study characters in the Old and New Testaments, as well as the life of Christ and an overview of the Book of Revelation.

LESSON 1

CREATION

Introduction

Target Truths

- God doesn't need anything to be happy.
- God made everything out of nothing.
- God made everything just right.

Vocabulary

- **The Trinity**: the three persons of the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
- **Wise:** knowing what to do and how to do it
- **Create:** to make something from nothing

Note to the Teacher

God's creation is like a window that you can look at one of two ways. Either you can look at the pane itself, or you can look through the window to the scenery beyond. Similarly, you can focus your attention on the goodness of God's creation, or you can focus on the good God who made this world. Let simple events this week point your heart to our Lord. At meal or snack time, enjoy the good food but give thanks to the infinitely better God who made the food enjoyable. Then you can begin praying this way about the air you breathe, the muscles you use, or the children you teach. Acknowledge with thankfulness the excellent Source of all things you and your students enjoy.

Bible Lessons

Bible Story #1: God Exists Before Creation

Target Truth

- God doesn't need anything to be happy.

The Big Picture

Before He made any person, God the Father loved the other members of the Trinity. He loves the Son and the Spirit because He sees His own divine perfections reflected in them. God loves Himself more than anything else because there is no greater object to be loved. Therefore, God did not need anything else to be happy. He did not create man because He was lonely; He enjoyed perfect contentment within Himself. Instead, He made the world and everything in it out of the overflow of His love. He made people so that He could give that same love to us. We see His love and goodness in creation.

Setting the Stage

Materials Needed: storybook

Note: This story introduces the Trinity. There is one God, but He has three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Explain to the students that the Trinity is a difficult subject matter to understand. It doesn't make sense to us how God could be one God but three Persons at the same time. However, because God said it, we must believe it is true.

Gather the students around you for story time. Ask the students if they have a favorite book or story and allow them to give answers. Explain to your students that you will be telling a story this year. It is a true story about real people and their very good God. Use a storybook as a prop to help them differentiate the end from the beginning.

Say: "When someone reads you a story, do they start at the end? No, that would be silly. We wouldn't know what was happening. Where is the best place to start? On the first page . . . at the beginning . . ."

The Story

Genesis 1:1; John 14:31; 17:24

In the beginning, there was nothing—no world, no sky, no flowers, no people. All there was . . . was God.

Do you think God was lonely? Not at all! Before He made anything, He was not alone. God the Father always had the Son and the Holy Spirit with Him.

God is all-powerful, and He always has been. Nothing is too hard for Him. He can make whatever He wants. He can make big, strong elephants or tall, giant mountains.[1][2]

God is all-wise, and He always has been. He knows exactly how to make anything He can imagine.[3] He knows how to make fat little bumblebees buzz through the air and how to change slow-crawling caterpillars into fast-fluttering butterflies.

However, God is not just powerful and wise. He is also loving and good.

How the Father loves the Son and the Holy Spirit! They had so much love that they wanted to share it.

1 **Visual:** Use the Student Manual page as a prop.
2 **Spotlight:** God is omnipotent, all-powerful.
3 **Question:** If you could make anything you could imagine, what would you make?

Review Questions

- What was it like in the beginning? (There was nothing—no world, no sky, no flowers, no people, etc.—except God.)
- Was anything too hard for Him? (No, He is all-powerful.)
- What could God make? (He could make anything He could imagine.)
- Was God the Father lonely? (No, He had the Son and the Holy Spirit.)
- How did the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit feel about each other? (They loved each other very much.)

Bible Story #2: God Creates the World: Days 1–3

Target Truth

- God made everything out of nothing.

The Big Picture

In this story, two significant themes emerge. First, God created the world and everything in it because He wanted to give His love to people for them to enjoy. God could have made food without taste, flowers without scent, or the sky without color. Instead, He made the world full of sensations and objects for us to enjoy. Second, God powerfully created something out of nothing. The fact that God *spoke* the world into existence should fill you and your students with wonder at His mighty power. Look for practical ways throughout the week to remind the students of both of these truths.

Setting the Stage

Materials Needed: blocks, Play-Doh, etc.

In this story, God shares His love by creating the world. Select several students to come before the class. For these students, have tangible things, like blocks or Play-Doh, for them to use. Ask each of them to make something and let them tell you what it is. After the first several students have returned to their seats, choose several more to come before the class. These students will be given "nothing." You can still pretend that you are giving the students something by having them hold out their hands and acting as if you are transferring something from your hands to theirs. Ask them to make something with what is in their hands. The children will likely be confused about why they don't have anything to build with and will be unable to build anything out of what they have been given. Use this as an opportunity to introduce the main concept of today's story—that God made all of creation out of nothing. As we will see in today's story, just because something is impossible for us doesn't mean that it is impossible for God!

Say: "I think God is about to speak. Let's listen to what He says and watch what happens . . ."

The Story

Genesis 1:2–13

The Father, Son, and Spirit decided to give their love to others. They wanted others to enjoy what they enjoyed, so God began to speak. God is so powerful that every time He said a word, something happened.

On the first day, God said, "Let there be light."[1] As soon as God spoke, there was light, and it was good. He named the light "day," and He named the darkness "night."

On the second day, He said, "Let there be sky. Let there be water." As soon as He spoke, there was a sky, and there was water.

On the third day, He said, "Let there be land." What do you think happened when He said this? Out of the water came the land! Then up out of the land popped mountains and [popped] trees and [popped] flowers too.[2] God named the land "earth" and the waters "seas."

God looked at what He had created and saw that it was good. He loved the world He had made.

---

1 **Visual:** Turn your classroom lights off before beginning the story; then turn them on after God says, "Let there be light."
2 **Action:** Pop up and down every time the word "popped" is said in the story. The words in brackets have been added if you choose to do this.

Review Questions

- On the first day, when God said, "Let there be light," what happened? (As soon as God spoke, there was light.)
- What did God name the light and the darkness? (day and night)
- What did God say on the second day? ("Let there be sky. Let there be water.")
- What did God create on the third day? (land, trees, flowers, etc.)
- What did God name the land and the waters? (earth and seas)
- When God looked at what He had created, what did He see? (He saw that it was good.)

Bible Story #3: God Creates the World: Days 4–6

Target Truth

- God made everything just right.

The Big Picture

In days 4–6 of creation, God filled up the world He had made on days 1–3. God designed everything made on days 4–6 to fit perfectly into its environment. On day 4, the sun, moon, and stars burst into the galaxy. On day 5, the fish found the sea to be their perfect home, while birds took naturally to the skies. Day 6 saw animals fitting right into their places on the dry land. God placed everything exactly where it belonged. This shows the goodness of God through the orderliness of His creation. Nothing was out of sorts or messy. God made everything fit just right. Encourage your students to praise God for all that He has created.

Setting the Stage

In this story, God creates animals to fill up the good world He has made. Have some fun by teaching your students how to make fish faces, flap their wings, and make animal sounds. You will have the opportunity to use these skills again during the telling of the story.

Say: "Can you imagine what the world would have looked like without people or animals? What would it have sounded like if there were no cars honking, dogs barking, or trains chugging? The world would have been very quiet. . ."

The Story

Genesis 1:14–25

After creating the light and darkness, sea and sky, and all the dry ground, God made more. He filled His world with good things.

On the fourth day, God said, "Let there be a sun, a moon, and stars. You belong in the sky." God gave the sun for light during the day and the moon for light at night. God also put the sun, moon, and stars in space to help us tell time. God saw that this, too, was good.

On the fifth day, He said, "Let there be fish. You belong in the water."[1] He said, "Let there be birds. You belong in the sky."[2] Then He said to them, "Fill up the sea with more fish, and fill up the sky with more birds." All of this was good.

On the sixth day, God said, "Let the earth bring forth all sorts of animals." All of a sudden there were frogs and dogs, cats and rats, and even parrots and ferrets.[3] God looked at His world and all that was in it and saw that it was good. God was showing His love. Now others could enjoy what He had made.

---

1 **Action:** Make fish faces together as a class.
2 **Action:** Flap your wings together as a class.
3 **Sound:** Make the sounds of your favorite animal.

Review Questions

- What lights did God put in the sky on the fourth day? (the sun, moon, and stars)
- Why did God make the sun, moon, and stars? (to give light and to help us tell time)
- What creatures did God make on the fifth day to fill up the water and sky? (fish and birds)
- What did God create on the sixth day? (Answers will vary.)
- When God looked at what He had created, what did He see? (He saw that it was good.)

Additional Elements

Scripture Memory: Creation (Genesis 1:1)

Supplies Needed: an empty sandwich bag

The first verse of the Bible introduces your students to two great truths about God. First, God, who created all things from nothing, always existed even before creation. Second, it reveals that this loving Creator is mighty.

Ask your students if they have ever made a sand castle. What did they make it out of? Ask them what they think God used to make the world. Did He use sand? Sticks? Blocks? God is so strong that He didn't use any of those things. He made everything out of nothing!

Show your students a clear, sealable plastic sandwich bag. Unzip the bag, open it up, hold it upside down, shake it, and let your students look in it. Ask them what is in the bag. (Nothing.) Remind your students that God could use the "nothing" in the plastic bag to make anything He wanted. As a class, brainstorm about some of the things that God could make out of nothing.

Music Curriculum

"God Is So Good," *Wee Sing Bible Songs*, pg. 51.

Catechism Questions

1. *Who is God?*
   A: God is the maker of all things.

2. *Out of what did He make all things?*
   A: Nothing

Extra Activities

1. Take a nature walk. Have students point out all the things around them that God made. Remind them of how strong God is and how He made all these things out of nothing.
2. Have the children help clean up the classroom by putting things in their proper places. Remind the children as they place items where they belong of how God made a place for everything in creation to belong. Quiz them about where different things that God made belong. (E.g., Where do birds belong? In the sky; Where do fish belong? In the water.)
3. Create a collage of things that could have been found in the Garden. Have your students cut pictures from magazines of plants and animals and then paste them on construction paper. Hang the completed collages around your room or use them to create a bulletin board.

LESSON 2

THE REBELLION

Introduction

Target Truths

- God created people to share in His love.
- God wants us to put Him first.
- God calls disobedience sin.

Vocabulary

- **Command**: a rule that must be obeyed
- **Perfect:** not having anything wrong
- **Sin**: disobeying God
- **Obey**: doing what you are told quickly, joyfully, and completely
- **Disobey:** not doing what you are told quickly, joyfully, and completely

Note to the Teacher

In this week's lesson, Adam and Eve thought that disobeying God's rule was better than obeying. They were wrong. Everything God made was good, even the rule He gave to Adam and Eve. Because of our sinful and fallen condition, it is easy to view God's rules as harsh and restricting instead of beneficial and loving. Do you view the restraints that God has put in your life as irritations? Our sinful hearts tell us that God is keeping good from us, yet from Genesis 3, we learn that even God's rules express His great love for us. Thank God this week for His goodness, including the rules He has lovingly set in place.

Bible Lessons

Bible Story #1: God Makes Adam and Eve

Target Truth

- God created people to share in His love.

The Big Picture

God's amazing love for mankind shines through the lines of this story. God made people very special, creating them to be like Him and to enjoy all of the good things that He made. Neither the animals nor the plants could enjoy God and His creation like man and woman could. Why the difference? God made Adam and Eve (and every human being since) in His own image. Emphasize to your students that God made each of them special. God loves them very much, and they should love God in return. Use the imagery of the parent-child relationship to help your students picture this love.

Setting the Stage

Materials Needed: family photos

In today's story, Adam and Eve are created in God's image. Bring a photo of your family and have each student bring a photo of theirs. Using your photo, point out similarities in the members of your family. Then have students look for the ways that they are similar to their parents. Ask your students if anyone has ever said, "You remind me of your dad." Explain that just as we remind people of our parents, God's children were made to remind others of what He is like.

Say: "Wow! Look at all of the amazing things that God has made. But wait. . . it looks like He isn't finished . . ."

The Story

Genesis 1:26–2:4; 2:15, 18–25; 1 Timothy 6:17

Everything God made was good. Though God had already created many things, there was still one more thing He wanted to make on the sixth day. He said, "Let's make people. Let's make them like Us. I want them to share in Our love. I want them to enjoy all that We have made."[1]

So, He did just that. First, God took some dust and shaped it. Then He breathed into it and gave it life.[2] That is how God made the first man. God named him Adam.

God put Adam in the Garden of Eden. There he could enjoy God's creation and enjoy God most of all. Then God said something surprising. He looked at Adam and said, "It is not good for you to be alone." This was the first time God had said that something was not good.

Man needed a wife, so God put Adam into a deep sleep and, from his side, took out one of his ribs. God shaped the rib into the first woman. Adam named his wife Eve.

God looked at Adam and Eve. They were made in His image—the way children are like their parents.[3] God blessed His children. He said, "Fill up the earth with your children and grandchildren. All the earth is for you and your family to enjoy and take care of."

God was pleased with everything He had made. He saw that it was all very good. On the seventh day God rested, not because He was tired, but because His work of creation was done.

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1 **Tip:** Remind your students that God is a Trinity—three Persons in one.
2 **Action:** Dramatize how God created Adam and Eve as the story is being told.
3 **Tip:** Refer back to the family photo activity from Setting the Stage.

Review Questions

- What was the "one more thing" that God wanted to make on the sixth day? (people)
- How did God make the first man? (He took some dust and shaped it. Then He breathed into it and gave it life.)
- What did God name the man? (Adam)
- How did God make the first woman? (God put Adam into a deep sleep and, from his side, took out one of his ribs. God shaped the rib into the first woman.)
- Who named the first woman Eve? (Adam)
- In whose image were Adam and Eve made? (God's image—the way children are like their parents.)
- What command did God give to Adam and Eve? (Fill up the earth with your children and grandchildren.)
- This time when God looked at what He had created, what did He see? (He saw that everything was very good and was pleased with all that He had made.)
- Why did God rest on the seventh day? (God rested, not because He was tired, but because His work of creation was done.)

Bible Story #2: God Gives a Good Rule to Adam and Eve

Target Truth

- God wants us to put Him first.

The Big Picture

By giving Adam and Eve one rule, God created an opportunity for them to live in a world that had priorities. Without such a rule, they could just enjoy God and His creation equally with no distinction. How your students respond to God's rules show whether God has first place in their love. Explain to your students that God's rules are good and are intended to help them show their love for God by putting Him first.

Setting the Stage

In today's story, Adam and Eve enjoy the benefits of living in a perfect place. It is hard for us to imagine what this would have been like, though the Bible describes heaven in a similar way. Ask your students if they have ever been sick. How did they feel? Ask them if they have ever been hurt. Let them share stories about their experiences. Imagine what it would be like to live in a place where you never had a runny nose, a stomachache, or even a scraped knee! Wouldn't that be wonderful? That is what the Garden is like in today's story.

Say: "Look at the Garden that God made for Adam and Eve. Isn't it a beautiful place? Let's find out more about it . . ."

The Story

Genesis 2:8–9, 15–17

Adam and Eve enjoyed the Garden God had made. He had made it just for them. It was their home, and it was good.

Every corner of the Garden was full of wonderful things—the sweetest fruit you've ever tasted, the greenest grass you've ever walked on, the brightest flowers you've ever seen.

It was a perfect place. No one ever got sick in the Garden. There were no coughs, sniffles, sneezes, or wheezes.[1] No one got hurt there. There were no broken arms or scratched knees.

There was no sin in the Garden either. No one got angry, and there was nothing to make you afraid. Everything Adam and Eve enjoyed in the Garden came from God.

God also gave them one rule, a very good command. He said, "There is one tree—in the middle of the Garden—that has fruit for you not to enjoy. When you see this fruit, do not eat it. If you do, you will certainly die."

Adam and Eve obeyed God's good rule because they loved Him. Everything in the Garden was perfect, until one day when something unexpected happened.[2]

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1 **Sound:** As you read the story, add the sounds of coughs, sniffles, sneezes, and wheezes.
2 **Question:** What do you think Adam and Eve talked about with God?

Review Questions

- What was the Garden like where Adam and Eve lived? (It was a perfect place full of wonderful things. No one ever got sick or hurt there, and there was no sin.)
- What one rule did God give Adam and Eve? (They must not eat the fruit of one special tree.)
- Where was the one special tree? (It was in the middle of the Garden.)
- What did God say would happen if they ate the fruit from this tree? (They would certainly die.)
- How did Adam and Eve show God that they loved Him? (by obeying His command not to eat from the special tree)
- How do you think we can show God that we love Him? (by obeying Him)

Bible Story #3: Adam and Eve Disobey God's Good Rule

Target Truth

- God calls disobedience sin.

The Big Picture

Disobedience is never a small error; it is mutiny against the God of all creation. When Eve disobeyed God's rule not to eat the fruit, she was fighting against God Himself. Instead of obeying God, she listened to Satan and her own desires. She had sided with the enemy. Using today's story, show your students the importance of obeying God and resisting the enemy's temptations to disobey.

Setting the Stage

Materials Needed: two wrapped presents

In today's story, Satan deceives Eve by offering her something that appears much better than it is. Satan knows that disobeying God by eating the forbidden fruit will be very costly for both Eve and Adam. To illustrate how things are not always what they appear, bring two wrapped gifts to class. One gift should be nicely wrapped but contain a worthless gift (e.g., bag of dirt, empty candy wrapper), while the other should be wrapped in newspaper but contain something valuable (e.g., a dollar, a candy bar). Ask your students which gift they would rather receive. Most of them will probably pick the present that looks nice on the outside. Have the students open both gifts to reveal what is inside. Remind your students to listen for someone in today's story who makes a poor choice.

Say: "Hey, look! I see Adam and Eve playing a game in the Garden. Wait a minute. Something doesn't seem quite right. What is that noise I hear? Do you hear it too? . . ."

The Story

Genesis 3:1–7

There was something moving on the ground. A sneaky snake snuck into the Garden.[1] It was Satan. He came up to Eve and said, "Did God really say that you couldn't eat from any of the trees in the Garden?"

"No," said Eve. "God said we could not eat the fruit from one special tree. He said we can't even touch the fruit," she added, "or we will die."

"Will it really hurt you?" hissed the snake.[2] "Look at it. You won't die. In fact, God told you not to eat it because He knows something special about that fruit. If you eat it, you will become like God Himself."

Eve looked up into the tree.[3] The fruit was just hanging there, shiny. It didn't look bad.

She reached up and picked a piece of fruit from the tree. *Wouldn't God want us to be like Him?* she thought. Eve looked down at the fruit in her hand. She wasn't thinking about God or what He had commanded. She was thinking about herself and what she wanted.

"Looks good," she said to herself. Eve held the fruit to her nose and sniffed. "Smells good too," she said. Then she opened her mouth and took a big bite. By taking that bite, Eve decided to believe the snake rather than God.

Adam was there with Eve, so she gave the fruit to him. Do you know what he did? He took a big bite too.

Soon Adam and Eve began to feel very bad about eating the fruit. God had given them only one rule, and they had broken it.

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1 **Visual:** Place a toy snake somewhere visible to the students but not too obvious.
2 **Sound:** Make a hissing sound any time the s-s-snake s-s-speaks.
3 **Action:** As you tell the story, imitate Eve's actions.

Review Questions

- Who came up to Eve in the Garden and started talking to her? (the snake, Satan)
- What did he ask her? ("Did God really say not to eat from any of the trees in the Garden?")
- What did Eve say? ("No, we may not eat of one special tree. We may not even touch it.")
- What did the snake want Eve to do? (eat the fruit that God said not to eat)
- Did Eve choose to believe God or Satan? (She believed Satan. She looked at the fruit, sniffed it, and took a bite.)
- What did she do after she took a bite? (She gave the fruit to Adam, and he took a bite too.)
- Why did Adam and Eve feel bad after they ate the fruit? (Adam and Eve knew they had sinned. God had given them only one rule, and they had broken it.)

Additional Elements

Scripture Memory: Obedience (John 14:15)

One way your students show love for their parents is by trusting and obeying them. They can show their love for God the same way. Ask your children to share some rules their parents have given them. Allow them to supply some examples. (E.g., "Clean your room" or "Don't touch the stove.") Ask them what they should do if they love their parents. (They should obey.)

Jesus says in this verse, "You're My friends. You say you love Me. But you can *show* that you love Me by doing what I ask. If you truly love Me, you will *obey* Me."

According to John 14:15, obedience displays our love for God. Spend some time with your children thinking about ways to show love for God by obeying. Then pick some of the ideas suggested and help your children do them throughout the week. Remind the students of the memory verse each time they obey.

Music Curriculum

"God Made Me," *Wee Sing Bible Songs*, pg. 14.

Catechism Questions

3. *How were all things made?*
   A: God spoke, and it was done.

4. *What did God make on the first day?*
   A: Light

Extra Activities

1. Give each child a lump of Play-Doh. Ask the children to make specific objects from the stories (e.g., a snake, a tree, a piece of fruit). Then have someone retell the part of the story that included this object. You may need to guide the student's retelling with questions.
2. Have the children role-play obeying. Choose a child to come to the front of the room. Then ask that child to do something (e.g., put a book on the shelf, slide his chair under the table, close the cabinet door). When he does what you have asked, point out his obedience. Thank him for doing what you asked. Continue this game using other children until everyone has had a turn. Commend obedience any time you see it during the week.
3. Have each child take turns coming up to the front of the classroom with the teacher. Talk about some of the child's most noticeable characteristics (e.g., "God made Jimmy with brown hair and brown eyes, and look at his cute dimples."). Then prompt the children by saying, "When God made _____, what did He think?" The answer each time will be, "This is very good!" The simple repetition is designed to bring home the point that everything God makes is good.

LESSON 3

SENT AWAY

Introduction

Target Truths

- God seeks His sinful children.
- God disciplines His sinful children.
- God rescues His sinful children.

Vocabulary

- **Blame:** to say your sin is someone else's fault
- **Lie:** to say something that is not true
- **Holy:** perfectly right and without sin
- **Tree of Life:** a tree in the Garden of Eden that made people live forever

Note to the Teacher

This lesson focuses on God's love in a seemingly unlikely place: His discipline of Adam and Eve. The consequences of Adam and Eve's sin marred the good world and relationships that God had created. These consequences would constantly remind them that sin is terrible. If this was all God intended, we would call this punishment, but God had an additional purpose. Through the discipline, He desired to turn them away from future sin. What motivates the discipline you exercise on your students? Don't merely seek to punish them, but seek to discipline them, correcting their lives for the future.

Bible Lessons

Bible Story #1: God Finds Adam and Eve

Target Truth

- God seeks His sinful children.

The Big Picture

Last week's story ended with Adam and Eve hiding from God after they had sinned. What might God have done to Adam and Eve when they sinned? God could have destroyed the human race, crumpled up His newly formed creation, and just started over. But, in His love and mercy, God pursued His fearful, sinful children. We clearly see God's love in His pursuing them—all for their own good and the glorification of His own grace. Even when your students get caught for doing wrong, this is nothing less than a sign of God's love. As a teacher you, too, must deal with sinful children in love if you want to display God's goodness to them.

Setting the Stage

Materials Needed: footprints leading to a hiding place

In today's story, Adam and Eve try to hide from God. Somewhere in your classroom, have 2 sets of footprints leading to a hiding place. Ask your students if they have ever tried to hide from their mom or dad when they've done something wrong. Why did they try to hide? Did someone find them? Adam and Eve did the same thing. In fact, that's what they are doing right now.

Say: "Can you see Adam and Eve's feet sticking out of those bushes? Let's listen to the story to find out what is happening . . ."

The Story

Genesis 3:7–13

Adam and Eve had sinned. They had disobeyed God. Now they were both hiding in the Garden, and Someone was walking toward them. The footsteps stopped in front of their hiding place.[1]

"Adam, where are you?" Someone asked. It was God. He knew exactly where Adam was. Adam could not hide from God,[2] but God had come to Adam because He loved Adam.

Adam said, "I was trying to hide. I heard You in the Garden, and I was afraid."

"Why were you afraid, Adam? Did you disobey My rule? Did you eat the fruit I told you not to eat?"

Adam wanted to run far away. He was afraid God would be angry if He found out that he had disobeyed, so he answered God's question the wrong way. He blamed Eve. "Eve—the woman You made—handed me the fruit to eat. She made me disobey."[3]

Eve was hiding too, but God knew exactly where she was. He said, "Eve, what did you do?"

Eve knew that she had done wrong and wanted to keep hiding. She fearfully stepped out into the open and said, "The snake lied to me. That is why I ate. The snake made me disobey." She had answered God's question, but she had answered it the wrong way. She blamed Satan.

Satan didn't say anything.[4]

The man and the woman knew they had been caught. They had not loved God and obeyed His rule, and they were afraid. What would the powerful Creator God do now?

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1 **Sound:** Have the students make the sound of footsteps with their feet.
2 **Spotlight:** God sees and knows everything.
3 **Action:** When Adam blames Eve in the story, point at an imaginary person like you are blaming her. When Eve blames the snake, point to the toy snake from yesterday's story.
4 **Sound:** At the place in the story in which Satan doesn't speak, pause dramatically.

Materials Needed: toy snake from last week's lesson

Review Questions

- What were Adam and Eve doing at the beginning of the story? (They were hiding from God.)
- Why were Adam and Eve hiding from God? (They were afraid because they knew they had sinned.)
- Did God know where Adam and Eve were hiding? (Yes, He knew exactly where they were because He knows everything.)
- What did God ask Adam? ("Did you disobey My rule?")
- How did Adam answer God's question the wrong way? (He blamed Eve for what he had done.)
- Who did Eve blame for what she had done? (She blamed the snake, Satan.)

Bible Story #2: God Talks to Eve

Target Truth

- God disciplines His sinful children.

The Big Picture

In this story, God deals with the problems that His children had created. God promised to crush Satan through a descendant of the woman. Ultimately, this happened when Jesus died on the cross. At Calvary, Jesus defeated Satan, although to outward appearances it seemed that Satan had won. God also promised to make life difficult for Eve and Adam. Why did God do this? These consequences became daily reminders of the true awfulness of their sin. These reminders were painful mercies. God's discipline of His children always springs from His heart of love. As you discipline your students, remind them that you are disciplining in love and for their good.

Setting the Stage

Materials Needed: a visible reminder of something special

In the next two stories, consequences are given to Adam and Eve as reminders of their sin. Use this activity to introduce the concept of reminders. Bring something to class that reminds you of someone or something special (e.g., seashell—reminder of collecting shells with my grandmother at the beach every summer). Ask your students what reminds them of something special in their lives and have them describe it. Encourage your students to listen for the reminders that God will give to someone in today's story.

Say: "Do you see that? Adam, Eve, and the snake are with God in the Garden. It looks like God is about to say something. Let's watch and listen . . ."

The Story

Genesis 3:14–16

God turned and spoke to Satan. "Snake, it will come down to this. One day you will strike at My own Son's foot. It will look like you have won, but His foot will crush[1] your head. In the end, He will win."

Then God turned to the woman and said. "Eve, I created you to enjoy Me and to enjoy the good world I made. But you disobeyed Me and ate the fruit I commanded you not to eat. You did what you wanted, not what I had commanded. So, I will make it hard for you to enjoy My good world."

God had made Eve to love and enjoy the family He had given her. The love she would have for them was to remind her of God's love, but sin messed up this blessing. Now, right beside her love and joy would be pain and trouble.

God said to Eve, "It will be hard to raise a family. The trouble you have will remind you of your sin."[1]

God punished Eve so she would remember what she had done wrong. God did not want her to sin again. Even though Eve had sinned, God still loved her.

1 Sound: Emphasize the word "crush" as you read it.

Review Questions

- Who did God punish first? (the snake, Satan)
- In the promise that God made to the snake, who did God say would win in the end? (His Son)
- What was Eve's punishment? (It would be hard to raise a family. Beside her love and joy would be pain and trouble.)
- Why did God punish Eve? (so she would remember what she had done wrong and not sin again)
- Did God still love Eve even though she had sinned? (yes)

1 The curse affected the very areas where Eve and Adam were made to reflect God's image. For example, Eve was female (Gen. 1:27), and it was her role as wife and mother that would be strained after the fall (3:16b). The same is true of Adam in the next story. He was made to cultivate the earth (1:26, 28), and it was his role as cultivator of the earth that became difficult after the fall (3:17–19).

Bible Story #3: God Lovingly Sends Adam and Eve Away

Target Truth

- God rescues His sinful children.

The Big Picture

When Isaiah entered the holy presence of God, he cried out "Woe is me! I am undone!" (Isa. 6). Because God must judge sin, sinners cannot abide in His presence. Thus when God sent the first sinners away from His holy presence in the Garden, He was actually displaying mercy and love. If Adam and Eve had remained in Eden, they might have eaten from the Tree of Life and been separated from God forever. God's sending them away actually signaled His great and compassionate love for His children. Only the cross of Jesus brings the ultimate solution for sin so people may enter God's presence with joy. Remind your students that they were made to fellowship with God, to enjoy Him forever.

Setting the Stage

At the end of today's story, God sends Adam and Eve away from Himself. Tell the students about a time when you were separated from someone you loved. Describe how you felt and then ask the students if they have ever experienced the same thing. Ask them how they felt being apart from someone they loved. (E.g., being left at home with a babysitter, leaving their grandparents' house after a visit) Have them listen for two people in today's story who must be separated from someone they love.

Say: "Are you ready to go back to the Garden? Let's climb through these bushes so that we can get a better look at what's going on. There's Eve. . . and Adam, and it looks like God is still talking with them. Let's listen to what God is telling them . . ."

The Story

Genesis 3:17–24

When God finished speaking to Eve, He turned to the man and said, "Adam, I made you to enjoy Me and the things I created, but you disobeyed My rule and did what you wanted, not what I had commanded. So, I will make it hard for you to enjoy My good world."

God had commanded Adam to plant and grow food for his family to eat. The good fruits and vegetables would remind Adam of God's love. Now, right beside the fruits and vegetables would grow thorns and weeds.[1]

God said to Adam, "It will be hard to grow food. The thorns and weeds will remind you of your sin."[2]

Then God spoke to both Adam and Eve. "You must leave your home," He said. "You cannot stay here with Me in the Garden. You used to enjoy walking and talking with Me, but because you have disobeyed Me, you must go."

God made Adam and Eve go outside the gate of the Garden. He was sending them away—away from the Garden, away from Him!

God sent angels to guard the Garden's entrance. Adam and Eve could never go back inside.[3] God didn't want them to eat from the Tree of Life, another special tree in the Garden. If they did, they would live apart from Him forever.[2]

God had sent His children away, but He had a bigger plan. One day, just as He had promised, God would send His Son to defeat Satan and sin. One day, God would walk and talk with His children once again.

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1 **Visual:** Bring an example of thorns or weeds as a prop.
2 **Tip:** Refer back to your previous discussion of reminders from Setting the Stage.
3 **Spotlight:** God is kind; He wants what is for our good.

Review Questions

- What was Adam's punishment? (It would be hard to grow food. Alongside the fruits and vegetables that he planted would grow thorns and weeds.)
- Where did God lead Adam and Eve? (outside the gate of the Garden)
- Why did God make them leave the Garden? (God wanted to protect them from eating of the Tree of Life and living forever apart from Him.)
- Why did God send angels to guard the entrance of the Garden? (He sent them so that Adam and Eve could never go back inside.)
- What bigger plan did God have even though He had sent His children away? (He would send His own Son to defeat Satan and sin.)

2 Even God's sending Adam and Eve away from His presence and away from the Tree of Life reveals God's love. If they had eaten from the Tree of Life, they would have lived forever apart from God (3:22-23). If they remained in God's holy presence as sinners, they would experience His judgment (Exo. 19:21).

Additional Elements

Scripture Memory: Discipline (Proverbs 3:12a)

This week's lesson has discussed how God disciplined Adam and Eve when they disobeyed Him. Do your students know what it means "to discipline"? When you discipline someone, you show them what they have done wrong and teach them how to do what is right instead.

Proverbs 3:12 says that God only disciplines a particular kind of person. What kind of person do you think God disciplines? God only disciplines those whom He loves.

Ask your students what a young boy's parents would do if they saw their son running in the street. (Discuss.) They would tell him that playing in the street is dangerous and that he needs to play in the yard instead. Ask what would happen if the son ran in the street again. (Discuss.) His parents would discipline him so that he would stop putting himself in a dangerous place. Parents discipline their children because of their love.

Music Curriculum

"Oh, Be Careful," *Wee Sing Bible Songs*, pg. 15.

Catechism Questions

5. *What did God make on the second day?*
   A: The sky

6. *What did God make on the third day?*
   A: Land and water

Extra Activities

1. Role-play situations in which your students first respond the wrong way and then respond the right way. For instance, you may ask a student, "Did you take the toy from _____?" The student would first respond the wrong way by blaming someone else. Then reenact the situation. Repeat your initial question and have the student respond the right way, "Yes, I took the toy. I'm sorry." This exercise will help reinforce the idea of the students taking responsibility for their actions.
2. Plant something; then allow your students to tend to what they've planted like Adam would have tended his garden. You could plant seeds in individual cups to be taken home once plants have sprouted. Or you could plant seeds in a planter, window box, or a small piece of land on your school's property to be cared for throughout the school year.
3. Play Hide-and-Seek. Have students take turns pretending to be Adam and Eve hiding from God. Select one student to represent God coming to find them. Remind the students that it wasn't good that Adam and Eve were trying to hide from God. They were afraid because they had done something wrong, but God came to find them because He loved them.