

God's Truth for You

Telling the story...

of God's love for all mankind and His great plan for bringing us back into covenant relationship with Him.

A Series of 27 stories from Genesis to Revelation

With discussion questions, suggested memory verses and facilitator notes.

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#1 HOW EVERYTHING BEGAN Gen. 1:1 – 2:2

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever wondered if there is a God who knows you and loves you?
2. Are there really many, many gods or is there one true God who is greater than all other spiritual beings?

Begin Story

I want to tell you about God, the great, good Spirit who made all things. No one made God. God has always been here just as he is here now. For all time in the future God will exist. Within one God, there are three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. These three are one God.

This is the story of how all things began. The earth, the heavens, animals, the spirit world...even you. It is the story of God and his plan for all people.

God Himself made all things. A long, long time ago there wasn't any ground or trees or rivers. There wasn't any sun, moon or stars. But God was here. When God created the world, he did it by speaking. God is so powerful, he simply spoke his word of command, and they existed! When God said, "Let there be light!" instantly light came into being. This is how God made the sun, the moon and the stars. God spoke and thus he created the ground and the sky. He spoke his word and the mountains and the sea were created. He made the trees, the grass and all the food we eat. God made all the fish and all the birds. He made all the animals and insects...all by his powerful word.

But then, God did something in a different way. He said, "Let us make mankind in our own image and let them rule over the earth." God took some earth and formed it into a

man's body. Then God breathed into the man's nostrils and the man became alive. God called the man Adam.

When God made all the things in this world, he saw that all these things were good. He made a fertile garden (very good place) for Adam to stay, where there were beautiful trees, good fruit and good food.

God told Adam to look after the garden and the animals, trees and food. God brought all the animals and birds to Adam and he gave them their names.

But there wasn't a suitable partner for Adam.

God said, "It is not good for the man to be by himself. I will make a partner for him." God made Adam go to sleep. Then God took a rib from Adam's side and He made the rib into a woman. Adam woke up and God brought the woman to him. Adam said; "This is good! The woman has come from my own bone." Adam called the woman Eve. Eve worked with Adam in the garden God had made for them. Adam and Eve were good people. There was no sin in them. Everything they did was good and right. They never got sick; all the time they were happy.

When God made the man and the woman, they were different from all the other things God had made. Adam and Eve were very happy in the garden God had made for them. Adam and Eve loved God and obeyed Him. They walked and talked with him in the garden. God gave Adam and Eve the authority to rule over all the creatures of the earth. Adam and Eve are our ancestors.

We can think about this too. We are not like the other things God has made. God made us so that we could worship him, love him and obey him. We can talk with God and work with Him too. God wants to be our friend and Father.

God made all things and he rules over all things. His power is very great. God loves all people everywhere, and he wants to help them. Therefore it is fitting (right, good) to honor God and obey His message.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. When God created Adam, how was it different from when he created everything else?
4. What did God provide for Adam and Eve?
5. What kind of relationship did God have with Adam and Eve?
6. In this story, is God part of creation or separate from his creation?
7. What do we learn from this story about God?

Closing Prayer Creator God, we praise you for your great power, wisdom and creativity. You alone are the giver of life. Thank you that you have made men and women with the high honor of bearing your image. Help us to reflect your glory and bring honor to your name throughout the earth. Amen.

Memory Verse “So God created mankind in his own image...male and female he created them.” Gen. 1:27

#2 SATAN AND THE SPIRIT WORLD Is. 14:12-15; Rev. 12:7-10, 12; John 10:10

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever wondered where evil spirits came from?
2. Do you think evil spirits sometimes do good things?

Begin Story

A long, long time ago, before God made Adam and Eve, God made all the spirits. The spirits were called angels. God made many, many angels. When God made the angels, they were only good. They loved God and obeyed Him. The angels lived with God in heaven where they worshipped God and served God. These angels had great power, but not nearly as much power as God. Angels also know many things, but not everything. Only God knows everything.

There was one angel who was more beautiful than all the others. His name was Lucifer. We also know him as Satan. He was a ruler over other angels. Because he was so beautiful, he became very proud. He wanted to make himself greater than God. Many angels followed Satan and they rebelled against God. But God defeated them and threw all the bad angels out of heaven. They came down to earth where they became bad spirits (demons – or other local terminology).

Satan hates God and hates all of God's friends. Because God loves people, Satan hates all people. He wants to turn people aside from following God. Satan and his demons roam the earth, looking for ways to deceive people and keep people from knowing the one true God. Their intentions are never good, even when they seem to be doing good things for people. In the end, their purpose is always to kill, steal and destroy everything good in our lives.

Satan is very angry because he knows that his end is coming. God promises that

someday Satan and all his demons will be bound and thrown into a lake of fire to be punished forever.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. When Satan become proud, what did he try to do?
4. Do you think pride also keeps people from obeying God?
5. Why is Satan so angry that he wants to destroy everything that God loves?
6. Why would Satan do something good for someone if he hates all people?
7. What is God's final plan for Satan and all his demons?

Closing Prayer Creator God, we praise you that you are far more powerful than all the spiritual world and all the powers of evil. We praise you that you are completely good and that someday you will rid the earth of all evil forces. Help us to know your truth so that we will not be deceived by any lying spirits that try to turn us away from you.

Memory Verse “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but ... against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Eph. 6:12

#3 SIN BEGINS Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-21; 1 John 1:5

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever wondered why people hurt each other and do bad things?
2. Have you ever wondered about yourself? “Why do I think evil thoughts and do bad things?”

Begin Story

Do you remember the story of creation? We saw that God's power is very great. God is also holy. Holy means that God is not like us. God is only good. He never has evil or selfish thoughts and he never does anything that is not good and just. There is not even a shadow of darkness in God. There is only goodness and light in God.

I'm going to tell you the story of how man became separated from God.

Adam and Eve were very happy in the garden God had made for them. God told Adam and Eve that they could eat the fruit from the trees in that place. (It was very nice fruit.) But there was one tree in the center of the garden. It was called the tree which gives knowledge to people of what is good and what is bad. God said to Adam and Eve, "You must not eat the fruit from that tree. If you eat it, you will die."

God loved Adam and Eve. He did not want them to die. So He warned them not to eat the fruit from this tree.

One day Satan came to Eve in the form of a snake. He told lies to Eve. He said, "Did God say you would die if you eat from the forbidden tree? God is not telling you the truth. If you eat from the forbidden tree, you will NOT die. You will become very wise. You will be like God Himself."

Eve listened to Satan's lie. She took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some of the fruit to Adam, and he also ate it. Adam and Eve both disobeyed God. But when they did this, it did not make them feel good or wise. No. They both felt ashamed and tried to hide from God, but God knew what they had done. He came and spoke to them. God told them that because they had disobeyed Him, the earth would now be under a curse and there would be suffering and hardship in their lives.

God told the snake that it would have to crawl on its belly, and that its descendants would always be enemies of the children of Adam and Eve. God told Eve that she would

have much pain in bearing children and that her husband would rule over her. God told Adam that he would have to work hard to get food from the ground. Weeds and thorns would make it very difficult for him.

He would have to dig the soil and grow his crops. The animals and birds had been friendly before, but now they became wild and frightened. They didn't want to stay with Adam and Eve any more.

God sent Adam and Eve away from the garden. Their lives became difficult and they experienced pain and sorrow. They lost their friendship with God and were separated from him.

Adam and Eve became sinful. They began to do many bad things like lying and stealing and getting angry with each other. Instead of God guiding their lives, they were now controlled by their own sinful nature, and by the power of Satan and his evil spirits.

Sadly, the children were all like their parents; they were all born with sinful natures and therefore they did sinful things.

Because Adam and Eve sinned, death came into the earth, to all things and to all people. All people became separated from God. As a result of disobeying God, the world is now full of violence, sadness, disease, hunger, greed, selfishness and poverty.

But God did not forget Adam and Eve. God still loved Adam and Eve, even though they had disobeyed him. God made a promise that, one day in the future, one of Eve's descendants would crush the power of Satan.

Even from the beginning, God had a plan to destroy Satan's power and make a way for us to come back to him. God had a plan to turn this sad story into a wonderful story!

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. What did God want from Adam and Eve?
4. Does God want to force people to obey him? Why do you think God put the forbidden tree in the garden?
5. Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?
6. What were the results of their disobedience?
7. Did God stop loving people because they began to sin against him?
8. What promise did God make to Eve?
9. What do we learn about God from this story?
10. What do I learn about myself from this story?

Closing Prayer Creator God, we praise you for you are full of goodness, truth and love. We thank you that you have not turned your back on us, even though we have disobeyed you and turned to our own evil ways. Thank you that you still love us and have a plan for taking away the sin that separates us from you. Amen.

Memory Verse "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." Is. 59:2

#4 ABRAHAM – OBEYS GOD Gen. 12:1-9; 15; 17:1-11

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Imagine what it would be like if God was your best friend. What do you think that would be like?
2. To be God's friend, what do you think God wants from you?

Begin Story

This is the story of one man who loved God and obeyed Him. His name was Abram. One day God spoke to Abram and said, "Abram, I want you to leave your own country, your own relatives and your father's house and go to another land that I will show you."

God also made a promise to Abram. God said, "I will make you become the father of a great nation, and I will make your own name great. You will be a blessing, and through you every clan (tribe) in the world will be blessed." God wanted Abram and his descendants to become a group of people who loved God and obeyed Him completely.

Abram did not know where he was going, but he believed that God would be with him and lead him to the right place. Abram took his wife Sarai with him, and also his nephew Lot. He also took all his possessions, his cattle and his servants. They traveled for many days and eventually came to a land called Canaan. There God spoke to Abram again and said, "This is the land I will give to you and your descendants." Then Abram built an altar and worshipped God in that place.

But Abram was not happy. He and his wife Sarai were both old people, and still they had no children. Abram thought that one of his servants would be the person to inherit all his property and possessions when he died.

Then one night Abram had a vision, and God spoke to him. God said, "Abram don't be anxious. I am your shield (the One who protects you). I am the One who rules over all people and possessions, and you are My close friend."

Abram replied, "Yes, you are a great God, and all these things you have given me are good, but I still have no children, and when I die all these things I have will pass on to one of my servants."

God said to Abram, "No, it won't be one of your servants who inherits your land and possessions. You will have a son, and he will inherit all your things." Then God told Abram to go outside and look up at the night sky. God said, "Look at the stars, Abram; can you count them all? Your descendants will be like that. They will be more than you can count."

Abram was an old man, and his wife Sarai was old too. But Abram believed that God could do anything He said.

Because Abram trusted God like that, God said that Abram was a righteous man.

God also told him that later on his descendants would be slaves (prisoners) in a foreign land for many years. But then the people who kept them as slaves would be punished, and Abram's descendants would be set free with many possessions. God's promises to Abram were very great -- so great they were hard to believe! To seal his agreement with Abram, God told Abram to set up a special ceremony. This ceremony normally was completed by two people and it meant that their promises to each other

would never be broken. But Abram did not complete the ceremony. When Abram was asleep, God completed the ceremony for him.

When Abram was 99 years old, God appeared to him again to remind him of the promises he had made. God said to Abram, “You are to walk before me and follow my ways. In return, I will greatly bless you and your descendants. I will give you all this land where you are now an alien. It will belong to you and your children. I am changing your name from Abram to Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. As for you, you and your descendants must keep your promise to follow my laws. These are the terms of my covenant (agreement) with you.” Then God gave Abraham instructions. He said, “As a sign that I have made a covenant with you and your descendants, every male born to you and every servant who comes to live with you must be circumcised when they are eight days old. This is a sign, a reminder in your own flesh, that you are my people and I am your God.” This is the end of our story.

Friends, God wants us to trust him and obey him like Abraham did. If we do, God has promised to help us and to bless us. He will also make us a blessing to other people too.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. In the covenant (agreement) that God made with Abraham,
 - What did God promise he would do?
 - What was Abraham supposed to do?
4. Why do you think God completed the ceremony for Abraham while Abraham was asleep?
5. What did God tell the descendants of Abraham to do as a sign that they had made a covenant with Him?

6. Even if we want to always obey God, is it easy?
7. What is the most important thing God wants from us so we can be his friends?
8. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Holy God, thank you that you desire to have an intimate friendship with the people you have created. Thank you that, even long ago in Abraham's time, you already had a plan to bless the nations of the earth by sending a Messiah who would lead us back to you. Amen.

Memory Verse "The Lord said to Abram, '...all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'" Gen. 12:3

#5 ISAAC & ISHMAEL ARE BORN Gen. 16; 17:15-21; 21:1-20

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever made a plan to make something good happen, but your plan only made things worse?
2. Do you think poor, low caste people are important to God? Or does he only care about people who are important or rich or high caste?

Begin Story

Before our last story happened (when Abraham was still Abram), Abram's wife Sarai was sad. She knew that Abram wanted to have a son very much, so she thought of a way that this could happen. Sarai said to Abram, "God has not let me have any children, so I will give you my servant girl, Hagar. You may sleep with Hagar and then if she has any

children, they will be my children. Perhaps this way we will get a son." (At that time, among the people of that place, it was not wrong for a man to have a second wife like that.)

Abram agreed to do what Sarai had suggested. Sarai gave her servant-girl Hagar to Abram to be his second wife. Abram slept with Hagar and she became pregnant. When Hagar realized she was pregnant she became very proud and arrogant towards Sarai. This made Sarah very upset and she spoke angrily to Abram: "YOU are to blame for this trouble. I gave you my servant-girl as your wife, but now she despises me."

Now there was much trouble in Abram's household. Sarai treated Hagar very badly (cruelly), so that after a while Hagar ran away, even though her own people were far away and she had no where to go.

An angel of God found Hagar in the desert and spoke to her. He said, "Hagar, return to Sarai and be her loyal servant. You will bear a son and you will call him Ishmael. Your descendants will become a great nation." Hagar was amazed that God had spoken to her, a lowly slave woman. She gave this name to God: El Roi. It means, "You are the God who sees me." So Hagar returned to be with Sarai and Abram. She bore a son and Abram called him Ishmael.

Later, when God renewed his promises to Abraham, he told him, "You are no longer to call your wife Sarai. She will be called "Sarah" for I will bless her and give you a son by her. She will be the mother of kings and nations."

Abraham fell down on his face, but inside he was laughing. He thought to himself, "Will a son be born to a man 100 years old? Will Sarah have a child at the age of 90?" Abraham said to God, "If only my son Ishmael could live under your blessing!"

God answered, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will have a son as I have promised. You will call him Isaac and my covenant will be with him and his descendants. As for Ishmael, I have heard you and I will also bless him and make him a great nation.”

God was gracious to Sarah and, one year later, she gave birth to a son. They named him Isaac, which means “laughter.” Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter and everyone who hears of this will laugh with me.”

But Sarah was concerned about Ishmael. She did not want the son of her servant to share in her son’s inheritance. She persuaded Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Early in the morning, Abraham gave them food and water and told them to go. When they were far out in the desert, they ran out of food and water. Hagar left her son under a bush and went away from him for she could not bear to watch her son die. She began to weep. But God heard the boy crying and called to Hagar. “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. Lift your boy up and take him by the hand for I will make him a great nation.” Then God opened Hagar’s eyes and she saw a well of water. God was with the boy Ishmael as he grew and he became the father of all the Arab peoples. This is the end of the story.

Friends, in these stories we have heard how God made all things and how God made the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Then we heard how Satan deceived Adam and Eve so that they disobeyed God. After that, life was much harder for them and their children. We heard about Abraham, a man God chose to begin a nation that would truly love Him. But even Abraham’s descendants could not keep their agreement to always love and obey God. Just like Adam and Eve, sin separated them from God. God made a promise that one day He would send a person who would be able to help all people and save them from the power of sin.

God said to Eve that one of her descendants would crush the serpent's head. That is, He would defeat the power of Satan.

God said to Abraham that through one of his descendants every nation in the world would be blessed.

God always keeps His promises.

God's promises to Eve and to Abraham came true when God sent Jesus to us. Jesus is the Son of God, but when He came to earth as a man, He came as a descendant of Abraham. Now any person from any nation can ask Jesus to be their Savior.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Why did Sarah tell her husband to have a baby with her servant, Hagar?
4. Do you think Sarah's idea was a good idea?
5. What can we learn from what Sarah did?
6. How did God take care of Hagar? Why did this surprise her?
7. What does this teach you about God and you?
8. What do we learn from this story about God and his promises?

Closing Prayer Faithful God, we thank you that you never forget your promises and you never change your mind. Teach us to trust your Word and trust your timing. Thank you that you are the God who sees even the smallest, lowliest person and that you desire to bless each of us. Amen.

Memory Verse “Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.” Ps. 36:5

#6 JOSEPH Gen. 37:1-28; 39; 41:1-14, 38-43; 42:1-8; 43:27-34; 45:1-15; 50:18-22

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever had to wait so long for something good to happen that you gave up hope?
2. Has someone ever done something terrible to you and you feel you cannot forgive them?

Begin Story

Abraham's son Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons. His favorite son was Joseph. Jacob gave Joseph a beautiful coat. Joseph's brothers were jealous of him. One night Joseph had a dream. Then he said to his brothers, "Listen to the dream I had. We were all in the field tying up sheaves of wheat. Your sheaves formed a circle around my sheaf and bowed down to it." The brothers were very angry. Did this dream mean that they would bow down to their younger brother? They hated Joseph and they looked for an opportunity to harm him.

Joseph's brothers were pasturing their flocks far from home. Jacob said to Joseph, "Go and see if your brothers are safe and if the flocks are alright." When the brothers saw Joseph coming to them, they decided to kill him. They stripped him of his beautiful coat and put him in a dry well. Then one of them said, "What will we gain by killing our brother? Let us sell him as a slave." Just then some traders came along, so the brothers sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. Then they stained Joseph's coat with the blood of a goat and took it to their father. Jacob thought that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. He wept for him with great sorrow.

The traders sold Joseph in the land of Egypt. He became the slave of a man called Potiphar. God was with Joseph and he had great success in all he did. Soon he was put in

charge of Potiphar's household. Joseph was a handsome young man. Potiphar's wife desired him for herself. She tried to force Joseph to lie with her. Joseph knew that was wrong so he refused her. He fled out of the house but Potiphar's wife grabbed his robe. She took the robe to her husband and she accused Joseph of trying to assault her. Potiphar had Joseph put into prison.

God was also with Joseph in the prison. Joseph loved God so he did what was pleasing to God. The commander of the prison saw that Joseph was an honest, good man so he put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners. Joseph remained in the prison for two more years. Then the king of Egypt had a dream. He saw seven fat cows beside the river. Seven thin cows came out of the river and they ate up the seven fat cows. The king was very distressed and demanded to know the meaning of his dream, but no one could tell the king the meaning, not even his wisest men and magicians. The king was furious and threatened to kill all his worthless wise men and magicians! Then the king's chief servant told the king, "There is a certain man in your prison. Two years ago, when I was in prison, his God was able to show him the meaning of my dreams." The king called Joseph out of the prison, and Joseph told the king the meaning of his dream. Joseph said, "God has told you what He is going to do. There will be seven years of good harvests in Egypt. After that there will be seven years of famine." The king saw that the Spirit of God was with Joseph, so he made him ruler over all Egypt.

During the seven years of good harvests, Joseph stored up much grain for the king. When the seven years of famine came he sold the grain to the people. There was famine in Canaan too. Remember the brothers who sold Joseph into slavery? Those older brothers of Joseph came to buy grain in Egypt. They did not know that the ruler was Joseph, but he recognized them. The brothers all bowed before Joseph to beg for mercy, just like the sheaves in Joseph's dream. After some time, they came again with Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin. Joseph could keep his secret no longer. He hugged Benjamin and wept

as he said to them, "I am your brother Joseph whom you sold." The brothers went home and told their father, "Joseph is still alive. He is ruler of all Egypt!"

Old Jacob took all his family and all that he owned and went to live in Egypt. How glad he was to see Joseph again! Jacob died in Egypt as a very old man. Then Joseph's brothers were afraid because of the wrong that they had done to Joseph. They thought surely Joseph would want revenge and have them put to death now that their father was gone. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. You plotted evil against me, but God turned it into good, in order to save the lives of many people." Joseph forgave his brothers and gave them a good place to live. This is the end of the story.

Friends, there is One in Heaven who is greater than Joseph. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Wicked men killed Jesus, thinking it was by their own power. But the death of Jesus was all according to God's plan for good. Jesus allowed himself to be killed so he could take the punishment for all our sins. Jesus rose from the dead, showing that he is God. He is the one who has power over life and death. If we turn to him for forgiveness, we can have a relationship with God again, just like Adam and Eve did in the beginning. We can have eternal life with God forever.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. When Joseph was a young boy, he had a dream from God that showed his brothers bowing down to him, but many years went by before that happened. Many bad things happened to Joseph during those years of waiting. Did Joseph stop trusting God?
4. What can we learn from Joseph's example?
5. How did God use Joseph's difficult experiences for good?
6. Why was Joseph able to forgive his brothers?
7. What do we learn about God from this story?

8. How does this story encourage or strengthen you?

Closing Prayer Mighty God, we praise you that you rule over all the affairs of mankind. You watch over your children with loving care. Thank you that, even when bad things happen, you are in control and cause all things to work for our good if we love and trust you like Joseph did. Amen.

Memory Verse “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Rom. 8:28

#7 MOSES – PART 1 Acts 7:17-34; Ex.3:1 - 4:17; Ex.7-10

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever wondered if there is a special purpose for your life?
2. Have you ever been afraid to try something because you didn't think you were educated or smart enough?

Begin Story

The descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob now lived in Egypt. They were called Israelites because God changed Jacob's name to Israel. A new king of Egypt came to power who did not remember Joseph and all the good he did. The Egyptians forced the Israelites to work very hard as slaves. They toiled in the hot sun making bricks for the Egyptians. They cried out to God to save them from their cruel masters.

300 years after Joseph, the people of Israel had multiplied into a large population. The king of Egypt was afraid that there were too many Israelites. He was afraid they might rise up against the Egyptians so he ordered the midwives to kill all the Israelite boy babies.

Moses was an Israelite baby. Moses' mother hid him. She put him in a basket and hid it in the reeds beside the river. She told Moses' sister, Miriam, to stand nearby and watch. One day, the king's daughter came to bathe at the river. She found the basket and baby Moses. She decided to keep the baby for herself and raise him as her own son. So Moses grew up in the king's palace, and learned the ways of the Egyptians.

When Moses was 40 years old, he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave. He wanted to help his own people, so he killed the Egyptian. Then Moses had to flee from the king. For the next 40 years he lived in a remote, desert place called Sinai.

One day, when Moses was 80 years old, he saw a very strange thing. He saw a bush burning with fire, but it was not destroyed. He thought, "I will come closer and see this strange thing." But God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, saying, "Moses! Do not come any closer! Take off your sandals for you are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I have seen how cruelly my people are treated. I have heard their groaning. I have come down to set them free. I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country."

Moses was very afraid. He told God, "The king will not listen to me! Besides, I am not a good speaker. Please send someone else to do it."

God answered, "I will send your brother Aaron to help you. I will help both of you to speak and teach you what to do."

Moses was afraid but he trusted God and returned to Egypt. His brother, Aaron, went with him. They said to the king, "The Lord, the God of Israel, says, 'Let My people go!'" But the king said, "I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go." Then God said to Moses, "Tell Aaron to take his stick and to throw it down in front of the king and it will turn into a snake." Aaron obeyed, and the king saw the power of God, but he would not let the people go.

So God worked many miracles against the Egyptians. They worshipped the river, so God turned all the water into blood so the people had nothing to drink. They worshipped

other animal gods so the one true God brought plagues of frogs, flies and locusts. They worshipped the wind and rain, so God brought a plague of hail which destroyed all their crops. He brought a plague of disease and the Egyptians were covered with boils. They worshipped the sun, so God covered the sun and brought complete darkness to the land. He showed that he had more power than all their gods and that he was the God of all creation. The Egyptian's animals died and the Egyptians became sick but none of these plagues harmed the people of Israel. Still, the king's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go.

God spoke to Moses again, saying, "Tell Israel that each family is to take a lamb and to kill it. They must take some of the blood and put it on their doorposts. I will go through the land of Egypt. I will kill every first-born male. When I see the blood on your doorpost, I will pass over you and not harm you." God did just as He said. All the first-born sons of the Egyptians died. None of the Israelite first-born died. Finally, the king sent for Moses and said, "Get out! You and all your people leave my country. Go and worship your God."

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Do you think it was just "good luck" that Moses was saved by the king's daughter?
4. Why did God raise up a man like Moses at this time?
5. When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, how did Moses respond?
6. What promise did God give Moses to give him courage?
7. Why did God send plagues upon the river, the animals and the sun?
8. What do we learn about God from this story?
9. What lesson do we learn about obeying God, even if we are afraid?

Closing Prayer Mighty God, we praise you for you are the one true God and you reign over all other beings. We thank you that you see the suffering of your people and you have compassion on us. Thank you that you have a purpose for each of us and want to do good things through us just as you did with Moses. Thank you that you are always with us to help us when we choose to obey you, just as you were with Moses and helped him.

Memory Verse “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.” Ps. 34:17

#8 MOSES – PART 2 Ex.13:21, 22; 14:5-30; 15:22-26; 16; 19:3-20; 20:1-24; 24:12-18

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever thought how wonderful it would be to be loved by someone who wanted to protect you, provide for you and would even die for you?
2. If someone loved you that much, would you want to give them your heart in return?

Begin Story

After the king said, “Get out!” Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt. God went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. But the Egyptians became angry because they had lost their slaves. The king regretted his decision. He ordered all his army with their best chariots and horses to pursue Israel, overtake them and bring them back.

The Israelites came to a great sea that they could not cross. The Egyptians were right behind them! Israel could not escape. They were terrified and cried out to Moses, “Why did you bring us here to die?” Moses said to them, "Don't be afraid! You will see what God will do to save you." Then God parted the water and opened up a path through the

sea. The Israelites passed through the sea on dry ground. The Egyptians tried to follow them, but the water came back over them. All the Egyptians were drowned and Israel was saved!

Moses led the people on into the desert. Soon they did not have enough to eat and began to complain to Moses. "Why did you bring us out here? It would be better to be slaves in Egypt than to die of starvation in the desert." God was patient with them and sent them food. Every morning small flakes like bread appeared on the ground. The people called it "Manna." Soon they began to complain again. "Manna, manna every day. When will we have something else to eat?" God was sorry that the people quickly forgot how good he was to them but still he helped them. Every evening God sent flocks of small birds for the people to eat. When there was no water, God told Moses, "Take your stick and strike the rock and water will come out for the people to drink." God cared for the people of Israel in the desert and provided everything they needed. Even the leather of their sandals did not wear out! God spoke to the people through Moses. He said, "If you listen carefully to me and keep my commands, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the God who heals you."

The Israelites came to the mountain of Sinai. God came down onto the mountain with thunder and lightning, smoke and fire. The people were terrified and said, "Only you talk to us. Whatever God says, you tell us. We will not talk to God directly, for if we do, we will die." Moses told the people, "God has shown you his power so that you will fear him and not sin against him. What does God want from you? He wants you to follow him with all your heart and all your life, to love him and worship him only."

God gave these 10 commands to Moses to tell the people: "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods. Do not bow down to any idol or worship it. Do not use My Name wrongly. Remember the seventh day and keep it holy. Honor your father and mother. Do not commit murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not accuse anyone falsely. Do not desire the possessions of others." Afterwards God wrote these laws

on tablets of stone and Moses brought them down the mountain to all the people. He explained to them that God wanted them to belong to him in a special way. God said to the people of Israel, “Although all the earth is mine, you are to be different. You are not to be like the other nations. If you follow my ways and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession.”

Before Moses died, God said to him, "Someday, I will send another prophet like you from among the Israelites. He will tell the people everything I command. He will write my commands on their hearts." This is where our story ends.

Friends, the prophet who God promised was one who is greater than all the prophets, even greater than Moses. It was the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. He came and taught us that God the Father wants us to belong to him in a special way. He wants us to be his children.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. When the people had problems, what did they do?
4. Do you think they were faithful in their hearts to God?
5. What did God give the people so they would know the right way to live?
6. What did God want from the people?
7. What kind of relationship do you think God wants with you?
8. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Holy God, we praise you that you protect us and provide for us according to your great love. Forgive us for complaining and forgetting your many blessings. Thank you for your commands that teach us the good and right way to live. Help us to follow your ways as a people who belong to you, the one true God. Amen.

Memory Verse “It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.” Deut. 13:4

#9 MOSES – PART 3 Ex. 32; 40:1-16, 34-38; Deut. 8:1-10; 30:15 - 31:6

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Do you think it is a good or bad thing for a man to love his wife so much that he is jealous for her love and does not want her to go after other men?
2. If a wife has a bad habit of being unfaithful to her husband, would you be surprised if the husband keeps taking her back and continues to love her?

Begin Story

One time, Moses was up on the mountain speaking with God. He was gone such a long time that the people said to Aaron, “We don’t know what has happened to Moses. Make us another god to lead us.” The people gathered all their gold and jewelry and threw it into a big fire. Aaron melted the gold and made an idol and the people worshipped it. When God saw how quickly the people had forgotten him, he was very angry. He wanted to destroy all the people because their hearts were so hard and stubborn. They had broken their covenant to obey his commands and brought great shame to God’s name. Moses came down from the mountain and saw that the people were drunk and wild, doing terrible things. Moses was angry too, but Moses prayed for God to show mercy and God agreed.

Instead of destroying the entire nation, God sent a plague into the camp and those who had sinned by worshipping the golden idol died.

God gave instructions to Moses to build a great tent where the people could gather to worship God together. When the tent was completed, the glorious presence of God covered the tent like a cloud. At night, there was a fire in the cloud. This is how God led the people. Whenever the cloud moved, they picked up their tents and followed it. This is how they knew that God was with them.

God promised to give Israel the land called Canaan. The people who lived in Canaan did terrible things that God hated, such as sacrificing children to their gods. Because of their evil deeds, God promised to defeat them and give the land to the Israelites.

When the Israelites reached Canaan, Moses sent twelve men to spy out the land. After 40 days they returned and told what they had seen. Two men, Joshua and Caleb, brought a good report. They said, "The land flows with milk and honey (is rich and fertile). Here is its fruit. The people who live there are powerful. However, do not be afraid of the people. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into this land." But the other ten spies brought a bad report. They said that the people of Canaan were like giants! They made the people of Israel afraid to enter Canaan. Then God became angry because they did not trust in his promise to give them the land. Because of their unbelief, he led them back into the desert where they wandered for the next 40 years.

During those 40 years, God was testing them to see what was in their hearts. He was humbling them and teaching them to trust him and obey him. All those who did not trust him eventually died in the desert and never entered the land that God had promised them.

When Moses was 120 years old, they came again to the land of Canaan. Moses was old and about to die. He reminded the people of God's message. "If you will obey the Lord your God and turn to him with all your heart, he will bless you greatly. If you turn from him and follow other gods, you will be cursed just like the other sinful nations. If

you choose to love and obey God, he will go before you and drive out your enemies. He will give you this land as your inheritance. You must decide what you will do. Be strong and brave, for God will be with you.” This is the end of our story.

Friends, the God of Moses is the one true God. He will not share our hearts with other false gods. Just like the people of Israel, we must choose whom we will serve. He promises to be with us if we will give him our hearts and serve only him.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Why do you think the people turned so quickly from God and built a golden idol?
4. Does it surprise you that God stayed with the people and continued to lead them?
5. Why didn't the people enter Canaan when they first got there?
6. If they had trusted God and entered Canaan, what do you think would have happened?
7. Why did God make the people wander in the desert for 40 more years?
8. When they came to Canaan again after 40 years, what choice did Moses tell them to make?
9. God promises to be with you forever if you belong to him. What does he want from you?

Closing Prayer Mighty God, we worship you for you are a holy and righteous God. Thank you that you love us and desire to lead us into a good and blessed life. Teach us to follow you always and walk in your good path. Thank you for your many great promises. Help us to trust you and be true to you in our hearts. Amen.

Memory Verse “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Prov. 3:5,6

#10 JOSHUA Josh.1:1-11; 2; 5:13 - 6:27; 24:13-31

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever had a task to do that was so great and difficult, it seemed impossible?
2. What did you do?

Begin Story

After Moses died, Joshua became the leader of Israel. Then God said to Joshua, "Now you and all the people get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give you. Just as I was with Moses, I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be careful to follow all my ways as I have instructed you through Moses. Now be strong and brave. Do not be discouraged. I will be with you wherever you go."

It was flood season so the river was very high and fast and the people did not know how they could cross the river. God told Joshua what to do. The priests of Israel had a special box called the Ark. It contained the laws of God on tablets of stone. God told them to carry the Ark into the river. As soon as the feet of the priests touched the water, the river stopped flowing and the water upstream piled up in a great heap! The priests stood in the middle of the riverbed while all the people crossed over into Canaan on dry land.

The people of Israel camped in Canaan near a city called Jericho. Joshua sent two spies into the city. The king of Jericho heard about the men and began to hunt for them. There was a prostitute in the city named Rahab. Rahab hid the spies and said to them, "We have heard how your God delivered you from the king of Egypt and how he has given you victory over the kings on the other side of the river. Truly your God is the God of heaven and earth. I know God is going to give you this land. When you conquer Jericho, you

must remember me and spare me and my family.” The spies told Joshua about Rahab’s faith and Joshua agreed to protect Rahab and her family.

Now Jericho was a strongly fortified city and Joshua did not know how they would conquer it. It seemed impossible. So Joshua asked God, “What are your instructions?” Then God said to Joshua, "I have already delivered Jericho into your hands. March around the city with all the armed men for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets in front of the Ark of God. But do not raise your voices or say a word. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times with the priests blowing the trumpets. Then have all the people give a loud shout. The wall of the city will collapse and the people can go straight into it." So Joshua and the people did as God commanded. The walls of Jericho fell down and Israel conquered the city.

Joshua remembered his promise to Rahab. She became one of the Israelites and followed the ways of God.

Canaan became the land of Israel just as God had promised. When Joshua was old, he called all the people together. He said to them, "Be strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of God. If you serve other gods, you will perish from the good land God has given you. Decide today whom you will serve." The people all promised to serve the Lord. Joshua set up a large stone as a reminder to the people that they had made a covenant with God. As long as Joshua and the elders who served him lived, the people followed the ways of God. But after Joshua died, they began to go their own way and they broke their promise to God. This is where our story ends.

Friends, God never breaks his Word. God kept all His promises to Joshua and to Israel. He gave them a land of their own and He defeated their enemies. God has made a promise to those who believe in Christ and belong to him. He has promised us an eternal home in heaven. He has defeated our enemy, Satan. Just as God gave the Israelites a choice, so God also gives you a choice. You must decide whether or not you will love and obey the true and living God.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Why did Rahab hide the spies of Israel?
4. One of Rahab's descendants became Israel's greatest king, King David. She was famous in Israel's history! Based on this story of Rahab, do you think God will ever reject someone because of their past?
5. Joshua set up a large stone to remind the people of their promise to God. Did they keep their promise?
6. Have you ever made a promise that you wanted to keep, but didn't?
7. Friends, even people who love us will always disappoint us sometime. Who is the only one who will never break a promise?

Closing Prayer Mighty God, we worship you for you are the one who goes before us and fights for us. You are the one who will never leave us nor forsake us. You are the one who can do the impossible for those who trust you. Thank you for you accept all who come to you, regardless of their past. Help us to remain faithful to you always. Amen.

Memory Verse "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." Josh. 1:5

#11 RUTH & NAOMI Ruth 1:1-18; 2:1-16; 3:7 - 4:22

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. If there is one true God and he loves all people, do you think it matters to him what country or tribe you are from?
2. Have you ever had to give up something valuable to you for someone you love?

Begin Story

The people of Israel grew into a large nation. For a long time, Israel did not have a king. God appointed certain men and women to act as judges for the people. They would seek God for decisions and help to rule the people. But sometimes Israel rebelled against God. Then they worshipped idols and false gods like the other nations. God sent war and famine to the people of Israel to try and bring them back to Himself.

During a famine, one family decided to flee to the land of Moab to find food. For ten years they lived in that foreign land. The father died there. The two sons married women from Moab. Then the sons died too. The mother was left with only her daughters-in-law in that foreign land.

The mother of that family was called Naomi. Her Moabite daughters-in-law were Ruth and Orpah. Naomi decided to return to the land of Israel. Ruth and Orpah went on the journey with her. Then Naomi said to them, "Return home my daughters. Why do you come with me? I am not going to have more sons who could become your husbands. God has turned against me." Orpah kissed Naomi and went back to her parents' home. But Ruth clung to Naomi and said, "Don't make me leave you. Where you go I will go. Your people shall be my people, and your God will be my God." So Ruth went with Naomi to Bethlehem in the land of Israel.

Naomi and Ruth were very poor. Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the left-over grain." She went to a field where the workers were harvesting the

barley. The owner of that field was a man named Boaz. He asked his workers about the foreign woman in his field. They said, "She is the Moabitess who came with Naomi." Boaz heard how she had been good to her mother-in-law. He saw that she was a good worker. So he said to Ruth, "Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting my grain. You do not need to go to any other field. You will be safe here." He told his workers not to harm her, but to give her water when she was thirsty and to leave grain for her to gather. That evening Ruth told Naomi about the kindness of Boaz. Naomi said, "May God bless him! He is our close relative."

When a man died in Israel, his nearest relative could marry the dead man's wife. One day Naomi said to Ruth, "I must find a husband for you so that you will have a home of your own. Boaz is our relative. This evening he will be threshing barley. So wash and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go where he is threshing. Notice where he lies down, and after he falls asleep, lie down at his feet." Ruth did just as Naomi had told her. When Boaz awoke he found Ruth at his feet. He knew that she wanted to marry him. So he said to her, "Ruth, I will do everything you ask, for everyone knows that you are a good woman."

Now Naomi had a field that had belonged to her dead husband. Because she was so poor, she needed to sell the field. It was the custom in Israel that the nearest male relative had the right to buy the field if he wanted it. But if he bought it, he also had to take care of the widow and her children. In this case, it meant that whoever bought the field also had to marry Ruth. So Boaz bought Naomi's land and took Ruth as his wife. They had a son called Obed. Then the women living in that place said to Naomi, "Praise God! He has given you a grandson to take care of you. Your daughter-in-law loves you. She is better to you than seven sons."

Ruth worshipped the God of Israel even though she was from a foreign land. God blessed her and her son became the grandfather of David, the great King of Israel. Ruth

was also an ancestor of the one God promised would come to save us from our sins, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the end of our story.

Friends, Naomi and Ruth were poor and could not pay their debt. We are just like them; we owe God a great debt for our sins. We cannot pay this debt. But God the Son became a man and came to earth to pay our debt for us. Just as Boaz had love and compassion for Ruth, Jesus has love and compassion for us. By becoming a man, he became like a close relative to all mankind. He paid our debt with his own life and then rose again. If we believe in him as our Lord and Savior, we can be forgiven of our sin and belong to God's family.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Do you think it was difficult for Ruth to leave her country and her people to go with her mother-in-law back to Israel?
4. How did God take care of Ruth and Naomi?
5. Why did Boaz redeem the land that Naomi owed money on?
6. Why did Jesus die to pay the penalty for your sins?
7. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Merciful God, we praise you that you have love and compassion for all people, even though we owe you a huge debt for our sinful and rebellious ways. Thank you for the example of Boaz and his love for Ruth. Thank you that you have become our close relative and paid the debt for our sin. Thank you that you redeem our lives so we can be free from the power of Satan and sin. Amen.

Memory Verse “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.” Eph. 1:7

#12 David – Part 1 Sam.16:1-13; 17:1 - 18:9; 22:1,2; 24; 2 Sam.5:1-4

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. If you were going to choose a king, what qualities would you look for?
2. If someone promises you something good, but they don’t give it to you right away...and you are still waiting...still waiting... How do you react?

Begin Story

Saul was the first king of Israel, but he disobeyed God. So the Spirit of God left Saul and did not help him any more.

There was a young boy named David who looked after his father's sheep. He trusted in the Living God. He was not afraid of danger. One day a lion took one of the sheep. David killed the lion and saved the sheep. He made beautiful music and sang praises to God. David was just a boy, but he loved and trusted God with all his heart. God sent the prophet Samuel to put special oil on David’s head and tell him that someday he would be the next king of Israel after Saul. David had seven older brothers, all strong and handsome. But God did not choose any of them. God said, “Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

At that time, there was war between the Philistines and Israel. The Philistines had a giant called Goliath. He called to Israel and said, "Choose a man...if he is able to kill me, then we will be your slaves but if I kill him, you shall be our slaves." The men of Israel were afraid of Goliath. King Saul promised great wealth and his daughter in marriage to

any man who would kill Goliath, but no one would fight him. Then young David said, "Who is this Philistine who does not know God? He should not threaten the army of the Living God!" David was not afraid of him. God could help him kill the giant.

King Saul gave David his own coat of iron armor and his helmet and his sword. But it was so heavy, David could not even walk around! David said, "I cannot go in these. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." So David took off the armor and chose five smooth stones. With only his sling in his hand, he went out to meet Goliath. When Goliath saw that David was only a boy, he was insulted and mocked David. But David said, "Today the whole world will know there is a God in Israel." David cast a stone right at the giant's head. Goliath fell to the ground and David ran to him. He took Goliath's own sword and cut off his head. So the army of Israel was able to defeat the Philistines.

At first King Saul was pleased with David because he saved Israel. The people of Israel loved David and sang songs about him. He became a great soldier and leader. Then Saul became jealous of David. He wanted to kill David. One day David was making music for Saul on his harp. An evil spirit entered Saul. He picked up his spear and threw it at David, but it missed him and stuck in the wall. After that Saul tried to kill David many times. Saul's son Jonathan and many Israelites helped David, but he still had to flee to the desert to escape from Saul. About 400 men who were also running from the king's authority joined David and he became their leader.

Saul and his army went to capture David in the desert. One day, David's men were hiding deep inside a cave when Saul entered the cave to relieve himself. David's men said, "Now is your chance to kill Saul!" But David said, "No, the Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the one who God anointed to be king." Instead, after Saul left the cave, David cried out to Saul, "See, why do you accuse me of trying to kill you? I had my chance but I spared your life. I have done nothing against you. May the Lord judge between us." So after that, Saul felt bad and stopped trying to kill David.

The Philistines came to fight Israel again. King Saul and Jonathan were killed in the battle. Then the people made David the king of Israel. He built his palace in the city of Jerusalem. From the time the prophet Samuel told David he would be king, to the time he actually became king, was about 15 years. God made David great and gave him power to defeat all the enemies of Israel.

God said to David, "I took you from looking after the sheep, and I made you king over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went and I have destroyed your enemies. Now I will make your name famous. After you die, I will make one of your descendants into a great King. His kingdom will never end." This is where our story ends.

Friends, the promised descendant of David was the Lord Jesus Christ. Many, many years after David, he came to earth as a human baby. Evil men killed him but he rose again. He is the eternal God who has no beginning and no end. His rule over all creation will never end. Someday all the enemies of God will be judged for their sin, but if we give the Lord Jesus our hearts and accept him as our King, we will live with him forever.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Why did David have the courage to fight Goliath?
4. God told David he was the chosen king when he was still very young. But then David had to wait for 15 years for that prophecy to come true, while he was hiding in caves and running for his life. What do you think that was like for David?
5. What do you think David might have learned during that time?
6. What do we learn about God in this story?

Closing Prayer Wonderful God, we praise you because you help the humble and weak, making them strong and mighty according to your will. Thank you for the example of

David, a shepherd boy who trusted you and loved you. Help us to also trust you and love you. Give us courage to live a life of faith as David did. Amen.

Memory Verse “The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?” Ps. 27:1

#13 David – Part 2 2 Sam.11:1 - 12:25; Ps.51:1-17

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. When you make a mistake or do something bad, what is easier to do? Try to hide it or openly confess what you have done?
2. When we hide our mistakes, it is because of fear. What are the things we are afraid of?

Begin Story

One day, when Israel’s army was off to war, King David was walking on the roof of his palace. He saw a beautiful woman having a bath. David wanted her for himself. The woman's name was Bathsheba. She was the wife of Uriah, who was a soldier in David's army. Uriah had gone away to fight the enemies of Israel. Bathsheba became pregnant. David wanted to hide his sin, so he sent a message to the captain of his army. He told the captain to send Uriah home so he could sleep with his wife. Uriah came home but he would only sleep outside. He said, “How can I eat and drink and lie with my wife when my men are suffering at war?” Still David did not confess and he tried again to hide his sin. This time he sent a message to the captain of the army and told him to make sure that Uriah was killed in the war. After the time of mourning for Uriah’s death was over, David took Bathsheba to be his own wife. The terrible thing that David did made God angry.

God sent a prophet named Nathan to talk to David. Nathan told David this story. “A poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb. He raised this lamb like his own child. It even ate and slept with him. This man had a rich neighbor who had many animals. One day a traveler came to the rich man’s house. Instead of killing one of his own sheep to feed the traveler, the rich man stole the poor man’s one lamb, killed it and served it to his guest.”

When David heard this story, he got very angry and declared, “This man deserves to die! He must pay a great price for doing such a terrible thing and having no pity on the poor man.”

The prophet Nathan said to David, “You are the man! God says to you, ‘I gave you everything! Was it not enough? Why did you despise my word and do what is evil in my sight? Because you killed Uriah and took his wife, violence will always be in your family.’”

David was filled with grief. He cried, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

David’s heart was broken because he had sinned against God. He prayed, “Forgive me, God, for you have proven to me that my heart is indeed evil. Wash me and give me a clean heart. Teach me your truth and your wisdom. Do not leave me but change my heart and strengthen me.”

Because David was humble and repented of his sin, God let him live. But God is a just God and a holy God. God showed David that he cannot just ignore sin and say, “It doesn’t matter.” Because of David’s sin, the first son of David and Bathsheba died. But God also showed mercy. David and Bathsheba had another son named Solomon. When Solomon grew up and became king, God blessed him with great wisdom and wealth because he was a humble man who did not seek for power. This is the end of our story.

Friends, God hates sin and he can never say, “It doesn’t matter.” When there is sin, there is also God’s judgment. But God is also full of compassion and mercy. To pay for our sin, God sent his own son to take our punishment. When we trust in Jesus to take

away our sin, God forgives us and washes us clean. God the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us. By the power of God's spirit, he gives us strength to live a new kind of life that pleases him.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Why did David try to hide his sin?
4. Does it surprise you that God forgave David even for adultery and murder?
5. Do you think there is anything that God won't forgive if we ask him?
6. If sin must always be judged, how can God forgive all our sins? (hint: Who paid the penalty for our sin so we can be forgiven?)
7. If God is willing to forgive us when we sin against him, how should we respond to those who sin against us?
8. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Merciful God, thank you that you are willing to forgive every sin if we are willing to humble ourselves and confess our sin. Thank you that it is not your desire to punish us, but to draw us to repentance so you can forgive us. Help us to be like David who was honest before you and repented of his sin. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to live pure and holy lives that bring honor to you. Amen.

Memory Verse "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Ps. 51:10

#14 Elijah the Prophet of God 1 Kings 16:29 – 17:24; 18:16-39; Luke 9:28-36

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Do you ever feel like you are alone when you are trying to do what is right and follow God?
2. When you feel alone, what do you do?

Begin Story

After David and Solomon, other kings ruled in Israel. One was a very wicked king named Ahab. He had an evil wife called Jezebel. She killed many of the followers of God, and she forced the people to worship the idols of Baal. Elijah was a great prophet of God. He went to King Ahab and said, "In the Name (by the power) of the Living God of Israel, there will be no rain for the next three years." So God sent a great famine upon the land of Israel. Elijah felt very lonely in this land where there was so much evil. However, God cared for his servant Elijah. He sent Elijah to a place where he could drink from a stream. Every day, God sent birds to bring food for Elijah to eat.

After some time, the stream dried up and God said to Elijah, "Go to the town of Zarephath. I have commanded a widow there to take care of you." When Elijah found the widow and asked for food and drink, she replied, "I only have enough for one small meal. After I eat it with my son, we will surely die." Elijah told her to obey God and make a small loaf of bread for him. If she did, God would bless her. The widow did as Elijah said and God did a great miracle. Every day, there was more flour in her jar and the oil in her jug never ran dry! Later, the widow's son died and the widow blamed Elijah. But Elijah said, "Give me your son." Elijah cried out to God and the boy was returned to life. Then the widow said, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that God's word is true."

In the third year of famine, Elijah called Ahab and all the people to Mount Carmel. He said to them, "How long will you keep from making your decision? If the Lord is God, then follow Him; but if Baal is god, then follow him." The people killed an animal as a

sacrifice to Baal. Then Elijah said to the priests of Baal, "Call on your god, and I will call on the Lord God. The one who answers by fire, He is God."

All morning the priests of Baal called to their god. They chanted and danced around their sacrifice and cut themselves with knives. But there was no fire. At noon, Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder! Perhaps your god is away traveling, or perhaps he is sleeping." The priests of Baal shouted even louder and danced harder and slashed themselves with swords and spears according to their custom. Evening came... but there was still no response from their god.

Finally, Elijah prepared his sacrifice. He dug a ditch around the sacrifice and poured four large jars of water over the sacrifice and the wood. "Do it again!" Elijah commanded. Three times, they poured water until the sacrifice and the wood were all completely soaked and water ran from the ditch. Then Elijah prayed to God. "O Lord, God of Israel, show the people that you are God and you are turning their hearts back to you again." Immediately fire fell from heaven! It burned up the sacrifice and the water as well. And all the people cried out, "The Lord - He is God!"

When Elijah was old, he was taken to be with God. 700 years later, when the Lord Jesus Christ was on the earth, Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus on a mountain. The disciples of Jesus saw the three men. Jesus' body was suddenly shining with glorious light. A voice came from heaven. It was God the Father. The voice said, "This is my son. Listen to him!" Even Moses and Elijah were listening to Jesus because Jesus is greater than all the prophets and teachers who have ever lived. All the prophets and teachers of God who lived before Jesus were longing for the day he would come to earth. They knew that when Jesus came, people could finally see the goodness and power and love of God with their own eyes.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?

2. What happened in this story?
3. How do you think Elijah felt when the queen had so many other prophets of God executed?
4. How did God answer Elijah's prayers?
5. What was God's purpose for sending the fire down from heaven? What did he want from the people?
6. Do you think God wants all people to know him?
7. Why did Moses, Elijah and all the people of God before Jesus long for the day he would come to earth?
8. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Mighty God, we praise you for your reign over all creation, over all the earth and over the unseen, spiritual realms. We thank you for you are the God who hears and answers our prayers. Thank you that it is your desire for all mankind to know you and your truth. Amen.

Memory Verse "For you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods." Ps. 97:9

#15 THE BIRTH OF JESUS John 1:1-14; Matt.1:18-25; 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-32

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever found yourself in a bad situation and thought, “There is no hope for change?”
2. Do you think there is any hope for this world to become a better place?

Begin Story

For many stories now, we have been hearing about the one who was promised by God to come into the world. This promised one, the “Christ,” would be a light for all mankind. This person was Jesus, God the Son. Jesus was alive even before he came to earth to be born as a human baby. He was with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit before the world began. Jesus took on human form and came to earth as a baby to reveal God to us, and to show us how we can become children of God again. This is the story of how it happened...

Jesus was born in the land of Israel many years ago but He was no ordinary baby. His mother, Mary, was a virgin. Mary did not conceive this baby by a man, but by the power of God.

Mary was already betrothed to a man named Joseph. When Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant, he was very upset. He loved Mary and did not want to expose her to public shame so he planned to send her away quietly. But God sent an angel to tell Joseph in a dream, “Don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her child was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will have a son and you are to name him Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.” Joseph woke up and did as the angel said.

At that time, all the people were ordered by the rulers to go to their family home to be registered. Joseph and Mary traveled to Joseph’s home village, Bethlehem, even though Mary was about to give birth. There were no rooms available at any inns so they were forced to take shelter in an animal stable. That night, Jesus, the Creator of the universe, was born in a hay trough!

Out in the hills, some shepherds were watching their sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared to them and they were terrified! The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people! Today a Savior is born to you; he is Christ the Lord.” The angel told them how to find the baby. Suddenly the night sky was filled with many, many shining angels and they were singing, “Glory to God! Peace to men for God is showing them his favor.” The shepherds rushed to find the baby Jesus and worship him.

When Jesus was eight days old, his parents took him to the temple in Jerusalem. There was an old man there named Simeon who loved God. God had promised Simeon that he would not die until he saw the Messiah born in Israel, the one who would be the Savior of all men. When Simeon saw the baby Jesus, he knew this was the One! With great joy, Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God saying, “Now I can die in peace. My eyes have seen the one God promised would come. He is a light for all the people of the world.”

While Jesus was still a baby, some holy men arrived from the East. They were looking for Jesus. They told the king (called Herod), “We have seen his star in the eastern sky and have come to worship him.” This made the king angry and afraid. Who was this baby they were calling king? Would he grow up and take away his kingdom? He wanted to kill this baby! But the king said to the holy men, “Search for the child. When you find him, report to me so that I can worship him as well.” The holy men followed the star and found Jesus. They were filled with joy. They brought him gifts and worshipped him. But before they could go back to tell the king where to find the baby, God warned them in a dream to go home by a different way. This is where our story ends.

Friends, the birth of Jesus was part of God’s plan from the very beginning. Do you remember when the world first began in the garden? God promised Eve that one day her descendant would crush Satan and take away his power. God promised Abraham that one day, through his descendant, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God promised

David that his descendant would have a kingdom that would never end. All these promises were talking about Jesus. He is the one who came to earth to bring us back to a relationship with God. He is the one who came to die for our sins so anyone who trusts in him can have forgiveness and be blessed with eternal life. He is the great King who will reign over heaven and earth forever!

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Why do you think the angel told the shepherds that this was news of “great joy for all people?”
4. Why was Simeon so happy to see the baby Jesus?
5. Think about the stories you have already heard and the promises that God made to people in the past – people like Eve, Abraham, Moses and David. What did these promises tell us about Jesus and what he would do?
6. When Jesus was born, what hope did he bring into the world?
7. What hope can Jesus bring to your life?
8. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Father in heaven, thank you for sending your son into the world to be our Savior. We praise you that, even from the beginning of the world, you had a plan to rescue us from our sin and bring us back into relationship with you. Thank you that have not left us without hope, but have sent the promised Messiah just as you said. Amen.

Memory Verse “But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:10,11

#16 BAPTISM & TEMPTATION OF JESUS Matt. 3:1,2; 3:11 - 4:11; John 1:29-34**Preparing Hearts and Minds** (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever wondered what you must do to do have God be pleased with you and truly love you?
2. Have you ever felt frustrated because it seems impossible to be good enough to please God?

Begin Story

Before Jesus began his ministry, there was a prophet in Israel called John the Baptist. He warned the people that they should turn from their evil ways and worship the One True God. Those who believed John were baptized in water. Baptism was the sign that they wanted God to forgive their sins and clean their lives. (Sin is anything which does not please God.) John also said, "After me will come one more powerful than I. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit of God."

Then Jesus came to the river where John was baptizing the people. Jesus had never sinned but he wanted to be baptized as an example for us to follow.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he exclaimed to the crowd, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" You see, in those days, the people would make sacrifices to God of an animal, like a goat or a sheep, so that God would not punish them for their sin. But the blood of an animal could never really take away their guilt. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he knew that Jesus would become the great sacrifice. Only the blood of God's perfect, sinless son could take away the guilt of

all people. That is why John called Jesus the “Lamb of God.” John was so excited to finally see the one whom God had sent to earth to take away our sin!

John did not want to baptize Jesus because he felt unworthy. But Jesus insisted. When Jesus was baptized, an amazing thing happened. As Jesus came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit of God descended upon him in the form of a dove. God the Father’s voice came from the heavens and said, "You are my son whom I love; I am well pleased with you."

Immediately after his baptism, the Holy Spirit of God led Jesus into the hot, desert wilderness. He had no food for 40 days and nights and grew very weak. During this time, Satan came to offer Jesus many temptations. Satan said, “If you are truly the son of God, use your power to turn these stones into bread.” Jesus answered with a quote from scripture, “Man does not live only by bread, but he lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Then Satan took Jesus to a high place and said, “If you are truly the son of God, throw yourself down from here. Doesn’t God’s word say the angels will rescue you?” Jesus answered again with a quote from scripture, “Don’t put the Lord your God to the test.” Finally, Satan took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory. Satan said, “All this has been given to me and I will give it to you if you will only bow down and worship me.” Jesus answered, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”

Then Satan left him and angels came to help him. From that time on, Jesus began his ministry. He did many miracles and people saw that he had God's power.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. When did Jesus get baptized – before or after his ministry began?
4. When the Father’s voice came from heaven, how do you think that made Jesus feel?

5. Did God the Father love Jesus before or after his ministry began?
6. Do you think you need to do any great things for God before he will love you?
7. When Jesus came up out of the water, what descended upon Jesus so that he could have the strength and power to serve God?
8. When Satan came to tempt Jesus, what did he say to try and put doubt in Jesus' mind?
9. What did Jesus use to answer Satan?
10. If you have believed in Jesus, you are adopted into God's family. If Satan tries to put thoughts in your mind that you are not God's child or that God does not love you, what can you do to fight back against those lies?

Closing Prayer Father in heaven, thank you for your son Jesus who takes away the sin of the world. Thank you that you have made a way through Jesus to adopt us into your family so we can be your children. Help us to remember that you love us with a love that never changes. Just as Jesus died and rose again, we thank you that we too can die to our old life and have a new life through the power of your Holy Spirit within us. Amen.

Memory Verse “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’ Matt. 3:17

#17 JESUS & THE SAMARITAN WOMAN John 4:4-30, 39-42

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever felt embarrassed or ashamed around someone because you thought they were better than you in some way?
2. If that person treated you with respect and kindness, would that surprise you?

Begin Story

Jesus had begun his time of ministry. He called a group of twelve men to become his disciples and follow him. One day, they were passing through a neighboring province. The people who lived there were considered low caste and the Jewish people usually avoided this area. But Jesus decided to pass through this area. It was about mid-day and Jesus was tired from the journey and sat down by a certain well to rest. He was alone for he sent his disciples into the town to find food. Soon a local woman came to draw water from the well. When she came near, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?”

The woman was surprised and replied, “You are not one of us. How can you ask me for a drink? Your people do not associate with us.”

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw water and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our ancestor who dug this well and drank from it himself as did his sons and flocks?”

Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become a fountain of living water springing up within to eternal life.”

The woman was very interested and said, “Please give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus told the woman, “Go call your husband and come back.”

“I have no husband,” the woman replied.

“You have answered right,” Jesus said. “The fact is, you have had five husbands and

the man you live with now is not your husband.”

The woman quickly changed the subject. She said, “Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain but your people insist the place of worship is in Jerusalem.”

Then Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship God the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.” Jesus explained to her that God is spirit. God the Father does not care about outward things like temples and rituals. He looks at the heart. He is looking for people who are true worshipers, people who worship him with sincere hearts.

The woman said, “I know that God’s Christ is coming. When he comes he will explain everything to us.”

Jesus declared, “I am the Christ who speaks to you.”

At this time, Jesus’ disciples returned from the town. They were shocked to see Jesus talking with a woman, especially a woman from a low-caste group.

The woman left her water jar and ran into the town to tell her people saying, “Can this man be the Christ, the Promised One?” The town people came and invited Jesus to remain with them and teach them. Many of the people in that town believed that Jesus was the Christ because of the woman’s testimony. Because of Jesus’ teaching, many more people believed in him.

Then the town people said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said. Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. In those days, it was the custom for women to come in a group to draw water in the morning while it was still cool. Why do think this woman came alone around mid-day?
4. Why was she surprised that Jesus was talking to her and even asking her to get water for him?
5. Jesus said he would give people “living water” and they would never be thirsty again. Do you think he was talking about natural thirst or spiritual thirst?
6. Until now, Jesus had not told anyone that he was the Christ. Does it surprise you that the first person he revealed himself to was an outcast woman?
7. Do you think it took courage for the woman to run to the people of her village and tell them about Jesus?
8. What was the result of her testimony?
9. What do we learn about Jesus from this story?

Closing Prayer Jesus, thank you for your great love for all people, no matter if they are rich or poor, male or female, respected or outcast. Thank you that you offer living water to satisfy anyone who comes to you. We worship you with sincerity, for you do not look on outward religious acts but you can see the truth in our hearts. We ask you for courage like the Samaritan woman so we can testify to others of your love and goodness, for you are the hope of the world. Amen.

Memory Verse “God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

John 4:24

#18 3 STORIES OF JESUS & WOMEN John 8:2-11; Luke 8:43-48; Luke 7:11-17**Preparing Hearts and Minds** (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever felt that men are more important to God than women?
2. Do you think God notices the problems and cares of women?

Begin Story

Friends, let me tell you three short stories that show us the attitude Jesus had towards women. In the culture of his time on earth, women were treated very badly and without respect. But Jesus did not conform to his culture. He came from heaven to show us what God is truly like and how to live in a way that pleases God.

One morning, Jesus was teaching a crowd of people in the temple courtyard. Suddenly, a group of religious leaders and teachers brought in a woman they had caught in the act of adultery. They forced her to stand before the crowd and accused her. They asked Jesus, “The law says such a woman is to be stoned. What do you say?”

The men did this because they were trying to trap Jesus and force him to say something contrary to their law and make trouble for him. But Jesus did not say a word. Instead, he bent down and started to write with his finger in the dirt. Finally he stood up and said, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the one to cast the first stone.” And again, he stooped down to write on the ground.

One by one, all people went away. When Jesus was alone with the woman, he said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

“No one, sir,” she answered.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Now go and leave your life of sin.”

Another time, such a crowd of people had gathered around Jesus that they almost crushed him as he walked. A woman was there who had been bleeding for twelve long years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors, and had spent all her money. But instead of getting better, she had only grown worse. When the woman heard about Jesus, she thought, "If only I touch his clothes, I will be healed." So she pressed her way through the crowd and touched the edge of his garment. Immediately the woman's bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked the people, "Who touched my clothes?"

Jesus' disciples answered, "How can you ask, 'Who touched me?' Don't you see the people crowding against you?"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had touched him. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at Jesus' feet. She was trembling with fear for, in those days, a woman was considered unclean if she was bleeding and she was not allowed to be in contact with other people. Before all the people, she told Jesus the truth. Jesus did not rebuke her. Instead, he said to the woman, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Our final story is about the day Jesus and his disciples were entering a town called Nain. As they drew near, they saw a dead person being carried out from the town with a large crowd following. The dead person was the only son of his mother and she was a widow. Who would care for this woman now? When Jesus saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

Then Jesus went up to the coffin and the men carrying it stood still. Jesus touched it and said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"

The dead man sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him back to his mother. The people were filled with awe and praised God. They said, “God has come to help his people!” News about Jesus spread all over the countryside.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in these stories?
2. What happened in these stories?
3. How would you describe the way Jesus treated the women in these stories?
4. What was different about the way Jesus treated these women compared to the way the women were normally treated in that culture?
5. Jesus came to demonstrate to all mankind the character and heart of God. What did you learn about God’s heart for women?
6. How do you respond to the knowledge that God sees you, he knows you and cares about you?

Closing Prayer Dear Jesus, thank you for your great love and compassion. Thank you that you see each person and care about our needs. We praise you for you are God over all the earth and you do not follow the ways of earthly customs and laws. Your ways are higher and better than all the ways of mankind. Teach us to know and follow your ways, especially in how we treat one another. Amen.

Memory Verse “Then he said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.’”

Luke 8:48

#19 JESUS FEEDS THE HUNGRY Mark 6:30-44; John 6:25-40

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Do you think it is possible to be rich with plenty of food and still feel empty inside?
2. What do you think all people hunger for the most?

Begin Story

Large crowds of people were following Jesus because they saw how Jesus healed sick and crippled people. In fact, there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples did not even get a chance to eat. So Jesus took his disciples in a boat to a remote, quiet place to rest. But the people saw this and many ran on foot to the place where they were going. When Jesus got there, he saw the masses of people waiting and he had compassion on them. He could see that they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things.

Many hours passed and it grew late. The disciples were worried and said to Jesus, “Send these people away! There is nothing in this remote place. Send them to the surrounding villages to buy something to eat.”

Jesus answered, “You give them something to eat.”

The disciples were shocked. “It would take eight month’s wages to buy enough bread for each person to have only one bite to eat! Are we supposed to spend that much to feed them?”

Jesus told them to go and see what they could find. When they returned, one of the disciples said, “Here is a boy with five small loaves of bread and two small fish. But how far will this little food go among so many?”

Jesus said to his disciples, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of green grass in that place and the people sat in groups of 50 and 100. There were about five

thousand men plus the women and children. Jesus took the loaves of bread and gave thanks to God. Then Jesus broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to give to the people. Those who were seated took as much bread as they wanted. Jesus did the same thing with the two small fish.

When the people had finished eating and all had enough to eat until they were satisfied, Jesus said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that remain. Let nothing be wasted.”

So the disciples gathered the broken pieces and filled twelve baskets with pieces of bread that remained. After the people saw this miraculous sign that Jesus did they began to say, “Surely this is the One who was promised to come into the world.”

Jesus knew that the people wanted to come and make him their king by force, so he slipped away into the hills. When the people found Jesus later he said to them, “You are only looking for me because I fed you. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” He was telling them that they should not just think about their physical needs, but about their spiritual need as well.

“What works does God require us to do?” the people asked.

Jesus answered, “The work God requires is this: to believe in the one God has sent.” Then Jesus began to teach the people saying, “The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life. Anyone who comes to me will never go hungry, and anyone who believes in me will never be thirsty...I am the bread that came down from heaven. My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life. And I will raise that person up at the last day. I will never drive away anyone who comes to me.”

When the people heard these words they began to grumble among themselves saying,

“Isn’t he Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”

“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus said. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them. I am the bread of life. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever.”

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. How did Jesus react to the crowds that were following him, even though he was tired and wanted to rest?
4. Jesus told his disciples to feed the people. Why didn’t they want to do it?
5. Have you ever felt like you could not do something God asked you to do?
6. If you begin to obey God, even if you don’t think you have the ability or the things you need, what do you think God will do?
7. Why do you think Jesus compared himself to bread and called himself the “Bread of Life?”
8. What did Jesus promise to those who eat the Bread of Life?
9. What do you think it means to “eat” the Bread of Life?
10. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Jesus, we thank you for your compassionate heart that never turns anyone away. Thank you that you came to earth to meet our need for spiritual life. You are the bread of life, and you have asked us to share this life with others. Just as you

multiplied the bread and fish so your disciples could feed others, you will be faithful give us the ability and the resources we need to do what you ask. Help us to have the faith to look to you and not to our own ability or resources. Amen.

Memory Verse “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.’” John 6:35

#20 2 STORIES OF HEALING Mark 2:1-12; John 9

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. If someone claimed that he was God in human flesh, would you think he was crazy?
2. What would you accept as proof that he really was God?

Begin Story

When Jesus walked the earth, he did many wonderful acts of healing – so many that we could not tell about all of them. We are going to hear about just two of them.

One day, Jesus was inside a house teaching the people about God. It was so crowded, there was no more room, not even at the door. Four men brought a paralyzed man to the house, but they could not get inside because of the crowd. So they dug a hole through the roof and let the man down through the hole on a mat. Jesus said to the sick man, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Some Jewish leaders got very angry with Jesus. They said, "God is the only One who can forgive sins!" They would not believe that Jesus

was from God. Then Jesus said to the man, "Get up, pick up your mat and go home!" The man was healed! He got up and walked out so everyone could see.

This is the end of the story. Jesus showed them that He was from God. He has the authority to forgive our sins just as He has the power of God to heal our sicknesses.

Our second story is about a man who had been blind from birth. Jesus' friends thought that blindness was a punishment from God. But Jesus told them this idea was wrong. He explained that this man was born blind for a special purpose, so that they could see God's power to heal him. Jesus spat on the ground and made mud. He put the mud on the blind man's eyes. Then Jesus said to him, "Go and wash!" The man went and washed, and came back seeing!

The man's neighbors asked, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Others said, "No, it only looks like him." But the man insisted, "I am the man."

"Then how is it that you can see?" they demanded.

He answered, "The man they call Jesus did this."

The leaders of the temple came and tried to question him because they were angry. They even questioned the man's parents. The man's parents were afraid of being outcast from the community so they said, "He is an adult. Let him speak for himself."

The leaders told the man that Jesus was bad and sinful, but the man answered, "I only know one thing -- I was blind, but now I see!"

"How did he do it?" they asked, still angry.

"I have already told you, but you do not listen," he answered.

Furious, the leaders attacked him with great insults and threw him out of their temple community. Later on, Jesus came and found him sitting alone. Jesus asked the man, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

"Who is he, sir? Tell me so that I may believe in him."

Jesus said, "You have now seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you."

The man exclaimed, “Lord, I believe!” and he worshipped Jesus.

This is the end of the story. Friends, this man was physically blind. But each one of us is spiritually blind until God opens our eyes. We cannot see the ways of God. But Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in these stories?
2. What happened in these stories?
3. Why do you think the religious leaders hated Jesus so much?
4. What did Jesus care more about – pleasing the leaders and rulers or helping the common people?
5. Who was actually blind, the blind man or the religious leaders? Why?
6. Sometimes Jesus did things that were against the religious customs and this made the leaders angry. What do you think Jesus was trying to show them?
7. What do we learn about God from these stories?

Closing Prayer Wonderful Lord Jesus, we praise you that you have both the power to forgive our sins and to heal our bodies. You care about all our needs. We thank you that come to bring light and spiritual understanding to our dark world. Give us eyes to see your truth and understand who you are. Amen.

Memory Verse “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”
Matt. 4:23

#21 2 STORIES OF RESURRECTION John 11:1-45, 53; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43**Preparing Hearts and Minds** (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever wondered why God did not answer your prayer when you wanted him to?
2. When you are full of sorrow, do you ever wonder if God cares or if he is listening?

Begin Story

Today we will hear two stories about Jesus, the giver of life.

Jesus had three very dear friends: Mary, her sister Martha and their brother, Lazarus. Lazarus became sick, so the sisters sent word to Jesus to come quickly to their village. But Jesus did not go to him at once. After waiting two days, Jesus said to his disciples, "Lazarus is dead. I am glad that I was not there; it will help you to believe on me. But let us go to him now."

The disciples did not want to go back to Judea, where Lazarus lived, because they knew the Jews there wanted to stone Jesus. But Jesus insisted, explaining that we must continue to do God's work while we have time in this life.

When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. The sisters were grieved because Jesus had not come to heal him. In fact, Mary did not even come out of the house to greet him. But Martha came out to meet Jesus and said, "Lord, I know that if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but even now, I know God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus said, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha replied, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live forever, even if his body dies. Do you believe this?"

"Yes Lord," Martha said. "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." Then Martha went to call her sister, Mary.

When Mary saw Jesus, she fell at his feet weeping. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her tears and the great sorrow of all the friends who had gathered, he also wept. "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

They took Jesus to the tomb where Lazarus' body was laid. It was a cave with a large stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," Jesus said.

"But Lord," Martha said, "it has been four days and the body will have a bad odor!"

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you, if you believe you will see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone and Jesus prayed to God the Father. Then he cried out, "Lazarus, come out!"

The dead man came out, with strips of burial cloth still wrapped around his hands and feet and face. Jesus said, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

After that, many of the Jews who had come to mourn with the sisters saw what Jesus did and they put their faith in him. But from that day, the religious leaders plotted to kill Jesus.

At another time, Jesus was teaching to a crowd of people. One of the temple rulers named Jairus fell at Jesus' feet and begged him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so she will be healed and live."

But soon some men from Jairus' home came and said, "Why bother the teacher anymore? Your daughter is already dead."

Jesus ignored what the men said and turned to Jairus. “Don’t be afraid. Just believe.”

When they got to Jairus’ home, Jesus saw a great commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly for the dead girl. Jesus said, “Why all this great noise? She is not dead, only sleeping.” The people laughed at him for saying this.

Jesus ordered everyone out of the house but only allowed the girl’s mother, father and three of his followers to go in with him. He took the girl’s hand and said to her, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”

Immediately, the girl stood up and walked around. She was twelve years old. Everyone was completely astonished! Jesus instructed them to keep the story quiet and to give the girl something to eat. This is the end of our story.

Friends, death is Satan's greatest weapon, but Jesus has power even over death. Those who believe and follow him need not fear death. Jesus is stronger than Satan, sin and death.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in these stories?
2. What happened in these stories?
3. Why didn’t Jesus come immediately when he heard that Lazarus was sick instead of waiting until he was dead?
4. At first, Martha and Mary were upset and disappointed that Jesus did not come quickly. What do you think they learned about trusting Jesus?
5. Do you think Jesus understood and cared about the sorrow that they felt?
6. What great promise did Jesus make to Martha and all believers?
7. When Jairus and Jesus heard that the daughter was dead, how did Jesus react?
8. What do we learn about Jesus from these stories?

Closing Prayer Mighty King Jesus, we praise you for you have power over all life and death. You are the giver of life and the sustainer of all life. We thank you because our lives are in your loving hands. Thank you for the promise of eternal life that you give to all who believe in you and follow you. Amen.

Memory Verse “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies.’” John 11:25

#22 3 STORIES OF SOVEREIGNTY Mark 4:35-41; Mark 5:1-20; Matt. 14:22-36

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever been afraid of something bigger and more powerful than you?
2. Would you have peace if you had a close, dear friend who was more powerful than anyone or anything?

Begin Story

When Jesus walked this earth, many people did not want to believe him nor accept him as Lord. That is because God gave mankind the freedom to choose him or reject him. But nature and the spirit world must always yield to his power. We will see that in the next three stories.

One day, Jesus and His disciples were at a great lake and Jesus said, “Let us cross over to the other side.”

Suddenly, when they were out on the lake, a fierce storm blew up. Great waves washed over the boat and it began to fill with water. Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat, sleeping on a cushion. His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus got up and said to the wind and the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Immediately the storm ceased. Jesus said to His disciples, "Why are you frightened? Have you no trust in me?"

The disciples were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"

When they crossed the lake, Jesus landed in a region called Gadarene. There, a man with an evil spirit came to meet him. This man lived among the tombs. The demons gave him great strength and no one could bind him, not even with chains. Often, he had torn apart the chains and the iron shackles from his feet. Night and day he suffered, wandering naked among the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

Jesus commanded, "Come out of him, you evil spirit!"

The man fell on his knees and shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"

Then Jesus asked the demon inside him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." The demon begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. Instead, the demons begged to be sent into a large herd of over 2000 pigs that were feeding on a hillside nearby. Jesus granted them permission and the evil spirits came out of the man and entered into the pigs. (You see, God had told the Jewish people of those days not to eat pork.) The pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Those tending the pigs ran to the town and reported what had happened. When the people came to see, they found the man sitting quietly, dressed and in his right mind. This made them afraid. When they found out about the pigs, they begged Jesus to leave their region.

As Jesus was getting into his boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him but Jesus told him, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.” So the man went and told people what Jesus had done for him and the people were amazed.

On a third occasion, Jesus’ friends were once again crossing the lake in a fishing boat. Jesus had sent them on ahead so that he could spend time alone on a mountain praying to his Father. It was a dark night and a terrible storm came up on the lake. The boat was far from land and the winds blew hard against it, keeping them from reaching the shore. Late into the night, Jesus went out to them, walking on top of the water.

When the friends saw Jesus, they were terrified for they thought it was a ghost. But Jesus immediately said to them, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

One of Jesus’ friends named Peter said, “Lord, if it’s you, tell me to come to you on the water.”

“Come,” Jesus said.

Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus. But then Peter looked at the wind and became afraid. He began to sink and cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “Why did you doubt?”

When they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

This is where our stories end. Friends, Jesus has power over all the spirit world and over all creation. Let us trust him and not be afraid.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in these stories?
2. What happened in these stories?
3. Why do you think the disciples were terrified when the wind and waves obeyed Jesus?
4. If you were in the boat, how do you think you would feel about Jesus after you calmed down?
5. When the demon-possessed man saw Jesus, how did the demons in him react?
6. Why do you think the people of that region wanted Jesus to go away, even after he delivered the possessed man?
7. God always gives us a choice - to cling to our sinful ways or turn to him as our Lord. What choice have you made?
8. Peter was able to walk on water for a short time. What made him start to sink?
9. Sometimes God calls us to do things that seem impossible, similar to walking on water! What must we do so that we will not become fearful and sink?
10. What do we learn about Jesus from these stories?

Closing Prayer Lord Jesus, we praise you for you are the ruler over all creation. Even the wind and waves obey you! All spiritual beings must submit to your authority! Thank you that you are able to help us when we are overwhelmed by problems that are too big for us. Thank you that we can find shelter in your loving arms. Amen.

Memory Verse “...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.” Phil. 2:10,11

#23 JESUS & RELIGION Matt. 11:28-30; 15:1-20; 23:13-28; John 6:28,29

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever wondered why there are many different religions with many different rules?
2. Have you ever felt that practicing all the rituals and keeping all the rules of religion is a burden that is hard to bear?

Begin Story

In the culture of Jesus’ time, people who wanted to gain spiritual knowledge would study under a special teacher (guru). If you followed the teachings of that guru, it was said that you took his “yoke” upon you, just like an ox is put into the yoke of its master. The yoke of teaching became your guide for how to live and how to worship God. Usually, there were so many rules, it was impossible to keep them all correctly! Have you ever felt ashamed and frustrated because you could not do everything correctly? That is often how people feel when they try to follow a religion.

In our next story, we will see that Jesus was a very unusual teacher.

One day, he said to his disciples, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Then some other teachers and religious leaders came to Jesus and asked, “Why do your disciples break the traditions of our elders?” They were offended because they saw that Jesus’ disciples did not keep all the many, many rules of their religion – things like how to wash their hands, how to use the ceremonial cups and bowls, the proper things to eat or not eat, and so forth. Because the religious leaders kept all these rules, they thought they were clean and righteous in God’s eyes. They taught that people who did not keep all these rules were unclean and defiled.

Jesus answered them, “Why are you breaking the command of God for the sake of your traditions? Don’t you see that you are concerned about all these traditions and rules that were created by men, but you are ignoring the things that God truly cares about? God is sad because you honor him with your lips, but your hearts are far from him.”

The disciples said to Jesus, “Don’t you know that the teachers and leaders were offended when they heard you say these things?”

Jesus did not care that they were offended. He said, “Don’t you see? It is not what goes into a man that makes him unclean – like eating with unwashed hands or eating certain foods. It is what comes out of his heart that defiles him. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, sexual sins, theft, lies and gossip. These are what make a person unclean.”

Later, Jesus confronted the religious leaders again. He said to them, “God is not pleased with you! You are like blind men trying to lead others. You look like good, holy men on the outside but inside you are full of wickedness.”

But the teachers and religious leaders did not want to listen. They were proud of their positions and high status in the community. They did not want to admit that they

were full of evil on the inside and ask God for forgiveness. So they continued to teach the people that they must please God by keeping all the traditions and rules of their religion.

This is the end of our story. Friends, religious works can never make us righteous. These are only outward things. God looks at our heart and he sees how we truly are on the inside. The good news is that God loves us in spite of our sinful hearts. That is why he sent Jesus into the world. Jesus came to die and pay the penalty for our sin. When we believe in him and ask him to forgive us, he washes us clean by the power of his own blood. He puts his own Holy Spirit into us. Then we are pleasing to God! This is God's free gift of salvation. We cannot earn salvation by being very spiritual and religious. We must simply believe and receive God's gift. That is why Jesus said, "You will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." This is truly good news!

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Which is easier, to observe some special ritual or to forgive your enemy?
4. Which is more important to God?
5. Why do you think it was so hard for the religious teachers and leaders to listen to Jesus?
6. Since we cannot change our own sinful hearts, what has God done for us?
7. Why do you think Jesus said that his yoke was easy and his burden light?
8. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Gracious Father, thank you that you see our weakness and our sin, yet you love us still. Thank you that you do not require us to earn our salvation through religious works, but have provided salvation as a gift through faith in your son Jesus.

Thank you that you do not leave us to struggle with sin, but you send us your Holy Spirit to help us live according to your ways. Amen.

Memory Verse “For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast.” Eph. 2:8,9

#24 THE NEW COVENANT Luke 22:14-34; Matt. 26:20-35; John 13:1-17, 34-38; John 10:17,18; John 14: 1-14

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. If your closest friend were about to die, would you be careful to listen to her last words?
2. What qualities do you think make a good leader?

Begin Story

This is the story of what Jesus said and did on the last night before he was crucified.

Jesus knew the time was near when he would be killed. It was a holy week for the Jewish people and Jesus’ enemies knew he would come to Jerusalem for the feast so they plotted to arrest him there. They secretly arranged for one of Jesus’ disciples to betray him for money. Jesus’ other disciples did not want him to go for they were afraid. But Jesus had told them, “No one can take my life from me. I lay it down by my own choice. I am like a good shepherd; I lay down my life for my sheep. I have the authority to lay it down and to take it up again.” So, even though Jesus knew what terrible things were about to happen, he set his face with determination to go to Jerusalem.

When Jesus and his disciples got there, they met in a room to share the special meal. Jesus did something very unexpected to show them his love. He took off his outer cloak, wrapped a towel around his waist, got a bowl of water and washed each of his disciple's dusty, dirty feet! When he got up, he said, "Do you understand what I have done? I have set an example for you. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. This is my new command to you; love each other just as I have loved you."

As Jesus began the special meal, he took a cup of wine and said, "This cup represents my blood which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. It is the symbol of God's new covenant with you." Then he took some bread, broke it and gave it to them. He said, "This bread is a symbol of my body which is broken for you. Every time you eat this special meal, remember me."

The disciples did not understand that Jesus was talking about his death. After a while, they began to argue about which one of them was the greatest. They thought that, because Jesus was so popular, one day he would be king. Since they were his friends, surely he would give all of them important positions in his new government. But Jesus told them, "The kings of this world are prideful about their authority and they rule over people. You are not to be like that. The greatest among you must be one who serves others. I am one who serves."

Jesus told them, "I am going away and you cannot follow me. Don't be sad and afraid. I am preparing a place for you in my Father's house. Someday I will come back and take you with me so you can be with me forever."

Thomas, one of the disciples, said, "We don't know where you are going. Show us the way."

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father

except through me. If you really knew me, you would know God the Father as well.”

Another disciple said, “Lord, show us the Father!”

Jesus answered, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. The Father and I are one. Believe in me. My Father and I will come and live in you through the Holy Spirit. I won’t leave you behind like orphans. We will speak to you and teach you and show our power through you. We will give you the power to live a life of love that is pleasing to God.”

Jesus also warned them that there would be a time when other people would persecute them and try to kill them. But he said, “Don’t be afraid. Even though you will have trouble in this world, I have overcome the world and I have overcome Satan. You will have peace in your heart because my Spirit will be in you. No matter what happens, I will give you the victory in the end.”

After the meal, Jesus and his disciples went out in the night to a garden where Jesus liked to pray. This is the end of our story.

Friends, Jesus explained that God wants to make a new covenant with us. This means our relationship with God no longer depends on our ability to keep God’s laws. Instead, our relationship is now based on God’s love and mercy.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. The disciples had left their homes and followed Jesus for three years. They expected him to start a revolution and become a king and give them important positions. How do you think they felt when he said he was going to die?
4. What did Jesus teach them by example?

5. Do you think Jesus could have stopped his death and defeated his political and religious enemies?
6. Why did Jesus willingly go to Jerusalem, knowing he would be arrested and killed?
7. Do you remember the stories you heard about Abraham and Moses and the people of Israel? What was the covenant that God made with them?
8. Were they able to keep their part of the covenant?
9. Jesus said that God would make a new covenant with us by his own blood. How is this covenant different and better than the old one?
10. What are some of the promises that Jesus made to his followers?
11. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Precious Jesus, thank you for your example of great love! Teach us to love one another as you have loved us. Teach us to serve others just as you came to serve all of mankind. Thank you that you came to earth to show us the heart of God and to show us the way back to God our Father. Amen.

Memory Verse “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” John 15:12

#25 ARREST/TRIAL/DEATH/RESURRECTION Mark 14:32 - 15:39; John 20:10-29

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. If someone had offended you, abused you and betrayed you, how do you think you would feel about making a great sacrifice to help them?
2. What would motivate someone to die to save people who are evil, selfish and rebellious?

Begin Story

Today we will hear the story of what happened at the end of Jesus' life on earth.

Jesus proved by the miracles he did that He was God's Son, but the Jewish leaders were jealous and wanted to kill Him. Jesus knew one of his own followers had betrayed him, telling them where they could find him at night. The leaders stirred up a mob and came to the garden where Jesus was praying. They were carrying torches, swords and clubs. When they arrested Jesus, all his followers deserted him and ran away in fear.

Jesus was first taken to the house of their high priest. There, many people told false stories about Jesus but their statements did not agree. Jesus refused to answer them. Finally, the high priest asked Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the Son of God?"

Jesus answered, "I am, and one day you will see me sitting on the throne in heaven."

The high priest was enraged because Jesus claimed to be God. He tore his clothes and shouted to the crowd, "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?"

They all agreed that Jesus should be executed. They spit on him, blindfolded him and beat him fiercely.

Early in the morning, Jesus was bound and taken to the palace of the Roman governor, called Pilate. Pilate questioned Jesus and could see that he was a good and innocent man. He tried to convince the mob to let him go free but they shouted, "Crucify

him! Crucify him!” Pilate wanted to satisfy the mob, so he ordered his soldiers to torture Jesus and nail him to a cross to die.

Jesus was forced to carry his own heavy, wooden cross to the hill where the Romans crucified criminals. He was crucified between two thieves. The thieves were executed for their own crimes, but Jesus had committed no crime.

Even though it was noon when Jesus was dying, darkness covered the land for three hours. Finally, Jesus cried out, “It is finished!” and he breathed his last. At that moment, a great earthquake shook the earth.

The dead body of Jesus was laid in a tomb and large stone was rolled over the entrance. On the third day, some women went to the tomb. They saw the stone was rolled away and the body of Jesus was gone. One of them, Mary Magdalene, began to cry. She bent down and looked into the tomb. Two angels sat where the body of Jesus had been. Then a man said to Mary, "Who is it you are looking for?" Mary thought he was the gardener. She asked him for the body of Jesus. Then he said her name, "Mary." Immediately she turned and saw that it was Jesus! He was alive! Jesus said to her, "Go to my friends and tell them I am alive." Mary went to the disciples with the news, “I have seen the Lord!”

One day later in the week, the disciples were gathered in a locked room for fear of the Jews. Suddenly, Jesus was there with them! He said, “Peace be with you!” He showed them his hands and side where he had been pierced. The disciples were overjoyed. Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you. Just like the Father sent me into the world, now I am sending you.” Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

One of the followers, Thomas, was not there so he doubted his friends when they told him that Jesus was alive. Then Jesus came again. This time, he let Thomas touch his wounds. Jesus said to Thomas, “Stop doubting and believe. Now you have seen and believe. Blessed are those who won’t get a chance to see with their own eyes, yet they believe.” This is where our story ends.

Friends, Jesus allowed himself to be crucified for your sins and mine. All the sins of all the people in the world were placed on Jesus and, for a terrible moment, God the Father turned his face away and allowed his beloved Son to suffer all the pain and sorrow that sin brings. He allowed his beloved son to pay the penalty for our sin so that we could be forgiven and set free!

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. Why did the Jewish leaders want Jesus dead?
4. Jesus' followers thought he was going to lead a great revolution, overthrow the Romans and become king of Israel. How do you think Jesus' followers felt when they saw him arrested, and then executed like a criminal?
5. Do you think Jesus was a helpless victim or was he in control?
6. How was Jesus' death a part of God's great plan to save all men and women?
7. By rising from the dead, what did Jesus prove?
8. What does Jesus want his followers to do?
9. What do we learn about God from this story?

Closing Prayer Precious Jesus, we worship you for you are the good shepherd who gave his life for his sheep. We are in awe that you allowed yourself to be arrested, tortured and crucified by the very ones you came to save! We praise you that death could not hold you down but that you rose again, with power over all life and death. Thank you that you offer eternal life to all who are willing to come to you and ask for your forgiveness. Amen.

Memory Verse “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” John 10:11

#26 THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11; Acts 2

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever thought a situation was going to turn out one way, then been completely surprised when it turned out differently?
2. Have you ever struggled with a sin in your life and wondered if you will ever have the power to change?

Begin Story

After Jesus rose from the dead, he showed himself to his followers for 40 days and gave them many convincing proofs that he was alive. In fact, he appeared to over 500 witnesses. Jesus’ followers asked him when he was going set up his new kingdom.

Jesus explained to them, “It is not for you to know when my kingdom will be established. Only God the Father knows. But you will receive power when God the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in your home area and throughout the whole world.” Jesus met with his followers on a mountain and told them, “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and tell people everywhere about me and teach them to obey everything that I have taught you. I will always be with you, even to the end of the world.”

After this, Jesus was taken up into a cloud right before their eyes. They were still staring up at the sky when an angel appeared to them and said, “Why are you standing here looking at the sky? Someday, Jesus will come back in the same way you saw him go.”

Ten days after Jesus went up to heaven, all of his followers were together in one house. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky like a great wind. The people saw something like flames of fire. The flames separated and came to rest on each person and they were all filled with the Spirit of God as Jesus had promised.

Those followers of Jesus were in the city of Jerusalem. There happened to be many people in Jerusalem from all over the world that week because it was a festival time. When Jesus' followers received the Spirit of God, they spoke to the people in their own languages. They told them about Jesus who had died and risen again. It was so amazing, that many people wondered, “How is it that these local people are speaking our language?” But others mocked them and said, “These people have had too much wine!” Peter got up and said, “We are not drunk! What you see and hear is the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the gift that God promised us long ago. It is a promise for you and for all who come after you. Each one of you must turn away from his sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven and you will receive the Holy Spirit.” That day, 3,000 people believed Peter. They were baptized with water as a sign of cleansing from sin. They received the Holy Spirit too and began to follow the ways of Jesus.

Sometimes they ate bread and drank together in a special meal. Jesus had commanded his followers to do this. The broken bread reminded them of the body of Jesus which was broken in death as punishment for our sins. The drink reminded them of the blood of Jesus which was poured out to cleanse us from our sin.

Because of their new covenant relationship with God, the new believers experienced the presence of God’s Holy Spirit in their hearts. God gave them a new heart and a new attitude. They loved God and they began to treat one another with love, like a big family. They were called a Church (or Christian Church). They shared their money and

possessions and helped those in need. Everyday they praised God and prayed together. The disciples taught them about Jesus.

The disciples did many miraculous wonders by the power of God's Spirit and the number of believers grew each day. It was not always easy to be a follower of Jesus. They faced much persecution and even death. But the Holy Spirit was with them. He gave them peace, courage and the power to love and obey God.

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. What happened in this story?
3. When Jesus went back to heaven, did he leave his followers alone?
4. In the stories you heard earlier, we learned that God always wanted a deep, personal covenant relationship with all men and women. But each time, people failed to keep their part of the covenant because their hearts grew hard and cold towards God. When the Holy Spirit came, what did he give the people who believed?
5. What are some of the things that happened when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers?
6. After the Holy Spirit came, how did their lives change?
7. Was the Holy Spirit only for the people who lived long ago in this story?
8. What is God's promise to you?
9. Why do you think the followers of Jesus had peace and courage, even when they were persecuted?
10. Have you decided if you will repent of your sin and ask Jesus to cleanse you? Have you asked him to send his Holy Spirit to give you a new heart so you can love and serve him as your Lord and Savior?

Closing Prayer Holy Spirit, help us to always remember the cross of Jesus and the covenant he made that brings us back to God. Thank you for your wonderful presence in the hearts of your people. Thank you that you live inside us to give us power to live according to God's ways, to live a life of love and goodness. Thank you that you give us peace in all circumstances. Thank you that you give us courage to tell others about Jesus. Amen.

Memory Verse “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

27 THE RETURNING KING & FINAL JUDGEMENT Matt. 25:31-46; 1Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:11 - 21:8

Preparing Hearts and Minds (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. Have you ever been upset that evil people seem to get away with doing wrong and there does not seem to be any justice for those who are poor or oppressed?
2. What would a perfect king be like?

Begin Story

We are coming to the end of God's story. This part of the story is still in the future, but God has already told us how the story ends so we can be ready!

Someday, a mighty trumpet will sound and suddenly the heavens will open. All people everywhere will see Jesus descending from the clouds as a mighty King. The first time Jesus came to earth, he came as a humble servant. He came to lay down his life to

save all who believe in him. But when he comes again, he will come in great glory and those who do not know him will be terrified, for he is coming to judge all people. Because he knows everything in our hearts, he is able to judge with perfect justice. Nothing can be hidden from him. But, my friend, if you have trusted in Jesus and asked him to forgive your sins, you have nothing to fear. You will not face God's judgment because Jesus has already paid the price for all your sin. When you see Jesus face to face, it will be a time of great joy!

Let me ask you, if you knew when a thief was going to enter your house, wouldn't you get ready and be prepared? Jesus is going to come at a time when many people are not ready and are not prepared. His return will catch them by surprise, just like a thief who comes in the night.

King Jesus will separate all the people of the earth just like a shepherd separates sheep from goats. To those who have obeyed his word by loving others, he will say, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Enter into your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world." To those who have disobeyed his word and lived selfish, sinful lives, he will say, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal flames prepared for the devil and his demons."

When Jesus returns, believers who are alive will be caught up to meet him in the air. Those believers who have already died will get new bodies. We will all have new bodies that no longer get sick or grow old. There will be no more disease or suffering! There will be no more sin. No more evil! Satan himself will be bound and thrown into the lake of fire forever.

Jesus is coming back to take us to our eternal home where we will be with God forever. There will be a great feast with much rejoicing, singing and dancing! Together with all the angels, we will be praising and worshipping Jesus, thanking him for his great sacrifice that took away our sin and brought us home to heaven.

Jesus will be on his throne and, with a great and powerful voice, he will declare, “Now God will live among his people, face to face. They will be his beloved people and God himself will be among them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old things have passed away. Behold, I make all things new!”

Today, the Spirit of God is speaking to your heart. He is saying, “Come. If you are thirsty, come. I am like a fountain and I give you water for your thirsty soul. There is no price for this water. It is my free gift. I am Jesus. I invite you to come to me.”

Friends, we must come to Jesus while he is inviting us to come and receive forgiveness and peace. Then we will be ready when he returns as the great King. We will be ready to welcome him with great rejoicing!

Understanding & Application (pause recording after each question for discussion)

1. What happens in this story?
2. Do you think it's important to be ready for Jesus' return?
3. Why will many people be surprised when he comes again?
4. What is going to happen to Satan and all his demons?
5. Why will Jesus be able to judge all people fairly?
6. Who will go to heaven to be with God forever?
7. What did Jesus do just so you could be with him forever?
8. Does this help you understand how valuable you are to God?
9. What is God's greatest desire for you?
10. Does this story about our future give you hope and strength?

Closing Prayer King Jesus, we praise you for you are the eternal God. We worship you for you will return someday soon for your people. You are the great judge who knows the hearts of all men and will judge each with fairness and truth. Thank you for your mercy

and forgiveness for all who call upon your name. Help us to keep our eyes on your return and live this short life in a way that brings honor to your name. Amen.

Memory Verse “The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” 1 John 2:17

God’s Truth For You Facilitator Notes

Notice to facilitators: The learning process for oral learners takes place as the listeners explore the characters and events of the story thru discussion. They discover the meaning and application of the story for themselves thru this process. It is not your role, as a facilitator, to “teach” them the meaning. You are simply to ask good questions that help the listeners stay focused on the story and discover the possible meanings for themselves. It is, however, important for you to clearly understand the main points of the story personally. This will help you keep the conversation going in the right direction. You may need to prompt the discussion with additional questions if the discussion has moved too far away from the main points.

If you are training other facilitators who are not literate, you will need to go through the stories with them and make sure these points are understood.

Here we have listed the main points of each story. Try not to let the discussion end until these points have been covered.

#1 How Everything Began

1. There is one good God who created all things. He is not part of creation, but he is separate from his creation.
2. Mankind is unique from everything else in creation because mankind was created in the image of God for loving relationship with God.

#2 Satan and the Spirit World

1. God is not the cause of evil. Evil is the result of rebellion against God.
2. God and Satan are not equal. God is far more powerful and will destroy Satan and all his demons someday.

#3 Sin Begins

1. Because Adam and Eve believed Satan's lies, they also rebelled against God. Disobeying God is called sin.
2. Sin separated Adam and Eve from God and they became evil. Since then, all mankind has been separated from God because of our evil nature but God still loves us.

#4 Abraham Obeys God

1. God had a close friendship with Abraham because Abraham trusted God and obeyed him, even when it wasn't easy.
2. God made a covenant (contract) with Abraham, promising to bless him and promising that one day all the nations of the world would be blessed thru one of his descendants, the Messiah.

#5 Isaac and Ishmael Are Born

1. If we stop trusting God to keep his promise and take matters into our own hands, we only make the situation worse.
2. God sees each person, even the poor and low caste. He loves each person and cares about their life.

#6 Joseph

1. When we are trusting God, God uses even the bad things in our lives for a good purpose.
2. Sometimes our difficulties are preparing us and shaping us so God can use us in a greater way.

#7 Moses – Part 1

1. God saw and cared about the sufferings of his people and did mighty things to deliver them.
2. God had a great purpose for Moses and promised to help him fulfill that purpose.

#8 Moses – Part 2

1. God is looking for people who will walk with him in a close relationship, trusting him and obeying his commands on how to live in a right way.
2. God desires to bless his people, to protect them and provide for them.

#9 Moses – Part 3

1. In spite of all God did for them, the people of Israel broke their covenant with God and turned away from him.
2. God is merciful and patient. Sometimes he uses difficult circumstances to bring us back to himself.

#10 Joshua

1. God will accept anyone who comes to him, regardless of their past or their position.
2. Even if we desire to always obey God, we will fail and break our promise to Him at times. We need God's forgiveness and His help. He is the only one who never breaks a promise.

#11 Ruth and Naomi

1. God accepts all people, no matter what nation or tribe they come from.
2. We owe God a debt for our sins that we cannot pay. Jesus pays that debt for us so that we can be at peace with God and belong to his family.

#12 David – Part 1

1. David had great courage and strength because of his close relationship with God.
2. God has a plan and purpose for each life. When God delays those plans, it is because he is preparing us and teaching us.

#13 David – Part 2

1. No matter what we have done, God will forgive us if we confess our sin, repent and ask God for forgiveness.
2. God cannot just ignore sin. He is also holy and just. We need Jesus, the one who pays the price for our sin for us.

#14 Elijah the Prophet of God

1. God is far greater than all other beings and powers.
2. It is God's desire for all mankind to know that He is the one true God.

NEW TESTAMENT**#15 The Birth of Jesus**

1. Jesus was God come to earth in human form.
2. Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promises to send a Savior for all mankind.

#16 The Baptism & Temptation of Jesus

1. God the Father loved Jesus because Jesus was His son, not because of what Jesus did.
2. When Satan wants us to doubt our position as a beloved child of God, we must hold on to the truth that God has given us in His Word.

#17 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

1. Jesus knew this woman was an immoral and outcast woman, yet he treated her with kindness and dignity.
2. Jesus promised "living water," – the Holy Spirit who would come to live inside us and satisfy our spiritual thirst for God.

#18 3 Stories of Jesus and Women

1. Jesus did not conform to the local culture in the way He treated women, but instead, He followed the ways of God.
2. Jesus saw the condition of women and helped them with compassion and respect.

#19 Jesus Feeds the Hungry

1. If God asks us to do something, He will provide the resources necessary to do it.
2. Jesus is spiritual "bread" – food for our souls. When we have a relationship with Him, He brings eternal life.

#20 2 Stories of Healing

1. Jesus healed people physically to show that He had divine authority.
2. Jesus wants to give us spiritual sight so we can know truth.

#21 2 Stories of Resurrection

1. Jesus has all power over life and death.
2. All who believe in Jesus will have eternal life.

#22 Stories of Sovereignty

1. Jesus demonstrated that He has authority over all creation, including the supernatural realm of spirits.
2. God has given us the freedom to choose to accept Him as our Lord or reject Him.

#23 Jesus & Religion

1. Practicing the rituals and good works of religion can never make us holy on the inside.
2. We cannot earn God's forgiveness. Forgiveness must be received as a free gift from God by putting our trust in Jesus.

#24 The New Covenant

1. Jesus came to earth to die for our sins so that we could have a new kind of relationship with God – a new covenant – that is based on God's love and mercy, not on our works.

2. Jesus left us an example of how to live according to God's ways by serving others with humility and love.

#25 Arrest/Trial/Death/Resurrection

1. Jesus was not a helpless victim. He had the power to stop his crucifixion but chose to lay down his life for mankind because of His great love.
2. Jesus' resurrection showed his authority and power to give eternal life to all who believe on Him.

#26 The Holy Spirit Comes

1. Even though Jesus has gone back to heaven, He has not left us alone. The Holy Spirit is now inside us.
2. The Holy Spirit works inside us to give us love for others, peace in all circumstances and boldness to share the good news of Jesus.

#27 The Returning King & Final Judgement

1. Jesus will return to earth again someday to judge all mankind and abolish all evil.
2. All believers will live with God forever in perfect place of great joy.