

GOD'S
WORD



INTRODUCTION

The Bible is one story...God's story. Woven throughout God's story is His overarching mission—to make His name great so that people from every nation, tribe, and tongue might know and worship Him. God set His mission in motion before the creation of the world and will see it through to completion. The exciting thing is that God's story is still unfolding in our day and God invites our families to be a part of it.

As parents, you have the privilege of communicating God's story to your children. This resource gives you a model for sharing God's Word with your family in an engaging, ongoing way that consistently shapes their view of God—His character, His heart, and His purposes—as well as their view of themselves—their identity, their blessings, and their purpose.

HOW TEACHING GOD'S WORD THIS WAY BENEFITS YOUR CHILDREN

Children develop a biblical world view where God is central -- they exist for God, to bring Him glory, not the other way around. This understanding leads to a strong, secure identity as characters in God's story who are deeply loved and called into the service of the eternal King.

Tracing how God was at work throughout Bible times shapes how children view all of history. They learn that world events are not random, but an intentional strategy of God to advance His purposes. This understanding provides children with a new lens for looking both at current events and situations in their own lives.

As children discover a biblical pattern of God blessing His people for the greater purpose of blessing the nations, they gain a balanced perspective on why God blesses them. This understanding will influence both their attitudes and choices about how they leverage their time, talent, and resources.

As children observe how God used Bible characters in every generation to advance His purposes, they begin to view their individual purpose in light of God's plan. Knowing that God has a valuable role for them gives children confidence and direction. Their desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves is satisfied as they join with God in what reaching the nations looks like for their generation.

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

This God's Word resource will have three components that complement one another.

1. A set of 52 Bible Story Activities that help your family trace God's global heart and purposes throughout Scripture and discover your part in God's story.
2. A list of 24 memory verses focused on God's global purposes that help you grow a heart for the nations in your children (option to download the memory verses formatted as cards).
3. A downloadable set of Bible character cut-outs. These correspond to the Bible story activities and serve as a visual reminder of how God invites people to join in His ongoing story.

TESTING

You will be testing five of the 52 Bible Story Activities. Each story includes background information about the Bible passage, a related family activity, discussion questions, and a prayer prompt.

IDEAS FOR USING BIBLE STORY ACTIVITIES

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- Do one Bible story activity each week to develop a habit of studying God's Word in an ongoing way.
- Background information is for you as parents, but if you have older children, feel free to include some of the information to introduce or teach the activity.
- Introduce each Bible passage in a way that reinforces that God is the main character of the Bible. Use words similar to this: "Today, we are going to read another part of God's story. I wonder how God will use a boy named David."
- Read the Bible passage to your family aloud. If your children are good readers, divide the passage into smaller sections and take turns.
- Include everyone in the family activity. Learning comes through doing!
- Make sure to discuss both questions. They are designed to draw out God's purpose and help you apply the principles to your own family.
- Use the prayer prompt to talk to God as a family. Be sensitive to ways God begins to answer your prayers.

God's Promise Put in Motion: Abraham

BACKGROUND

Many years after the tower of Babel, God chose to speak to a man named Abram (later called Abraham) who lived in Haran. God called Abraham to leave his home and go to a land that God would show him. God did not tell Abraham where he was headed, but He did make an everlasting covenant, an unbreakable promise, with Abraham that would be pivotal in the rest of human history. God would bless Abraham so that he would be a blessing, the same purpose God has in blessing His people today. God would also form the nation of Israel from Abraham's family. Most importantly, God declared to Abraham, "in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 12:3) Jesus, the Savior of the world and ultimate fulfillment of the promise to bless all the families of the earth, would come through the line of Abraham.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Begin by reading with your family: Genesis 12:1-3; 17:5-8, 19; 22:17-18

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Teaching Time: 12 minutes

Materials: small bags of treats for one third of the people in your family. Put enough treats inside for everyone to get a treat if those receiving treat bags share. For example, if you have 6 people in your family, fix two bags with enough treats for six people.

Option: For small families, use stuffed animals or dolls in this demonstration, invite friends to join you, or do this activity with a group from church.

After dinner, tell your family that you have prepared treats for them. Begin passing out the treat bags and apologize for running out of bags. Discuss ways to make sure that everyone receives a treat. Have those who received bags share treats with those who didn't. Talk about how God's reason for blessing Abraham and his family was so that he would bless others around him.

DISCUSS

1. If you did not receive a treat bag, how did that feel? If you did receive a treat bag, was it because you did something to deserve it? Did God bless Abraham because God loved him more than the other people living around him? Did Abraham do something special to receive God's favor? What did God expect Abraham to do with his blessings?
2. In our world today, one third of people have never had the opportunity to learn about God's gift of salvation through Jesus. Our family knows and loves Jesus. Why did God bless our family in this way? What blessings (material things, talents, knowledge, experiences, spiritual life) do our family have that we could pass on to other people?

PRAY

Pray that believers worldwide would actively seek to participate in God's purposes to bless all the families of the earth.

A Young Boy's Refusal:

David and Goliath

BACKGROUND

Before David became a king, he was just a shepherd boy, but God saw in David what He did not see in any of David's older, bigger brothers. David loved the Lord and understood God's heart for all nations to worship Him. Upon arriving at the Israelites' camp, David encountered the sneering Goliath. David would not stand for God's name being profaned among the Gentile (non-Jewish) nations. Too small to even wear the king's battle armor, David took on Goliath with just a few stones. David declared not only that the battle was the Lord's, but that through it, the whole world would know there was a God in Israel. (v. 46)

BIBLE PASSAGE

Begin by reading with your family: 1 Samuel 17

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Teaching Time: 20 minutes

Materials: (optional) measuring tape or ruler, small soft object

Read 1 Samuel 17:4 and explain that David was an average-sized boy and Goliath was a giant man who stood 3 m (9 ft 9 in) tall. Measure or estimate this height. Let each person compare his own height to Goliath's. Share with your children that David was not trained in battle. Goliath had weapons, but David only had stones and a sling. He was not strong enough to wear armor to protect himself. Act out what it might look like to wear or carry something that is too heavy. Explain how it seemed impossible for David to defeat a giant, but God looked past the obvious and saw something in David that He could use for His purpose. David knew of God's sovereignty and power. David was fighting for God's honor and he saw the outcome of the battle as the Lord's. Choose one person to be Goliath and stand 2.5 m (8 ft) away. Have the others be David. Take turns tossing a soft object at Goliath. When Goliath is hit, he must fall down. Switch roles if you have time. Finish the drama with this question and answer:

Parent: Why did David want to fight Goliath?

Children (shout): So the whole world will know there is a God in Israel.

DISCUSS

1. Read 1 Samuel 16:7. How does God view us? How does this change our attitude when God calls us to do something?
2. David couldn't stand for God's name to be defamed among the nations. His view of God led him to make decisions of courage. How do you feel when you hear others dishonoring God's name in the world? What is your response when you hear these things?

PRAY

Ask God to reveal how your family can be used to proclaim God's name.

A King's Declaration:

Daniel and Darius

BACKGROUND

During the time that God's people were exiles in Babylon, God proclaimed His name in this foreign land. Daniel was a believer in the true God. Highly respected in the eyes of King Darius, Daniel was made a trusted leader in Babylon. Other leaders became jealous and passed a law for the purpose of getting rid of Daniel. The men who convinced the king to pass this law turned Daniel in when he disobeyed it. Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. However, God spared him from the lions and Daniel emerged unharmed the next day. Because of the wonders he had seen, King Darius wrote to all peoples, nations, and men of every language that they must fear and revere the God of Daniel. God's name spread. God continues to bless His people because of His great love for them, but He also continues to bless them in light of His purpose to be known in every nation!

BIBLE PASSAGE

Begin by reading with your family: Daniel 6

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Teaching Time: 10 minutes

Materials: ball, wall

Find a wall outside your house or inside to bounce the ball off of. Have family members line up side by side, facing the wall. Explain that the ball represents God's blessing. As you throw the ball at the wall share that God first blessed Daniel by sparing him from the lions. When it bounces off, the next person in line should catch it. As the next person bounces the ball off the wall for the next person to catch, say that the blessing was passed to King Darius. Have him bounce the ball off the wall for the next person to catch. After the last throw, share that God's blessing then extended to all peoples when King Darius wrote to them telling them of the God of Daniel. You can repeat the activity as many times as you want. Have your children state how the blessing was passed on as they throw the ball towards the wall and catch it.

DISCUSS

1. What three people or groups of people were blessed by God? How did God bless them? What was the greater purpose of God's blessing Daniel?
2. King Darius learned about God by watching Daniel. What can others around you learn about God by watching your family?

PRAY

Pray that God would use your family to demonstrate who God is to others.

Savior of the World:

The Samaritan Woman

BACKGROUND

As Jesus traveled with His disciples, He had to go through Samaria. He encountered a Samaritan woman at the village well. Despised because of her race, looked down upon because of her gender, and avoided because of her sin, this woman had little value in people's eyes. Yet, Jesus sought her out, offering her living water that would satisfy her deepest need and explaining that He was the Messiah. After the woman shared about her encounter with Jesus, the villagers came to see for themselves. Knowing that Samaritans were coming to meet Him at that very moment, Jesus told His disciples, "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." (v. 35) Because of the woman's testimony and Jesus' own words, many Samaritans believed, declaring that they now knew that Jesus was Savior of the world. These hated and despised people were the first to acknowledge Jesus as such. This account demonstrates God's intense love for individuals and how He used that love to bring an entire people to Himself.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Begin by reading with your family: John 4:1-35, 39-42

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Teaching Time: 10 minutes

Materials: water in a sink, tub, bucket, or pond; rock

Look at the water and describe the surface. Explain that the still water is like the Samaritan village before Jesus visited. Read the passage together and talk about how when Jesus entered the village, He chose to share His message of salvation with one person. Ask who He shared this with. Now take turns dropping the rock into the water. Observe the ripples that appear on the surface. How many rings of ripples can you count? Share with your children how Jesus' message affected the Samaritan woman in a powerful way, but the impact of God's message did not stop with her. Talk about who else heard about Jesus through the woman's testimony and how they responded.

DISCUSS

1. God's Son, Jesus, chose to speak to a person who was despised and ignored. What does this demonstrate about God? Read Romans 5:8. How is each of us like the Samaritan woman?
2. God gave the Samaritan woman the privilege of being the first person in the entire village to know the Savior of the world. What was God's greater purpose for this blessing?

PRAY

Pray for people who have never had the opportunity to hear that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

The End of the Story:

The Purchase and the Promise

BACKGROUND

God makes sure we know how His story will end. One day in the future, believers from every nation, tribe, people, and language will stand before God's throne in heaven. No group will be missing. They will join together in worshipping Jesus, the one who paid for their sins at the cross! God's promise to Abraham -- to bless all nations through him (Genesis 12:3) -- will be fulfilled completely. Until that glorious day, God is still at work through His Church, accomplishing the task. He is using us to bring His kingdom to the peoples of the earth, leading them into worship of the Savior of the world.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Begin by reading with your family: Revelation 5:9, 7:9-10

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Teaching Time: 15 minutes

Materials: paper, pencils or pens, crayons or markers

Talk about a time you were invited to a party or a special event. Let each person share. Explain that God invites everyone who believes in Jesus to join Him in Heaven forever and ever. Talk about how exciting it will be to see people there from every culture, celebrating and praising God and His Son, Jesus, together. Share with your children that around the world today, some people groups do not know about God's invitation and that no one has come to share the gospel with them yet. As a family, think of specific unreached people groups. Then make invitations for them to join heaven's worship party. Write the name of an unreached people group on each invitation.

DISCUSS

1. How do you think this heavenly celebration will look and sound? What did the Lamb (Jesus) do to make this celebration possible? Read Matthew 24:14. What is yet to happen before this celebration takes place?
2. What are ways that our family can join with God in getting the good news of Jesus to unreached peoples?

PRAY

Hold your finished invitations. Praise God for His faithfulness to bring people from every nation to know and worship Him.

Name: _____ Country: _____

Ages of your children who participated in the activities: _____

Parent Beta Feedback Questions

OVERALL

1. Given the instructions provided, did you understand how to use these materials?
2. Were the activities culturally appropriate for families in your area?
3. Would a larger set of activities like these provide you with a framework/pattern for continuing to teach your children about God's heart for the world through His Word in an ongoing way?

ACTIVITIES

1. Did the information provided equip you to teach the activity concepts to your children?
2. Was the background information provided for you, the parent, in each Bible story helpful in being prepared to teach it to your children?
3. Were the activities simple for you to implement in your home? Did you have the supplies needed?
4. How would you rate the length of the activities?
 - ☐ Activities were too short or simple
 - ☐ Activities were just the right length and easy to execute
 - ☐ Activities were too long and complicated
5. Were the activities engaging for your children? (eager to participate, discuss, pray, etc.)

6. Was it easy for your children to grasp the concepts presented?

7. Did these activities spark other related-conversations with your children during the week?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

LAYOUT

1. Did the arrangement/layout of text on the page make it easy to follow the order of activities?

2. By which method would you most likely prefer to receive these materials?

- ☐ Download and use digitally
- ☐ Download and print at home
- ☐ Buy professionally printed copy from local ministry

Any additional comments you would like to make regarding the layout and design of the material: