

The Road to Redemption

Children's Study – Part 1 (Devotions 1-20)

Children's Study Timetable - Part 1

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|----|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Introduction & the Need for Redemption | Ash Wednesday Feb 22 | The Road to Emmaus |
| 2 | | Feb 23 | Creation |
| 3 | | Feb 24 | The Fall of Man |
| 4 | | Feb 25 | Adam a 'Type' of Christ |
| | | FIRST SUNDAY Feb 26 | |
| 5 | The promised 'seed' & the Necessity of Faith | Feb 27 | Cain and Abel |
| 6 | | Feb 28 | The Flood |
| 7 | | Mar 1 | The Ark |
| 8 | | Mar 2 | Abraham, Father of Faith |
| 9 | | Mar 3 | The Birth of the Promised Son |
| 10 | | Mar 4 | Isaac - The Sacrifice of the Son |
| | | SECOND SUNDAY Mar 5 | |
| 11 | Children & Slaves, Reconciliation | Mar 6 | Jacob and Esau |
| 12 | | Mar 7 | Jacob's Ladder |
| 13 | | Mar 8 | Joseph - Son, Slave, Saviour |
| 14 | | Mar 9 | Joseph - The Reconciler |
| 15 | | Mar 10 | Slavery in Egypt |
| 16 | | Mar 11 | The Burning Bush |
| | | THIRD SUNDAY Mar 12 | |
| 17 | Rescue & New Life | Mar 13 | The Plagues of Egypt |
| 18 | | Mar 14 | The Passover |
| 19 | | Mar 15 | The Red Sea Crossing |
| 20 | | Mar 16 | Manna |

Children's Study - Day One - The Road to Emmaus

Parent Notes

The purpose of the 'Road to Redemption' journey is to show that the Old Testament points the way to Jesus and the cross; to tell the amazing truth that, even from Creation, God had planned the way by which all people could be saved. Many of the famous Bible stories, like Noah's Ark, the slaves being saved from Egypt and Abraham sacrificing his son, Isaac, deliberately point ahead to Jesus. There are also specific prophecies about him, and times when God literally shows up to talk about the promised saviour that people, by faith, were looking forward to.

For the children to understand this idea, The Road to Redemption explains it by saying that God placed 'clues' in scripture so that everyone would understand that Jesus is the Son of God and he is the one who would save the world.

On the road to Emmaus is where Jesus himself speaks of these 'clues' and it is where we start the journey today. Each of the daily studies include a prayer for a child to read aloud (or to echo their parent as they say it,) and a fun activity to reinforce the message. Sundays are set aside as a day of rest, and a time where families might like to meet up with others on the journey for a shared meal and discussion about what they are learning.

Don't forget to use the Road to Redemption Trail to mark your progress by putting a sticker on each day as you complete it. May the Lord bless you with a deeper understanding of Him and may your hearts, like the two men on the road to Emmaus, burn inside you with renewed joy and excitement about this amazing story of the Son of God coming to Earth to save us all.

Story - The Surprise on the Road (Based on Luke 24:13-49)

After Jesus had died on the cross, his followers were very sad and confused. They couldn't understand what had just happened! Why would Jesus, who told people all about God and did so many amazing miracles (like feeding thousands of people and healing the sick) let himself be killed? But then, something even more peculiar had happened ... his body vanished from the tomb where he had been buried and an angel told some women that he was alive. Was it possible that he wasn't dead, after all? It was all so hard to understand.

Two of these followers were walking along a road talking about all these things when someone else joined them. He asked them what they were talking about, and when they told him about Jesus dying on the cross, he said that they were foolish! They hadn't understood all the clues that God had put in the ancient scriptures written by Moses and the other prophets that told them all about it! God's plan, right from the start, was that His Son would come to Earth and die to save everyone, but then he would come back to life again.

This was a big surprise to the two men. They begged to know all about it, so that's what happened. They walked and they listened, and finally understood. Then, suddenly, the men got an even bigger surprise. They realised who was with them! IT WAS JESUS! He really was alive!

The men were so excited that they ran all the way back to Jerusalem to tell Jesus' other followers. And while they were doing that, Jesus appeared again, right there in the room with them! He helped all of them to understand the clues from the scriptures, too. No one was sad or confused anymore. They finally understood that it was planned all along for God's Son to die and come back to life. Now, it was their job to tell the world so everyone else could understand, too.

Questions:

1. Why were the two men so sad and confused?
2. Who joined them as they walked along the road?
3. Jesus told the men about how the ancient scriptures pointed the way to him, and explained how He needed to die on the cross. How did the disciples feel after they realised that Jesus was alive and with them again?

4. Today, these ancient scriptures make up the Old Testament part of the Bible. Can you name the first three books of the Bible? Do you know any of the stories that happen in them? Jesus said that Moses and the prophets wrote about Him, so we will be looking inside those books to find the clues about Jesus and the cross that God put there for us to find.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for putting clues into the Bible to help us to learn about Your son, Jesus, and what he did for us when he died on the cross. Please help us to understand more and to be so excited and happy that Jesus is alive, that we want to tell others all about it. Amen.

Activity

Make a list of the Bible stories you know (from the Old Testament.) You will be able to tick them off if we find clues about Jesus in them during the Road to Redemption



Children's Study - Day 2 - Creation

Parent Notes

The key idea for the children to learn from the story of Creation is that when it says that God was there at the beginning, it means that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were all there together. God SPEAKS the word and all creation into existence. It is through Jesus, the Son of God, that everything in creation is made and Jesus continues to hold everything together since then. He is the visible God who makes God known to us. Although he is not specifically mentioned in the Genesis account, other readings in the Bible tell us how vital he is - nothing can be made without him.

Story - God Made the World (Based on Genesis 1 and John 1:1-18)

In the very beginning, everything was dark and empty, but God was there. God's Spirit was hovering over the waters, ready to begin creating a whole world full of colour and life. God was so powerful, He only needed to speak the words and it happened! God said, 'Let there be light!' and there was! Just like that, light and darkness, day and night! He saw that it was GOOD! The next day, God said, 'Let there be a space between the waters, and there it was! BOOM! SKY! That was good, too! God kept on speaking, and things kept on happening ...on Day Three it was land and plants, then on Day Four, the sun, moon and stars! Things were looking green and flowery and sun-shiney and night-starry. Then, the fish and the birds came on Day Five, so that the seas and the sky were teeming with fins and scales and feathers and beaks.

Had God finished? No, not at all! On Day Six, God spoke again and animals were created; things that crawled and jumped and ran! Everything was new, wonderful and perfect. But God still had one more thing to create and this was something extra special. He created people, a man and a woman, and gave them an amazing garden called Eden to live in. They were perfect and innocent and happy, too, and they were friends with God.

On the seventh Day, God rested - not because He was tired, but because everything was exactly right and it was GOOD. Creation was real - it could be seen with the eyes of all the creatures and touched by them. They could smell it and hear it and taste it and it all held together. The Bible says that God made the world through His Son, and without His Son it could not have been made. In fact, without God's Son it would not hold together. That's why the Bible calls God's Son the 'Word', but we call him by the name 'Jesus' because one day He came to live on Earth as one of the humans he had once created. Isn't that the most amazing thing of all?

Questions:

1. When God made the world, HOW did He do it (what did He do each day that made something happen?)
2. Can you remember the different types of things that God made? What is *your* favourite part of creation?
3. Other parts of the Bible say that it is through Jesus that God made everything, so when it says that God was there 'in the Beginning' it means God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit were all there together in one. It's hard to understand that idea but it can be helpful to think of it a bit like water which has three main states it exists in but it's all still water. Do you know the three 'states' that water exists in? One is ice, what are the other two?

Prayer

Before you pray, think of some of your favourite parts of creation - what is your favourite animal, plant or type of scenery (like a waterfall or a beach.) You could thank God especially for those parts.

Dear God, thank you for the amazing world You made through Jesus, just by speaking the words! Thank you for all the plants and animals and beautiful things to look at, especially ... (*add your ideas here.*) Thank you for making us, too! Amen.

Activity

Take some ice cubes and get an adult to help you heat them in a pot on the stove (or in the microwave) so you can see them change into water and then into steam. Think about how there are three types of water, but they are all water. There are also three parts of God - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but they are all one God.



Children's Study - Day 3 - The Fall of Man

Parent Notes

The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve had a wonderful life in the Garden of Eden, including a close relationship with God, who walked and talked with them. They were allowed to eat freely of all fruit, except for that from two trees. God gave them the opportunity to obey him, but they failed in this and ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Immediately, they felt guilty and hid away, too ashamed to show themselves when God came to them. As a consequence of their disobedience, they are told to leave the garden. From this point they had broken their relationship with God, and they were now sentenced to death - themselves and all their descendants. It seems hopeless.

Story - The Day That Everything Changed (Based on Genesis 3)

Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, loved the garden God had made for them, and were free to walk all through it, eating any fruit they wanted EXCEPT for one rule. They were not allowed to eat the fruit from a special tree called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Not only did God tell Adam and Eve not to eat its fruit, He also warned them that if they did, they would die! That was OK, Adam and

Eve had each other and all the creatures and plants to enjoy. Also, God came and walked in the garden with them each day. It was all lovely ... until it wasn't.

You see, God didn't just make the world and the creatures that lived in it, before He did that He had also made the heavens and the angels. One of those heavenly beings, Satan, had turned against God and he came to Eden to make trouble. In the form of a snake, Satan started speaking lies to Eve. He convinced her that, instead of dying if she ate from the special tree, she would become like God! That sounded exciting and the fruit looked delicious so Eve took the fruit and ate it, and then she gave some to Adam. He ate it, too, but instead of feeling good, they immediately felt ashamed ... so ashamed that they ran away and hid. They knew they had made a terrible mistake.

When God came to the garden, He had to call out their names because they didn't want to show themselves to Him, but of course, they could not hide from God. He knew what they had done. Adam tried to blame Eve, and Eve blamed the snake, but there was nothing that could be done to fix what had happened, not then, anyway. Because they had disobeyed God, Adam and Eve would have to leave the garden and never come back. They had brought badness into a perfect place and broken their friendship with God. Just like God had warned them, eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil meant that now they were going to die, just like every person in the world that came after them would. It wasn't going to happen to them that day, but they *would* grow old and eventually die.

Fortunately, it wasn't ALL bad news. Just like at night time, if a door is left open a crack so that a little bit of light shines through it, God had a promise of hope for Adam and Eve. He said that one of Eve's 'seed' (that means a child) would make things right again. What God was promising was that one day, someone would be born into the world who would bring people back to God, so they could live forever in heaven with Him. You see, right back in the Garden of Eden, God had a plan that He, Himself, would fix what was broken. When the time was right, God's Son would be born into the world and, until then, this promise would be the ray of light that would give people hope.

God made Adam and Eve clothes of animal skins and sent them away. Everything had gone wrong, but God knew that one day it would be made right. He had promised it would be so.

Questions

1. What was life like for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they broke God's rule about not eating the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?
2. How did they feel after they ate it?
3. What did it do to their friendship with God?
4. What other consequences happened because of their disobedience?
5. What is the promise God gave which brought hope to Adam and Eve?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that you did not leave people forever separated from you. Instead, you had a plan to bring us back close to you again. Thank you that one day we can live forever in heaven, a place even more wonderful than the Garden of Eden. Amen.

Activity

Draw a picture or make a Lego model of the best garden you can imagine, full of wonderful animals and plants. Draw or model yourself in the garden, walking and talking with God.



Children's Study - Day 4 - Adam Points to Jesus

Parent Notes

Rather than focusing on the passages of scripture from Romans and Corinthians which compare Adam with Jesus (as the adult study for Day 4 does) we can compare the two by looking at the story where Jesus, having died and been resurrected, now returns to heaven by going up into the sky. Through one man, Adam, sin and death entered the world. Through one man, Jesus, forgiveness and life is freely offered as a gift to bring us back into relationship with God. Jesus returns to heaven in order to 'prepare a place' for all those who love him. Our closeness with God is restored, just like it was in the Garden of Eden, and we have eternal life rather than death.

Story: Jesus Makes a New Home for Us (Based on John 14, Acts 1:1-7)

Yesterday, we learnt that Adam disobeyed God which broke apart their close relationship. Adam felt guilty and afraid, and he knew that he was going to die. Even worse, all of his children and their children and their children for all of time would be born with the same 'sin nature' as Adam. That means, everyone in the world thinks, says and does things that are wrong. We can't come near our perfect, holy God without help. When the Bible tells us that 'death entered the world because of one man' it's talking about Adam. Wow, that's so sad, isn't it?

But, remember that promised seed? Well, Jesus is the OPPOSITE of Adam! LIFE entered the world because of Jesus! Sin entered because of Adam and RIGHTEOUSNESS (being made right with God) entered because of Jesus. Separation from God entered because of Adam and FRIENDSHIP with God because of Jesus.

So, if Adam is the opposite of Jesus and got sent out of an amazing place where he could talk every day with God, what do you think Jesus is doing? The opposite of getting sent out, is welcoming people in, and that's exactly where Jesus is now! He's in heaven preparing a special place for anyone who believes in Him to live. And, if the Garden of Eden was perfect, wonderful and amazing, don't you think heaven will be even better?

Jesus' friends (called the disciples) watched Jesus go up into the clouds because his work on Earth was finished. He had died and he had come back to life, which had fixed everything that Adam had broken. Jesus told his friends not to be sad, because He was going to His Father in heaven and, one day, they would all be together, forever. What's more, he said that God would 'make His home with them'. That sounds kind of cosy, don't you think? God making His home with us? I like the sound of that!

Questions

1. When Jesus went up in the clouds, where was he going?
2. What is Jesus getting ready and why?
3. What do you think heaven will be like? Think about what it might look like, and think about how it will feel to live there.
4. What is the favourite gift you've ever received? Who gave it to you? Was it someone who loved you a lot?
5. By dying on the cross, Jesus 'bought back' all the people in the world so that they no longer need to be separated from God. All you have to do is believe in Jesus and say 'yes please' to the gift he wants to give. The gift isn't something you can wrap up in paper, it's something far better - life with God forever.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the special gift You want to give me - life in heaven with you forever. Thank you that Jesus is alive now, and is in heaven making a special place for us to live with you there one day. Amen.

Activity

Make a card, write a note or prepare a gift to give to somebody you love, just like God gave you a gift because He loves you!



Children's Study - Day 5 - Cain and Abel

Parent Notes

Today's story is both simple and complicated. The simple part (the part that most children's Bibles emphasise) is that Cain brought only 'some' crops with no particular effort to find the first and the best. Abel, however, brought the best of the best as his offering, and he did it willingly.

Where it gets complicated is that (according to Hebrews 11:4) Abel's offering is accepted because he brought it 'by faith'. What was this faith? Did faith make him bring a particular offering (the sacrifice of a lamb) or was it solely the standard of the sacrifice that mattered, showing as it did the attitude of his heart? The answer is not certain, however we should remember that Adam and Eve were expecting one of their offspring to be the 'promised seed' and would be speaking to their sons about this, so right from the beginning, faith in God would be tied closely to faith in the one who would come and save mankind.

As we continue our journey along the Road to Redemption, we find that it is only by faith that anyone is saved, whether they lived before Jesus or after. Salvation is always because of God's grace, received through faith.

Story: Abel's Offering of Faith (Based on Genesis 4: 1-12)

After Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, they settled down and began to have children. Their first child was a boy called Cain; he became a farmer who grew vegetables and crops to eat. Their second son was called Abel; he grew up to be a shepherd, who cared for his flock of sheep.

The time came when the two sons were expected to bring an offering to God - something special to worship him and to thank Him for their harvest. Abel killed the best of his lambs and brought God the most special portions; Cain brought some of the crops he had grown. But God knew that only one of the sons came with faith in their heart. He accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's. Cain was so angry and jealous, that later he killed his brother. His heart was not right with God.

No one can please God unless they have faith; faith is more important than anything we can do or say. Faith means believing what God says is true, even if we can't see it. We are saved by our faith in Jesus. He's the only one who could fix what Adam had broken when he had disobeyed God. Before Jesus was born, people's faith was in the promised seed who would one day come. It is the same faith as ours, but that faith was looking forward to Jesus, knowing that one day the promised one WOULD come and we have faith because we know he DID come.

Questions

1. What were the names of Adam and Eve's first two sons, and what did they do as their work?
2. What offering did each of the sons bring before God?
3. What do you think made Abel's offering pleasing to God, when Cain's was not?
4. Cain got so angry, he killed his brother. What do you think that says about his heart?
5. Can you explain what it means to 'have faith' in someone or something? Who does the Bible say we must believe in to be saved?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that we don't have to worry about bringing offerings to you like Cain and Abel did. JESUS is the acceptable offering, and we just need faith in him to please You! You make it so easy to be Your child because You love us so much! Amen.

Activity

God doesn't need us to bring offerings to Him, but He does love it when we bless other people. What is a job you don't like much, but your Mum or Dad really appreciate you doing? Could you do it without being asked? Imagine if you tidied up the lounge, or emptied out the rubbish bins as a special act of love for them? It's HOW you do things, (with a sweet smile and a happy heart or a grumpy face and yucky thoughts) that makes the difference.



Children's Study - Day 6 - The Flood

Parent Notes

Because we are splitting the story of Noah's ark into two days, with today focusing on the flood (the judgement of God) and tomorrow on the ark (the way of salvation) it is important to concentrate on aspects of the flood itself in today's questions. Children may accept quite easily the idea of the world being flooded, as the image of Noah's family and the ark is such a bright symbol of God providing a way to be saved that it overshadows the rest, however when studied carefully the flood is also a gruesome story of the death of all people and animals except those few who were saved on the ark. Therefore, today's topic may require some support and sensitivity depending on the child. We will concentrate on the fact that God is so holy (good) that he could not bear how violent and wicked the people had become, and needed to start the world all over again, to give people a chance at a new beginning.

Story: The Terrible Flood (Based on Genesis 6:5-22)

It was not only death that spread through all the world when Adam and Eve sinned, but evil of every kind. People were angry and hateful, they hurt each other and thought only about themselves, never about God. The Bible says that, 'everything they thought or imagined was totally evil'. It was all so terrible, in fact, that God's heart was broken and, full of sorrow, He decided that He had to start all over again, giving people a chance at a new beginning.

However, there was one man in the world who was different from all the others. Noah was 'righteous' which meant that he lived in a way that was right and pleased God. God's special favour rested on him. Noah had faith to believe that whatever God said He would do *would* happen so, when God told him that He planned to flood the whole world, Noah believed Him, even though nothing like that had ever happened before.

Noah listened carefully as God told him to build a huge boat, an ark that would not only save Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives, but animals of every kind. It would have three decks and stalls for the different animals to live in. They would need to take food for the creatures as well as themselves, enough for a very long time.

God said that he would make a covenant with Noah. A covenant is a solemn promise, so Noah knew he could DEFINITELY trust God to protect his family. More than that, it meant that through Noah's family, the promised seed of Eve would come, who would one day set all things right again between God and men. Noah set to work right away, but it took long years of building the enormous ark, painting it with tar to make it waterproof and gathering the food supplies before it was ready. All the while, Noah

'preached' to people, warning them that God was going to flood the Earth, but no one listened to him. Not until the first rain drops began to fall.

Questions

1. Why did God decide He needed to flood the Earth and give people a chance at a new beginning?
2. Why was it Noah (and his family) who were saved - what was so special about Noah?
3. How do you think Noah felt when God told him to build an ark – a huge, massive, stupendously big boat to be built on dry land, far from any water?
4. What instructions was Noah given about what to take on board? Why?
5. Do you think people laughed when Noah warned them about what God had told him would happen? Have you ever felt like people are teasing you because you believe in God? (Some people think that no one back then had ever seen rain, let alone enough rain to flood the earth, and the building went on for more than 50 years so Noah must have looked pretty strange, that's for sure!)

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that You are holy! You are everything that is good and pure. Help us to be strong like Noah and do what is right, even if everyone else is going another way. Thank you that You can be trusted to keep all of your promises. Amen.

Activity

Imagine you had to design a spaceship to orbit the Earth for a year to keep yourself and your family safe. What would you have to take on board with you? What would your spaceship look like? How big would it be? What if you had to take two of every kind of animal with you?



Children's Study - Day 7 - The Ark

Parent Notes

Today the key thought is that God is a loving God who made a way for people to be saved. He could not allow the wickedness on Earth to continue, but at the same time, He provided the ark for those who had faith in Him to go on board. Just like the ark is the ONLY way that Noah and his family were saved from the flood, faith in Jesus is the ONLY way all people can be saved. Unlike the ark in the flood, this is an eternal salvation, which means we can have life forever in heaven with God.

Story: Noah's Ark (Based on Genesis 7, Genesis 8)

When the ark was ready, God told Noah to go on board with his family, and to take with him two animals of each kind (a male and a female) so that after the flood they could multiply and fill up the Earth again. Each 'kind' meant a pair from the dog family, the cat family, the horse family and the bear family on and on until every kind was there. It was from these pairs, that all the species we have today would gradually come.

God gave a special instruction for something He called 'clean animals'. These were ones that would be used for sacrifices and for eating after the flood because, for the first time, God would allow people to eat meat. The 'clean' animals were cows, deer, goats and sheep. There were to be seven pairs of all the kinds of birds, too.

For seven days animals came to the ark, and Noah's family settled them safely on board. Then, God closed the door and it began to rain. It seemed as if the skies opened up and rain fell like rivers from above. Water erupted from beneath the ground, too, and the flood waters began to rise. For forty days and forty nights the rain fell without stopping, until the entire Earth was covered with water, right over the top of the highest mountains. All that survived were the fish in the sea and those animals and people on the ark.

For three long months the ark floated, alone on those wide, empty waters. The wooden planks that Noah had hammered together were all that stood between the life on board and the dangerous waters below them.

God had not forgotten Noah, and He sent a wind to blow across the Earth. The flood waters slowly began to leave. After one hundred and fifty days, the ark finally touched land again. It came to rest on Mount Ararat, but it took more long months before the ground was dry enough for the door to be opened. When it did, the animals went out into the world, pair by pair.

Noah built an altar and made a sacrifice to God, thanking Him for keeping his family safe. God made the covenant promise with Noah, saying that He would never again destroy all life on Earth; He promised that He would never send such an enormous flood again. As a sign of the covenant, God put a rainbow in the sky so men could see, forever, this promise of God.

There was only one way to be saved from the flood; it was by getting on board the ark. That took faith - belief in God that the flood was coming, and belief in His one way that people could be saved. The ark points ahead through time, to when there would be another one way made for all people to be saved. Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father, but through me.'

Questions

1. How were Noah and his family saved from the flood? Was there any way they could have been saved if they did not go onto the ark?
2. Why did God tell Noah to take animals onto the ark with him? How many of each kind of animal did he take? Why were there more of some types than others?
3. How long did the flood waters cover the Earth before the ark touched land again?
4. After the flood ended, what did God promise all people, forever? What was the sign of this 'covenant' (promise?)
5. What does the ark tell us about Jesus?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that You made a way for Noah and his family to be saved from the flood. Thank you that You also made a way for all people to be saved, by faith in Jesus. Thank you for always keeping Your promises. Amen.

Activity

Create an artwork with a rainbow on it, to remind you that God keeps his promises!



Children's Study - Day 8 - Abraham, Father of Faith

Parent Notes

Because we are splitting the study of Abraham into three days on The Road to Redemption, we need to take the children's story of Abraham quite gradually. The children will focus on the birth of Isaac tomorrow (Day 9), and then the sacrifice of Isaac on Day 10. We therefore skip out the teaching on circumcision, which could be both confusing and awkward to focus on with your child. The key point today is that God chose Abraham to be one of the men who would pass the promise down from father to son

until the time was right for Jesus to be born. Abraham is called the 'Father of Faith' because through him, God promised to bless all the people in the world. (NB: In the activity section, use a Bible to show your child the genealogy (family tree) of Jesus in Luke 3:23-38, which begins at Adam, in order to emphasise the idea that from the very beginning, God had a plan to save us, and the hope of the promised seed was passed from generation to generation down through time. You don't need to read all the 'sons of', just run your finger down the left-hand side of the verses which goes Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan etc.)

Story: Abraham, Father of Faith (Based on Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15: 1-6, Luke 3: 23-38)

Many years after the flood, when people were once more spread across the Earth, a man named Abram heard from God. Abram was seventy-five years old, and lived in Haran with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and many servants and flocks of animals. God told Abram that if he left behind the land he lived in and his father's family, to go to a new land that God would show him, God would bless him. God said that he would make Abram into a great nation and He would bless everyone in the world through him. It was a long, hard journey, but Abram believed God and, in faith, set off for Canaan, a place we now know as Israel.

A lot of time passed by but Abram did not see any sign of the 'great nation' that would come from him, because he and Sarai did not have any children. One night, God spoke to Abram again. He said, 'Abram, I will protect you and reward you.' Abram replied, 'O Lord, what good is a reward if I have no son to give it to?' He was already so old that he could not see how a child would be born to him. But God told him to look up at the night sky.

"Count the stars, if you can," He told Abram. "That's how many descendants you will have. I will give you this land, too."

Abram believed God, and God called him righteous, because of this faith. Tomorrow we will find out that Abram was given a new name by God, 'Abraham'. Abraham is called the Father of Faith because, not only did the nation of Israel come from him, but the promised seed was passed on through his family. It was through this seed that all nations of the world would be blessed and people of every nation, from the Arctic at the top of the world to New Zealand at the bottom, from the continents of Africa, North and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania would be known as his children if we share his same faith in the coming promised one, who we know as Jesus.

Questions

1. What did God show Abram when he told him that one day he would have many children and grandchildren? Do you think Abram could really have counted them all?
2. What does it mean that 'all people in the world will be blessed' through Abram?
3. Why did God call Abram 'righteous'?
4. Who are known as the children of Abraham?
5. Do you know any of the other Bible characters who were in the family line of Abraham down to Jesus? There was a famous king in the Bible who killed a giant, and a man who had a wrestling match with God. Tomorrow we will find out about Abraham's son who is also one of these men.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that I am one of your children, because I have faith in you. Please help me to be more like Abraham, who believed what you told him. Help me to be a blessing to many people, too! Amen.

Activity

Get an adult to help you find the family line of Jesus in Luke chapter 23. See if together you can find on that line the people we have learnt about so far - Adam, Noah and Abraham. Perhaps you can find that giant killer and the man who wrestled with God there, too! You won't find Abel because he was killed by Cain, and it was their younger brother, Seth, who was part of the family line of the promised seed.



Children's Study - Day 9 - The Birth of the Promised Son

Parent Notes

We are slipping in slightly ahead of the adult's reading for tomorrow, in that the children learn of the birth of Isaac today. We will focus today on how 'anything is possible with God' and how miraculous the birth of Isaac was.

Story: The Birth of the Promised Son (Based on Genesis 17)

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him. He said, "I am God Almighty. Serve me faithfully and I promise to give you so many descendants you can't count them all."

Abram fell flat on his face in front of God, feeling unworthy to stand in God's presence. God told him that He was confirming the covenant promise - nations would come from Abram, even some kings! Abram was to now be called by a new name, 'Abraham,' which meant 'father of many'. God promised to always be Abraham's God, and the God of his children. He would give them the land of Canaan to be their own. Then God told Abraham something amazing - by this time next year, Sarai (who God said would now be called 'Sarah') would give birth to a son. His name would be Isaac, and he would grow up to be the father of twelve rulers.

Abraham laughed to himself at the thought of an old man like him having a baby, but he was ready to trust God to do what He had promised.

One day, Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent, when he looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. He hurried over and invited them to rest and eat with him. While they ate, one of the men told Abraham that this time next year, he would have a son. Sarai was in the tent and heard. She laughed to herself in disbelief - a woman as old as she? It could never happen.

That's when Abraham realised one of the men was God because, even though Sarah laughed silently and only spoke her words of disbelief in her head, He knew what she was thinking. The man said, 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' Then He and the two angels with him left.

Sure enough, it happened just as God had promised. At the time He said it would happen, Sarah gave birth to a son. She called him Isaac and declared, "God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me." What a joyful day it was, a longed-for son at last arrived. Now the laughter was only happiness; all the doubt had gone.

Questions

1. Although they looked like men, who were the three visitors that ate with Abraham?
2. What did the Lord tell Abraham?
3. Why did Sarah laugh at the idea?
4. Did God give Abraham and Sarah what he had promised them?
5. Do you think there is anything too hard for God to do? What other miracles that happen in the Bible can you think of?

Prayer

Before you pray today, think about something in your life that feels hard or disappointing - something that you wish God would help you to change.

Dear God, thank you that nothing is too hard for You. Please help me with ... (*fill in your request here.*) Help us to wait patiently for Your help, like Abraham did. Amen.

Activity

When Abraham and Sarah's promised son was born, he was called Isaac, which means 'he will laugh'. Abraham and Sarah had been so surprised to think they might have a child in their old age that they had laughed at the idea - but their laughter when Isaac was born was full of happiness. Find out what your name means, and find out why you were called that by your parents. Was there a special reason?



Children's Study - Day 10 - The Sacrifice of the Son

Parent Notes

The story of Abraham 'sacrificing' Isaac is one of the clearest foreshadowings in the Bible pointing directly ahead to Jesus, and also to God the Father. Key points for children to know are that God *never* intended Isaac to die - this was a special drama acted out so that people would understand that God's son had to die one day. Isaac was not a little boy - he was a grown-up man and he did not fight his elderly father, but allowed himself to be placed on the altar to receive the death blow. Abraham believed Isaac would die, but in faith he also believed he would come back to life. Jesus died on the cross on the same mountain many years later, proving that it was all planned from the beginning.

Story: The Sacrifice of the Son (Based on Genesis 22:1-18)

Isaac grew up to be a fine young man, dearly loved by his proud parents. They knew how special he was because, not only was he the only son born to Sarah, but God had promised that through him, twelve rulers would come, and from them, a whole mighty nation to fill up the promised land of Canaan. It was all so perfect and exciting, until God asked Abraham to do something so strange, so awful, so HORRID that it didn't seem possible God could ask such a thing.

"Abraham," God called, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, the one you love so much. Go to the land of Moriah and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains. I will show you which one."

Now, you might assume Abraham would refuse to do such an unthinkable thing, but he isn't called the 'Father of Faith' for nothing. You see, Abraham believed God when He had promised that through Isaac many descendants would come, so Abraham thought to himself, 'Well, I guess God can bring Isaac back to life again, so if He wants me to do this, that's what will happen.'

Early the next morning, Abraham got up, saddled his donkey, chopped up some wood for the fire he would need, and set off, Isaac at his side. Now, Isaac wasn't a little boy, not at all. He was all grown up and when they reached the mountain, it was Isaac who carried the wood on his back up the hillside.

"Dad," he said, "I see we have wood to burn the sacrifice on, but where is the sheep?"

"God will provide the sheep, son," Abraham told him.

When they reached the right place, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood and then he tied up Isaac and laid him on top of it. Isaac could have struggled and fought to get away - he would have been much stronger than his elderly father, but he did not.

Abraham picked up a knife, and lifted it above his head. This was where his faith was tested like no other time in his life - to kill his beloved, precious son? To obey God and not the instinct of his heart, which was to save his boy?

'Yes,' Abraham decided, 'I will obey and trust in God.'

He was about to plunge the knife downwards, when God called to him, "Abraham, Abraham!"

"Yes! Here I am!" Abraham shouted.

"Don't lay a hand on the boy! Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."

Abraham looked up and saw a sheep, caught in some thorn bushes near the altar. With a heart full of relief and thankfulness, he released Isaac from his binding and sacrificed the sheep in his place.

"The Lord will provide," he told his son, his voice filled with awe and joy. "I name this place, 'The Lord *will* Provide.'"

Almost two thousand years later ON EXACTLY THE SAME MOUNTAIN (Mount Moriah), another beloved only son walked up the hillside. He did not carry wood for a burnt offering on his back, instead the wood he carried was the cross on which he would die. There, Jesus, called the Lamb of God, was killed - his innocent sacrifice paying the ransom price for all the people of the world, to bring them back to God. God had never meant for Abraham to kill Isaac, He only wanted the scene to be acted out, to show people the truth of what would happen to HIS Son. This was so that when Jesus died on the cross in that place, people would understand and believe.

God's plan to bring all people back to him was always there, working for our good, all the way from Creation to the Cross.

Questions

1. What did God ask Abraham to do? Did Abraham decide to obey? Why do you think he chose to do that?
2. Isaac was not a little boy but a man. Did he try to fight his father and run away? Why not?
3. What stopped Abraham from killing Isaac? Did God always plan to stop him?
4. What did Abraham sacrifice in Isaac's place?
5. What did Abraham call the mountain?
6. The same mountain that Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac on is the same hill that Jesus died on, after carrying the cross up it like Isaac carried the wood. What was God trying to tell us by this story?

Prayer

Thank you, God, that You loved the world so much that You gave Your only Son to die, like Abraham thought he was giving Isaac to die. Thank you for all the clues You put into the Bible to show us that Jesus is the one who will save us. Amen.

Activity:

Act out the story of Abraham and Isaac, and don't forget the poor sheep!



Children's Study - Day 11 - Jacob and Esau

Story: The Twins who Fought (Based on Genesis 25:19-34)

When Isaac was forty years old, he married a woman called Rebekah. They prayed to God for a baby, and God gave them two! These twins started fighting each other, even before they were born! They wriggled and kicked so much in Rebekah's tummy that she asked God why it was happening.

God told Rebekah that one day her babies would grow up to be the leaders of mighty nations, but only one of them was the one he was choosing to carry the promise of his coming Son, the 'seed' of woman who would save the world. God chose Jacob for this special blessing.

The trouble was, when the twins were born, Esau came out first! In those days it meant *he* should get the special blessing from his father. Jacob decided he wanted to change that and he didn't wait for God to sort it out. When the twins were both grown up, Jacob decided to lay a trap for Esau so he would give Jacob the rights of the first son.

Jacob waited until Esau was hot and tired from hunting all day, then told him that he would trade him some tasty stew for the rights of the oldest son. Esau was really, REALLY hungry, and didn't really care much about it, so he said yes. Then, another time, Jacob dressed up like Esau and pretended to be him so that Isaac (who was nearly blind in his old age) would accidentally give him the rest of the blessing.

Esau was so angry with Jacob that Jacob had to run away for a while. He had taken the blessing like God had said would happen, but he had used tricks to get it. I wonder what would have happened if he had patiently waited for God to sort it out? What do you think?

Jacob went on to be one of the men who was in the family line of Jesus. He passed the promise of the coming seed down to one of his sons, and from there the promise kept on going, all the way to Jesus. Even though he was known as a trickster, and did other things that a righteous man of God should not have done, God still loved him and blessed him because that's what God is like. We don't always deserve to be loved, but He chooses to do it anyway. We will find out that it is Jacob who has those twelve promised sons, the grandsons of Isaac and great-grandsons of Abraham. God is always faithful to His promise that he will be their God.

Questions

1. What were the names of Isaac's twin sons?
2. Why did Rebekah ask God what was going on with her unborn babies? What did God tell her?
3. What did Jacob want to take from Esau? How did he take the two things that he did?
4. What happened afterwards? Do you think Esau and Jacob ever made up their fight and became close to each other?
5. When did God decide he wanted to bless Jacob - before or after Jacob was born? If you believe in Jesus, you are also one of God's chosen children! The Bible says that you are loved by God, and even before you began to form in your Mum's tummy, God already knew you! That's pretty amazing, isn't it?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that even before I was born, You knew me and loved me. Thank you that everyone who believes in Jesus has Your special blessing. We don't need tricks or arguments to receive it, because Jesus bought the blessing for us on the cross and He shares it freely with anyone who believes in Him. Amen

Activity

Out of all the foods in the world, which one is your favourite? Is it a special dessert like jelly and ice cream, a tasty meal like lasagne, or perhaps a fresh, juicy pineapple? Can you imagine choosing that over

the right to be one of God's children? It seems a bit crazy, but maybe you can ask your Mum or Dad to make a favourite food of yours soon, and then, when you eat it, thank God that His blessing doesn't depend on what we do, or say or eat. He loves us, even before we are born! If your Mum or Dad can't make that food one day soon, how about you draw or paint a picture of it and write a heading on the page that says, 'I love Jesus more than ...' Mine might say, 'I love Jesus more than chocolate!'



Children's Study - Day 12 - Jacob's Ladder

Parent Notes

Today we have the pleasure of studying a Bible story that Jesus himself clearly explained. That makes the way it points to him super easy to understand! The dream Jacob had is sometimes translated as being about a ladder, and sometimes a stairway. That doesn't matter - what matters is the idea that there is a wide, deep gap between God and man. We cannot go across it ourselves, and we cannot build any bridge with our own effort. But Jesus, who is both God and man, is able to be the one who 'mediates' or acts as the 'go-between'. He is the one who bridges the gap between God and man.

Story: Jacob's Dream (Based on Genesis 28:10-22, John 1:45-51)

Jacob was on the way to his Uncle Laban's house because he was worried that if he stayed with Esau, his brother might kill him. That's how angry Esau was after being tricked out of the blessing!

One night, Jacob lay down on the ground and went to sleep. While he slept, he dreamt an amazing dream! He could see the tallest ladder ever, stretching all the way from heaven down to Earth! Angels were going up and down it all the time! Standing at the top of the ladder was God. He told Jacob that He was going to bless him, give him lots and lots of land, and so many descendants that they would be like dust. He also promised to protect Jacob all the days of his life. Jacob was so amazed by his dream, that when he woke up he called that place the 'gateway to heaven' and he set up a special stone memorial there, to always remember it.

What Jacob didn't know was that one day God's Son, Jesus, would explain the real meaning of the dream. Jesus said to his followers, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the ladder between heaven and Earth.' What Jesus meant was, he was the promised seed, the one who would make things right between people and God again. *He* was the real gateway to heaven; no-one can get there without faith in Him!

Questions

1. What did Jacob see in his dream?
2. What did God promise Jacob?
3. What did Jacob do to remember the place where God had spoken to him?
4. What do you know about angels? They are created by God to be His messengers and to help protect His children. Do you know any stories in the Bible where angels give someone a message?
5. Who did Jesus say the real ladder is? What does that mean?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for making a way to heaven for us. Thank you that the way for us is not hard. We don't have to climb up a long, long ladder - we only have to believe in Your Son, Jesus. He is the way and the truth and the life. Amen.

Activity

Have you ever climbed a really high set of stairs? Did you get puffed? Try and find some stairs to walk up and down today or tomorrow. Go up and down them like an angel in Jacob's dream, counting how many steps you take before you get puffed. Or, you could make a type of bridge across the floor with some cushions. Jump from cushion to cushion to cushion and back again, keeping count of your jumps until you are puffed. Then, thank God that He has made an easier way to heaven than by climbing or jumping!



Children's Study Day 13 - Joseph - Son, Slave, Saviour

Parent Notes

The story of Joseph (the beloved son of Jacob) becoming a slave can help children understand a little bit of what it was like for the Son of God to be so loving, kind and humble that he was willing to become human, like us (even though he was still God at the same time.) Today we emphasise the idea that although Joseph's brothers hated Joseph and sold him (then told their father he was dead), that God planned to turn that into a great goodness. We learn what that goodness is tomorrow, but for now, we remember that the awful thing Jesus had to go through by dying on the cross, was used by God to be the greatest rescue mission in history because it was for everyone in all the world.

Story: Joseph - Son, Slave, Saviour (Based on Genesis 37:1-13, 18-36)

Now Jacob got a taste of his own medicine. Have you heard that saying before? It means that someone who has done a bit of mischief, gets some back in return, and that's exactly what happened to Jacob. He had immediately fallen in love with Rachel, his Uncle Laban's beautiful daughter and agreed to work for Laban for seven years, as long as he was allowed to marry Rachel at the end of it. His uncle agreed, but then pulled a trick on Jacob by secretly switching the bride to Leah, Rachel's older sister. Jacob was ANGRY and HURT. He still married Rachel, but had to agree to another seven years of work, and she was the only one he loved.

Well, two sisters married to the same man didn't turn out great. Rachel was VERY jealous when Leah had a baby, and it got worse over the years. No matter how badly she wanted a son, she did not become pregnant. Instead, Rachel had to watch as Leah had son after son, and then two other wives had sons, and still she had no babies of her own. It was only when Jacob already had ten sons that Rachel finally had her own. She called him Joseph and he was loved by her and Jacob more than any of the others - he might as well have been the first-born son as he was so wanted and adored.

Jacob made his feelings for Joseph clear when one day he gave Joseph a special, colourful coat. This gift made his brothers think that Jacob was saying 'this is my number one son.' They hated Joseph then and things got even worse when God gave Joseph some dreams. In one of them, eleven stacks of wheat bowed down to him, which meant all eleven brothers would be beneath him one day (by then, he had a younger brother, Benjamin, who was also born to Rachel.) In another dream, eleven stars and the sun and the moon bowed down, which meant that Joseph would be even greater than his parents! That gave Jacob a lot to think about - what did God have in mind for his son?

Unfortunately, Joseph died. He got torn to pieces by some wild animals and that was the end of him. Actually, no, that's not what happened - it's the lie the brothers told Jacob. What really happened was they waited until they were all away from home one day, then they snatched Joseph and tossed him in a pit before selling him to some slave traders. A bit of goat blood here, a few tugs and tears there, and the special coat looked exactly like Joseph was no more. It broke Jacob's heart, and it would have broken Rachel's, too, but she had died some time ago. Poor Jacob, and poor Joseph! The favourite son of a wealthy man, dearly loved and used to a pleasant life was now a slave! He was on the way to Egypt to be sold as a servant there. It didn't look much like those dreams of his were going to come true, did it?

Questions

1. Why did Jacob give Joseph a special gift? What was the gift he gave his son?
2. Why did the dreams that Joseph was having upset his brothers so much?
3. What did they decide to do to Joseph to get rid of him?
4. What is a slave? How would the life of a slave be different to that of a loved son?
5. Was God still with Joseph, even though he was in an awful place now, a slave instead of the favourite son?
6. Do you know that the Bible says that Jesus became like a slave for us? Like Joseph, he was the loved Son of God, and He was powerful and perfect ... but he left that behind when he was born as a human baby on Earth. Some terrible things happened to him, and he even died ... was that the end of the story?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you that You loved us so much that You left heaven to come down to Earth and be with us. Thank you that You died for all of the people in the world, even though You had done nothing wrong. Thank you that there is a really exciting and wonderful end to that story, just like there will be for Joseph! Amen

Activity

Design the most amazing, colourful coat (or robe, like a dressing gown) that you can think of. Make it into a collage of different colours of paper and, if you have some, perhaps add some glitter or stickers because it was a VERY amazing coat! Otherwise, just use your brightest felt pens or most colourful pencils.



Children's Study Day 14 - Joseph the Reconciler

Parent Notes

It is more than twenty years later that Joseph sees his brothers again. When it happens, there is a terrible famine throughout the world and Joseph holds the position of authority where he can decide if he saves his brothers by giving them food, or punishes them for what they did to him. Even if he DID end up helping them, it could have been in a grudging way, or one that still punished them somehow. Instead, Joseph told them that God had used what had happened for good, and through it, God would protect all of their family through the time of hardship. The key message today is that Joseph worked to bring all of his family back together and he did it with love, a bit like Jesus brings people back to the God who loves them so much.

Story: Joseph the Reconciler (Based on Genesis chapters 39-46)

Twenty long years pass before the brothers see Joseph again. All this time, Jacob has grieved his son - he never got over losing Joseph and the brothers never stopped feeling guilty. What a terrible secret they had kept all this time.

In Egypt, Joseph's life had been a bit like a roller coaster, full of ups and downs. First of all, he had been sold to a man called Potiphar, who was a rich, important Egyptian. God blessed Joseph, and suddenly everything went so well that Potiphar left it all up to him. Joseph was respected and appreciated - so even though he was a slave, he was an important man, second only to Potiphar in the household. Joseph was a righteous man, too. Unfortunately, a woman told lies about him and got him thrown in jail. That was a heap worse even than being a slave at Potiphar's house, but again, God was with him.

Joseph worked hard in the jail, and soon the chief jailor was leaving everything up to him. God blessed Joseph's work and, once again, Joseph was in number two position, second only to the chief jailor. That didn't mean he liked being in jail though, especially since he hadn't done anything wrong!

Then, God used Joseph's ability with dreams and suddenly Joseph found himself in front of Pharaoh, who really WAS the most powerful man in all the land of Egypt! Joseph interpreted two dreams for him and said that there was going to be seven years of plenty, when Egypt should store up lots of food, because they would be followed by seven years of terrible famine when all of the crops would fail. Pharaoh was mightily pleased with Joseph and made him leader of everything, second only to him!

It all happened as Joseph had described - the years of plenty and the years of famine. The famine was so bad that it affected the whole world and people travelled to Egypt especially to buy grain from Joseph. One day, ten men came and knelt down before him. Joseph recognised them as his brothers and he remembered his dream about the bundles of wheat. The brothers were TERRIFIED when Joseph told them who he was. They thought he was now so rich and powerful, he'd have THEM killed, or made into slaves to get his revenge. But he didn't! Instead, Joseph said, "Don't be afraid of me. You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. No, don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children."

The brothers could scarcely believe it, but they hurried back to their father, and brought him and their own families to Egypt to be cared for by Joseph. Can you imagine how happy Jacob felt, to see his son again?

The Bible says that, like Joseph, Jesus has a powerful position. He is at the right hand of God and, like Joseph, he brings people who were in broken relationships back together - he brings man back to God.

Questions

1. What happened in Joseph's life when he first reached Egypt? How many places did he live and work?
2. What happened in each of those places? What sort of a man was Joseph?
3. What did Joseph tell Pharaoh that God was warning him about in his dreams?
4. Why did Joseph's brothers travel to Egypt? It is more than twenty years since the brothers have seen Joseph. Why were they afraid when he told them who he was?
5. What did it mean when Joseph said, 'You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good?'
6. The brothers rushed back home and brought Joseph's dad, Jacob, his little brother and all of the families back to live in Egypt. Joseph had brought everyone together again, so that their family was not broken anymore. How is this like what Jesus does for everyone?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that even when things are hard, You can still make good things come out of it. Thank you that because of Jesus, we can be in Your family, and we can be close to You, just like Joseph's family was close to Joseph in the end. You are amazing! Amen

Activity

Do you ever argue with your brothers or sisters or your friends? Is there anything you have said or done, even by accident, that you feel bad about and you wish that it hadn't happened? Or, is there someone who has hurt you that you find really hard to be nice to now? Talk to your Mum or Dad about it and see if they can help you to work the problem out. Saying sorry, or saying, 'I forgive you' might be the first step to bringing your friendship or family back to closeness again.



Children's Study Day 15 - Slavery in Egypt

Parent Notes

Today we focus only on the story of how the Israelites came to be slaves in Egypt. This is all part of God's 'big picture' that He wants to show the world. When Adam and Eve sinned, they received a penalty, which is physical death and permanent separation from God. We are all slaves to sin, living under a death penalty without any hope until we follow Jesus who leads us out to freedom. In this way, Moses points the way ahead to Jesus and we are like the Israelites who find our new life only in Him.

Story: We Need Help! (Based on Exodus 1:6-22, Exodus 2:1-10)

At first, there were only seventy people who moved to Egypt to live with Joseph - his brothers and their families and his dad, Jacob. They started farming the land and, as the years passed, they kept having children and filling up more space which was great for a good many years. However, after Joseph died, there came a time when the people of Egypt decided that there were just too many Israelites! There were so many of them that the Egyptians were scared they might take over the whole country! They decided to put a stop to it!

Unfortunately, the ideas the Egyptians came up with to take all the power back from the Israelites were really, very, extremely AWFUL! They made the Israelites slaves, which meant God's special people had to work all day for no money and the Egyptians were extra mean to them on purpose, forcing them to make bricks all day to build cities. When that didn't stop the Israelites having children and filling up the land, the new Pharaoh decided to kill all the baby boys! That's how horrible it was.

Just one mother managed to keep her baby boy a secret. It was hard work, as she had to hide him from Pharaoh's soldiers, but she managed to keep him safely at home until he was three months old. Then, he was too big to hide any longer. God must have helped the mother because the next things that happened seem too good to be true. First, the mother placed the baby into a basket, and sent him floating down the Nile River. He was found by the daughter of Pharaoh who decided she wanted to keep him to be her own son so she called him, Moses.

Next, the baby still needed milk so, guess who got asked to feed the baby and look after him at her house? That's right, the baby's mother! God gave the baby back to her for a long time and, although the day came when she had to take Moses to the palace to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, at least the mother knew her son was safe.

I wonder if she also knew that her little baby would grow up to be the man who would save all of the Israelites and take them safely into another land? They sure needed help and a rescuer was on the way ... they just had to wait for him to grow up!

Questions

1. What happened to the Israelites after they 'filled the land' of Egypt?

2. What did Pharaoh do to try and stop the Israelites from becoming more powerful than the Egyptians?
3. Why did Moses' mother hide him? Why do you think she put him in the basket and sent him down the river?
4. Who found the baby? What happened next?
5. Being a slave was horrible, so the Israelites really wanted to be free. Guess who the Bible says can make all of us free?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that You looked after baby Moses and kept him safe. Thank you that you had an amazing plan for his life, and that you have good plans for our lives too! Amen.

Activity

Make a 'basket' of some sort to hold a toy (make the basket like a boat.) It could be a bottle you cut up, or something you make out of wood. Then, find somewhere to float your boat and see if it looks after your toy as well as the basket looked after Baby Moses.



Children's Study Day 16 - The Burning Bush

Parent Notes

The story of the burning bush is important to our faith, not only because it is where God calls Moses to be the one to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but because God reveals His name to Moses, 'I Am.' 'I Am' is not only stating that God exists, but that God is everywhere, for all time and He is present. He is with His people; His attention, His love, care, protection and power are always there. The difference is like knowing that wind exists, as a scientific reality, and actually being pushed along in your sailing boat by it, feeling it rush against your face and hearing the sails flap. The message that Moses is to take to the Israelites is 'God IS and God is present.' When Jesus says 'I AM' in the New Testament, he is declaring that he is God.

Story: The Burning Bush (Based on Exodus chapters 2 - 4)

Moses grew up in the palace as one of Pharaoh's children, not knowing that one day he would be the one who would lead the Israelite slaves to freedom. He got into big trouble with Pharaoh, because he killed an Egyptian man who was beating up one of the slaves. Moses ran away to the desert and stayed there for forty years!

While he lived in the desert, Moses got married and had two sons. He also looked after a flock of sheep. He got a big surprise one day when he went to check on them and saw a bush that was on fire ... but it didn't burn up! It just burned and burned and burned. Moses went closer to look at it, and got an even bigger surprise! A voice called his name and told him to not come closer but to take off his sandals, because he was standing on holy ground!

The voice said that He was God, and that He wanted to use Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt!

Moses was scared - he didn't think he could do it, and he came up with lots of excuses. He said that he wasn't important enough, that no one would believe him, and he wasn't a good speaker but God said that He, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, would be with Moses.

God said Moses needed to tell the Israelites that God's name is 'I Am' and gave him some amazing miracles to show the leaders so that they would believe the time had come for the Israelites to be free!

Moses' staff would become a snake, and he would be able to turn water into blood! As well as these signs, God said He would send Moses his brother, Aaron, to help him. So, with God's name, the miracles and his brother beside him, Moses bravely set off to Egypt.

Questions

1. Why did Moses run away from Egypt?
2. He lived in the desert for forty years before God called to him - what was he doing in this time?
3. What did Moses see in the desert which was so strange?
4. What did God ask Moses to do?
5. What did God give Moses to help him?
6. What do you think God's special name 'I Am' means? Did you know that Jesus called himself 'I Am' as well, because he is God?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that You had a plan for saving the Israelites from their slavery. Even though Moses didn't think he was special enough or clever enough to do such a big thing, you promised to be with him. Thank you for always being with us, too.

Activity

Get your Mum or Dad to play a game with you, which is like Simon Says, but instead of saying 'Simon' they say your name, just like God called to Moses by his name. So, if your name was Harry, you would do everything you were told if they said your name first. The game would go,
'Harry, touch your nose.'
'Harry, jump up and down'
'Harry, wriggle your fingers'
But if your Mum or Dad said 'Pat your head' and you did it when they didn't say your name, you're out!



Children's Study - Day 17 - The Plagues of Egypt

Parent Notes

God sent ten plagues on Egypt, however we won't talk about the final one, the death of the first-born son today, as we will focus on that tomorrow. The key point to share with your children is that God is mighty and can do wonderful things. No one else can do what God can do. All the plagues He sent to Egypt were to show Pharaoh and the Egyptians that they should let the Israelite people go! God was ready to rescue His people, but He also wanted to show them that He was powerful and able to lead them to the promised land.

Story: The Plagues of Egypt (Based on Genesis 5-10)

God had decided that it was time for the Israelites to be free, so as soon as Moses showed the Israelite leaders the miraculous signs that God had provided, and convinced them that God really was about to take them out of Egypt, he went up to the palace to ask Pharaoh to let the people go. Pharaoh wasn't in the least interested in losing his slave force and angrily demanded who this God was, to make demands of him! He was so full of rage that he ordered the slave masters to be even harsher to the Israelites so that they had to make just as many bricks, but now they also had to gather their own hay to use when they made them. It was really awful, and they blamed Moses!

Moses prayed, and God told him it was time to show Pharaoh just how powerful He was. First of all, Moses threw his staff on the ground at Pharaoh's feet, and it turned into a snake. But the magicians were able to make snakes appear, too, and even though Moses' one gobbled theirs up, Pharaoh refused to listen. The next day, while Pharaoh was at the river Nile, Moses struck the water with his staff and it turned to blood! Not just that river, but all the water in Egypt. The fish died and the whole country stank.

When that didn't soften Pharaoh's heart, God sent a plague of frogs. They crawled all over the land, in every house, and cupboard and bed. It was disgusting! Pharaoh decided to tell Moses that yes, the people could go, but as soon as the plague stopped, he changed his mind. And this is how it went, for many more plagues. The plague would come, Pharaoh would say yes, Moses would pray for God to take the plague away, then Pharaoh would change his mind. After the first three plagues (water turning to blood, frogs and lice) God made the plagues only go to some parts of the land. He had shown His people how powerful He was, and now He protected them by only letting the plagues affect the Egyptians.

The next six plagues were; animals dying, painful boils breaking out on people's skin, hail smashing all the crops, locusts, and total darkness. Even after all that, Pharaoh did not change his mind. God had given him over to his hard, hard heart which made him stubborn even when his own people suffered.

God had shown how mighty He was - and how angry He was at how His people had been treated for so long. He was ready to send one last plague and this one would make certain that even Pharaoh would BEG the Israelites to leave. The Israelites are getting ready to follow Moses out of their slavery into freedom. We have a leader, too, that we follow. He shows us the way to God.

Questions

1. How did Moses convince the Israelite leaders that God was ready to rescue them?
2. What did Moses ask Pharaoh?
3. What are some of the plagues that God sent to Egypt?
4. What did Pharaoh do after each plague?
5. Which plague do you think would be the WORST one to live through?
6. Most of the plagues only hurt the Egyptians, and God's special people were safe from them. What do you think they learnt about God?

Prayer

Dear God, You must be so powerful to have made all the different plagues! Thank you for showing the Israelites, and us, that You are mighty enough to take care of Your people. Thank you that no matter what happens in the world, nothing can ever take us away from Your love. Amen

Activity

Get your Mum or Dad to call out all of the different plagues, and you act each one out. For example, if they say, 'frogs' you could hop like a frog, and if they say 'darkness' you could lie down and shut your eyes! The plagues were: Water turned to blood, frogs, lice, flies, animals die, boils, hail, locusts and darkness.



Children's Study - Day 18 - The Passover

Parent Notes

It's a little grim to contemplate the blood of an innocent lamb being shed, but if scripture is sanitised too much it can lose its meaning. That is the difficulty of parenting - deciding at what age children are ready to hear and understand certain truths, and when they need to be sheltered. It's hard to get away from death in the Old Testament but if you wish to skip the last plague, you could focus on the faith of the

Israelites in getting ready to go, even before the plague came, because they believed God was going to rescue them at last.

Story: The Passover (Based on Exodus 12)

Finally, God decided it was time for the Israelites to GO! He told Moses that He was going to send one last plague, a plague so terrible that the Egyptians would *beg* the Israelites to leave. This plague was going to be death for all the first-born sons ... a lot like what Pharaoh had ordered for the slave babies all those years ago. This time, the Israelites had to do something to protect themselves from the plague because God wanted them to make their own choice to follow Him in faith. He also wanted to show the world the bigger story - that one day His Son would come to die for them and if they believed in Him, they could be saved.

So, God told the Israelites they needed to find a lamb, one without any dirty marks on it or anything wrong with its body, because it had to point ahead to Jesus, who never did anything wrong. They were to kill the lamb and brush the door frames of their houses with the blood. Anyone who stayed inside that house would be safe from the plague, just like anyone who believes in Jesus is saved.

God also told the people to eat a meal of the lamb and some unleavened bread - that's flat bread without any yeast, because they were to be ready to go at any second and there was no time to waste waiting for bread to rise.

Can you imagine crouching together in your house, waiting with your ears straining to hear what is going on outside, trusting that the blood that you brushed on the doorframe was enough to keep you safe? Of course, it was the faith that made the Israelites choose to obey God's instructions that really saved them.

That night, the plague did come to Egypt, but God's people were safe; safe but not sleepy. They had their shoes on and had tucked their cloaks up tight around the body so they wouldn't trip over - it was time to go!

Death had 'passed over them' and they were going to remember this night forever and ever. They would have a Passover festival every year to make sure they never forgot how God saved them, where they would brush their door frames with blood, and eat lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs to remember their ancestors' harsh four hundred years in Egypt and the night God saved them.

When Jesus came, he was known as the 'Lamb of God' because he took the place of the lamb in order to save us all. Do you know that when he died on the cross, it was during a Passover festival? Yes, Jesus the Lamb of God died the same week as the Passover lambs. That had to be planned by God, didn't it?

Questions

1. What was the last plague (number ten)?
2. What did God tell the Israelites they needed to do to make sure they were safe?
3. What would have happened, if some of the Israelites had decided they did not need to obey God and brush blood on their door frames?
4. How did the people get ready to leave for the promised land? What did they have for their meal?
5. What did the Israelites call the festival they held every year to remember God rescuing them? Why was it called that?
6. How long were the Israelites slaves in Egypt for? What do you think they are most looking forward to, once they are free?

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for teaching us so many things about Your Son, Jesus. You want us to know the way to be saved because You love us so much. Thank you that the story of the Passover points to Jesus! Amen.

Activity

When the Israelites left Egypt, they went in such a hurry that they could not wait for the bread to rise. Make (or buy) some flat bread to eat to remind you how the Israelites were ready to go! You could take your flatbread on a walk or a picnic ... or just eat it at home with your shoes and coats on like the Israelites! If you can't do that activity, you could paint a picture to remind yourself that the Israelites painted their door frames so the plague would 'pass over' them.



Children's Study Day 19 - The Red Sea Crossing

Parent Notes

A key point to express today is that, just like the Israelites walked through the Red Sea from their life in Egypt into their new life in the promised land, so too do God's children have new life thanks to Jesus. This means they have the Holy Spirit inside them to help them to know how to live in a way that pleases God, just like the cloud and the fire led the Israelites exactly the way that God wanted them to go.

Story: The Red Sea Crossing (Based on Exodus 13: 17-22, Exodus 14)

Even before the plague where the first-born sons had died, the Egyptians were more than pleased to get rid of the Israelites. In fact, they had given them jewellery and items of gold and silver to send them on their way. Now Pharaoh also wanted them gone. It was still night time when he ordered the people to leave, so they picked up what belongings they could carry and got out of there! 600 000 men left Egypt, as well as women and children. That's at least a million people!

God did not leave the Israelites on their own; He went before them in a cloud during the day and gave them light from a pillar of fire at night. Rather than taking them the quickest route to the promised land, He decided to lead them through the wilderness as they were not ready yet for all the fighting they would need to do to take the land for their own.

After some days of travel, God told Moses to have the people camp in a place that looked like they had turned back, and maybe gotten lost. He wanted to get rid of Pharaoh once and for all, because He knew that while Pharaoh lived, His people would never truly be free. When word reached Pharaoh that the Israelites were wandering about aimlessly in the wilderness, he ordered his entire army of chariots and men to ready themselves. They raced after the Israelites, intent on capturing them again.

When the Israelites saw Pharaoh and his huge army had caught up with them, they panicked. They were trapped between the army and the sea; there was nowhere for them to go! "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, only to die in the wilderness?" they cried to Moses, but he encouraged them to stay calm and watch God fight for them.

Sure enough, God had a plan. He moved the cloud to stand between the Israelites and the Egyptians and, as darkness fell, the cloud turned to fire, which kept the two groups safely apart. Meanwhile, Moses held his hand over the Red Sea. The Lord sent a wind, which blew all night, pushing back the sea and making a dry pathway through the middle of it. The Israelites walked through on this pathway, completely dry, with walls of water towering up on either side of them.

Pharaoh ordered his men after them, but God twisted the chariot wheels and confused the men so they did not quite catch up. The sun began to rise as the last Israelite stepped out of the sea onto land once more. Moses raised his hand over the sea and the waters rushed back into place, sweeping all the chariots and armed men away. That was the end of Pharaoh and the forces of Egypt. The people were free at last! They were full of awe and put their faith in God and Moses.

We have an old life to get away from, too. It's the life we live before we believe in Jesus and have our old sin nature taken away from us. Like the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, we need to turn away from that old life, and turn towards God in faith.

Questions

1. There were at least a million Israelite people! How did God lead them where He wanted them to go?
2. The Israelites were told to camp for the night at the edge of the Red Sea. Why was that?
3. How did the Israelites feel when Pharaoh changed his mind and decided to chase after them?
4. How did God make a way for the Israelites to escape from the trap they were in?
5. Do you think it would have been scary, fun or exciting to cross through the middle of the sea?
6. What happened to the Egyptians when they tried to follow the Israelites?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that You are close to Your children and, through your Holy Spirit, you help us to know which way to go in our lives. Thank you that You made a miracle happen and the sea was pushed back to make a dry path for the Israelites. Help us also to trust You when life gets tough. Amen.

Activity

Play 'follow the leader', with the person in front being cloud or fire. When they shout 'cloud' you follow them anywhere they go. When they shout 'fire', it's night time, so you have to lie down and close your eyes until they shout 'cloud' again.



Children's Study Day 20 - Manna

Parent Notes

Today we learn about two types of bread that came down from heaven - the manna given to the Israelites in the desert that kept them alive for forty years until they reached the promised land, and Jesus, who said he was the true bread for heaven, who gives all those who believe in him eternal life.

Story: Bread from Heaven (Based on Exodus 16:11-26, John 6)

A month into their new life outside of Egypt, the Israelites were still in the wilderness. They were not enjoying a life of walking slowly across the dry, barren land where there was little water and no food to eat. In fact, they were so hungry that they started complaining to Moses.

"We should never have left Egypt," they grumbled. "At least back there we had food - as much as we could eat! We are going to starve and it's all your fault!"

Moses prayed to God, who told him that, first of all, He would give the Israelites meat that evening, but after that he was going to rain down food from heaven so that every morning when they woke up, they could gather it off the ground!

That evening flocks of quail flew into the camp and settled down, more than enough for the people to eat them for dinner. In the morning, when the dew evaporated, a white substance like frost covered the ground. It was flaky and tasted a little bit like honey but it was like nothing the Israelites had ever seen before.

"What is it?" they exclaimed, completely mystified. So that's how manna got its name - this white flakey bread that the Israelites gathered for the next forty years, right until their last day in the wilderness. (Manna means, 'What is it?')

When Jesus came to Earth, he fed some big crowds, too, and He did it with bread. One time he fed 5000 men, not counting the women and children. Then, he asked his disciples to gather up the leftover scraps of bread lying about the ground. Maybe that reminded the Jewish people of Moses and the manna

in the desert because they suddenly got VERY excited and insisted they were going to make Jesus their king, right then and there. But Jesus hadn't come to Earth to be a king this time, He had come to be a saviour and to die on the cross. He also knew that these people did not have true faith in him ... they just wanted their tummies full of bread

Jesus told them that HE was the true bread from heaven, and if they believed in Him, they would have life forevermore. But the people couldn't understand what he meant and they for sure did not think he had come down from heaven! Many people turned away and left him that day, but Jesus' closest followers, his disciples, said no, they would stay with him because they believed Him. He was the only one who could give them life forevermore.

Now many people understand and believe. They are called Christians, because they follow Jesus Christ!

Questions

1. The Israelites were so unhappy, they actually began to think that going back to being slaves wasn't such a bad idea. What did they complain about?
2. How did God give the Israelites food?
3. What does the word 'manna' mean?
4. Can you imagine feeding one million people special bread from heaven 6 days a week for 40 YEARS? That's what God did! What else did he send from heaven to give people life?
5. What did Jesus feed all the thousands of people who came to listen to him?
6. Manna was just pointing the way to Jesus, who gives us life FOREVER. What did Jesus call himself? The true ...?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the way all the parts of the Bible work together to teach us about Jesus. Thank you that he came down from heaven, like manna, to give us life forever. Amen

Activity

See if your Mum or Dad will sprinkle cornflakes, rice bubbles, oats or similar cereal pieces around the ground. Race your brothers or sisters (or parents) to pick up as much as you can into a bowl or basket. Be careful not to bump your heads! Then, you can have fun scattering what you collected outside for the birds. They like manna, too!