

T H E
BIG
G  **D**
STORY
past. present. future.

Bible Study Resource

A family or small group resource
for **preschool** through **elementary** age kids



THE BIG GOD STORY BIBLE STUDY RESOURCE

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Before You Begin

What Story Are Your Children Living?

As people, we are designed to love stories and to live stories. We all live inside a story, whether we recognize it or not. We tell ourselves a story of what the world is about, what's important, and what our place in the story is.

Our culture bombards our children with a story that says life is "all about me." It tells them that they are born by chance, that life is about getting what they want, and that death is the end of the story. The Bible tells a different story, a story of a Lover pursuing His created ones in order to have a personal relationship with each one of them. This story is "all about God." It tells children that they are born because God wants them, that life is about knowing and loving Him, and that death is not at all the end of the story. It tells them that The Big God Story started long ago, has been lived by people for many centuries, is going somewhere exciting, has a place for each child, and is centered on Jesus.

This resource is designed to help you plant The Big God Story into the hearts of the children in your ministry or family, whether they are preschoolers or elementary age. It is designed for 15 group meetings, with an optional one at the beginning to view The Big God Story video. But it can be modified to meet your context or schedule as needed.

This resource envisions an adult leader and a small group of two to eight children. If you have

more than eight children, you will probably want to divide into discussion/activity groups of up to eight children with a leader for each group. If you are a parent with one child, that's not a problem; you can have the discussion and do the activities one-on-one with your child.

The following content is divided into 15 sessions. Ideally you'll cover one in each group meeting, but if you don't have time for 15 meetings, you can combine sessions or omit some.



KIT MATERIALS

The Big God Story Media Pack contains:

- this Bible study resource
- *The Big God Story* video (an animated version)
- a video in which Michelle Anthony presents The Big God Story verbally (for older children, parents, and leaders to view)
- a Bible timeline (to be posted on the wall or used on a table)
- Bible people (in sizes small, medium, large)
- "The Big God Story" song from the *Songs from the Playhouse* album
- a video with visual lyrics for "The Big God Story" song
- a motions video for "The Big God Story" song

Preparing for Your Meetings

Timeline. The Media Pack contains a timeline and Bible people images so children can see where the individual Bible people and their narratives fit into The Big God Story. In the room where you'll lead this study, attach the provided timeline to the wall or set aside a table to display the components. Have the small Bible people images available so you or a member of the group can tape them to the timeline when they learn each person's part of the story. If you would like to, you can create a larger version of the timeline out of yarn or posterboard and paint and use the larger timeline figures provided.

Videos. All of the adults who will lead the children's groups should view the videos ahead of time. The video of Michelle presenting The Big God Story will communicate the story on an adult level so leaders have an adult understanding of the story. The animated video will be shown to the children, and leaders will find it helpful to know what to expect. If you or other leaders find anything in The Big God Story that you don't understand, you can identify your questions before meeting with the children.

If you would like to teach The Big God Story song and motions to your children's group(s), have leaders view the song videos ahead of time as well and become familiar with the lyrics and motions.

The guide. You may want to three-hole punch this guide and put it in a three-ring binder for easy reference and storage. Lastly, take some time to look through it and begin thinking about which activities you will want to do over the course of the study. Several of them require additional prep time. The activities are currently placed at the end of your Bible study time to get kids moving after your discussion. If you find you have a group of particularly tactile learners, you may want to use the activity at the beginning of your time and talk through the discussion portion while engaging their hands.

Room Setup

This Bible study resource envisions the following room setup, which you may decide to adapt: The room has a *video screen* at the front. One wall has the *timeline* on it. Children may sit on the floor, or may need *chairs*. A *table* or *tables* are recommended for some activities.

Optional Meeting:

The Big God Story Video and Song

You may choose to show the animated Big God Story video to the children before spending time on the story of Adam and Eve. The video is approximately 12 minutes long and will give children the big picture before they explore the individual episodes. Children need to know that the episodes in the Bible are connected together in one big story that makes sense and awakens wonder as a whole.

In this optional meeting, you can also introduce “The Big God Story” song.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- *The Big God Story* animated video
- “The Big God Story” visual lyrics video



INTRODUCTION

Before you show the animated video, introduce it by saying something like this:

Did you know that you and I are part of the most exciting story ever told? It's the story of God. The people in the Bible are all part of that story, and you and I are part of it too. We're going to watch a video that tells this story. As you watch it, remember that this is your story.



THE BGS ANIMATED VIDEO

Show the video to the group.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

Here are some questions you can use to get your group talking about the video.

Who is the most important person in the story? How can you tell?

God is the most important person. He's in every scene. He set the story in motion by making the world. Jesus is God, and He came to earth at just the right time to save us from sin. And Jesus is coming back for us. (If children say Jesus is the most important person in the story, that's a right answer too.)

Have you ever heard about any of the other people in the story before? Who?

This question will help you know which parts of the story are familiar to which children. For some, many of the individual people may be familiar, and they most need to know how the story fits together. For others, it will all be new.

Is this a story you want to be part of? Why?

There's no wrong answer here. Find out what children think of the story.



MUSIC RESPONSE

Show "The Big God Story" visual lyrics video. Begin teaching the song. Use it to give children a chance to worship the author of this incredible story.



1 Adam and Eve



IN THE BIBLE

You can read the full story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1—3.

Background

As you open the pages of the Bible, the events in the garden of Eden may seem like a simple narrative about paradise and mankind's tragic fall from grace. But hints of the gospel story are found throughout this wonderful beginning to The Big God Story. As you discuss these events with your group this week, you'll be setting the stage for kids to understand what God has promised them throughout the entire Bible. Don't be afraid to go deep or discuss topics you think your group might not understand, because teaching even a four- or five-year-old about redemption and forgiveness of sins is foundational to a lifetime of faith in God.

In this narrative we see that God is holy and different from us. However, God let Adam and Eve have free access to Him in a perfect and loving relationship. But now, because of their sin choice and the ones we have made, the only access we have to His throne is through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Their sin has been passed on from generation to generation like a hereditary disease—you'll see it throughout the Bible. Sadly, Adam and Eve took their open access to God for granted while they walked with Him in the garden, and no person on earth since then has known the

joy of unhindered communication with God. But someday we will! We will because of God's promise to send a Redeemer—one who would break the bondage of sin and restore perfect relationship. Jesus fulfilled this promise two thousand years ago on a cross in a little town in Israel.

As you teach your group The Big God Story, always come back to this promise. It is the connecting theme throughout all history. Ask children to look for how the promise is being preserved at each point. You will be encouraged and inspired by their insight, and you just might wonder who's teaching whom by the time you're finished with this resource!

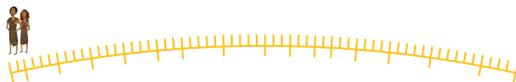
Adam and Eve: A Children's Version

To remind children of the beginning of The Big God Story, you can view the first part of the animated video together. Or you can read aloud this summary:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, the rivers, the oceans, the sun, moon, and stars, the trees, the birds, and animals of every kind. Last of all, He created the first man and woman: Adam and Eve. These first people were created by God to be in relationship with Him in a beautiful garden. Sadly, one day Adam and Eve disobeyed God. This sin broke their close relationship with Him, and this sin led to consequences. One consequence was that they had to leave the garden. But God

promised that, one day, a Redeemer would come to restore that relationship. This promised Redeemer would be the salvation for everyone. After God made this promise, people began to wait for the promise to be fulfilled.

Ask for a child volunteer to tape the *Adam* and *Eve* figures to the timeline. An older child might be able to judge where to put them. A younger child might need you to tell them where to place Adam and Eve.



Aa DEFINITIONS

The following words are used in the conversation starters and explanations below. These simplified definitions are meant to help young children grasp the concepts more easily. You may want to use these definitions as you teach or you may stop and ask children, “**What is sin? Can anybody tell me what sin is?**” or “**What does it mean to forgive somebody?**”

Relationship—A friendship between two people. You can choose a relationship, like you choose your friends, or you can be born into a relationship, like with your mom or dad.

Holy—Completely perfect in goodness and love. Because people sin and God is completely perfect, He is totally different from us. We can never be good enough to be holy, no matter how hard we try.

Sin—Anything other than perfect goodness and love. Usually we sin by disobeying God, but even if we think we’re very obedient, there are still hidden sins in our lives. We do bad things without paying attention, we don’t treat people with as much love as we should, and we want to do bad things that we would do if we could get away with them. We will always sin, as long as we live on earth. (Note

to leaders: Sin literally means “missing the mark.” Explain to your group from personal experience how you expect obedience and they may “miss the mark,” even if they try hard to obey.)

Forgiveness—God decides He will not be angry because of our sins anymore. Forgiveness comes through the death of Jesus when we accept it in our lives. When we are forgiven, we can have a relationship/friendship with God.

Redeemer—Because of our sin, we need a Redeemer to let us be friends with God again. To “redeem” means to take something that is broken or sinful and make it fixed or holy again. This isn’t free; it’s very expensive. And the only person who could pay for it was Jesus, because the cost was a perfect life. You see, Jesus never, ever—not once—sinned. He is perfect. Jesus knew this was the price, and He was willing to pay it because He loved us so much.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1 Talk about the seven days of creation.

Day 1: Light and darkness

Day 2: The heavens (or sky)

Day 3: The sea, the land, and plants/trees

Day 4: Sun, moon, and stars

Day 5: Sea creatures and birds

Day 6: Creatures on earth and man/woman

Day 7: God rested

Ask your group to imagine what it would have been like to watch God create the world. Provoke their wonder with statements such as:

I wonder what the earth looked like without light or the sun, moon, and stars. What do you think?

I wonder what it was like when God told the ocean it could only go so far up on the land. What do you think?

I wonder what animals He created first.

I wonder what the garden must have looked like with all the animals playing together.

I wonder, if I were to get to create an animal, what it would look like. What sort of animal would you like to create?

2 Talk about:

Adam and Eve were God's friends. When they lived in the garden of Eden with God, they had a perfect relationship with Him. He had made them to be perfect, and they had never done anything wrong. They had the freedom to see God face-to-face and talk to Him at any time.

Ask your group to imagine what it would have been like to be God's friend in this way. You might say:

I wonder what it was like to see God face to face and talk to Him whenever they wanted. How would that make you feel?

Some children may love this idea, and some may find it scary. There's no wrong answer.

3 Talk about:

God made the whole garden of Eden and wanted Adam and Eve to enjoy all of it. It was their home. They could eat the fruit from almost all the trees. But He told them they weren't allowed to eat from one tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They knew they weren't supposed to eat from this tree, but Satan (God's enemy) appeared to them as a snake and tricked Eve into eating it anyway. Sadly, Adam ate it too! They chose to disobey God's rules on purpose. This is called sin.

Can you imagine doing what Adam and Eve did? If your parent says, "Don't do this," do you obey all the time?

Children respond.

Why not?

Profound answers are not necessary here. The point is to get children thinking about how they are like Adam and Eve.

4 Talk about:

Why was it such a big deal when Adam and Eve sinned? Why did this ruin their relationship with God? Because God is perfect. He has never, ever, ever done anything wrong—ever. He is completely right all the time. Because of this, we call Him holy. He hates sin and can't be around it.

When Adam and Eve chose to disobey, they sinned. God could no longer live in the garden with them, so they had to leave. This is a big deal because the punishment didn't just affect Adam and Eve. All people born on earth after them—everyone—now has to live with a broken friendship or relationship with God.

How does this make you feel about God? Does it make you happy or scared or mad? Why?

It's natural to find God's holiness scary. People in the Bible get scared of God's holiness a lot. That's why they're so happy to find out about a Redeemer who takes away their sin. On the other hand, some people feel angry about this situation with sin. It doesn't seem fair that we're born with sin because of what people a long, long time ago did. If some in your group feel this way, you can explain that we inherit lots of things from our parents. Some of those things are things we're glad to have, like brown eyes, and some are things we wish we didn't have, like sin. But it's the way humans are made. We can feel mad at Adam and Eve for messing up, or mad at our parents for giving us hair we don't like, and that's understandable. But eventually we need to get past being mad and be glad that God has given us a way to get rid of the sin we were born with. We also need to take responsibility for the sinful things we do. They aren't Adam's fault. We all have a choice.

5 Talk about:

Why do we need a Redeemer? Can't we just say we're sorry? Well, sometimes just saying you're sorry isn't enough. There are consequences. God is perfect, and in order to live with Him, we must be perfect in love and goodness too. But that's impossible! The Bible tells us that all people have sinned (Romans 3:23). That's why God sent the Redeemer. Jesus never sinned, either on purpose or by accident. And on the cross, He has taken the consequences of our sin. So when God looks at us, instead of seeing our sin, God looks at Jesus' perfect life. Jesus makes it possible for us to be close to the holy God if we have Jesus as our Redeemer.

Ask your group what they think about Jesus taking the consequences of their sin, including the sinful things they have chosen to do.

6 Talk about:

What happened when Adam and Eve left the garden? Their friendship with God was different. They couldn't walk and talk with Him like they had before. God said that from that point on, people had to work hard to survive on this earth. Their easy life in paradise was over, and days of hard work and strained relationships were ahead of them. They now needed a Redeemer in order to have a friendship with God and to live in peace with one another again.

Have you sinned? Do you need to ask God to be your Redeemer too?

Everyone has sinned—every single person. We all need to be redeemed! If you want to confess your sin and ask God to be your Redeemer, you can pray to Him. Here is a sample prayer:

Dear God, I know that I have sinned and that You are holy. Because of this, we have a broken relationship. I trust that You sent Jesus to pay the price for my sin and to be my Redeemer. Thank You for doing this for me and for loving me even though I sin.

Please forgive my sin and come into my life to show me how to live in relationship with You and others. Amen.



MUSIC RESPONSE

After hearing and discussing God's Word, take a few minutes to respond to Him through song. Select a worship song of your choice or sing "God of Love" from the TruWorship Songs from the Playhouse album.



ACTIVITY

Option 1: Mud Experiment

The garden of Eden shows us God's amazing creativity and care for His handiwork. Invite children to interact with God's creation through this cool experiment with cornstarch and water.



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- cornstarch
- water
- 1 bowl or plastic bin
- wet wipes or wet paper towels (for messy hands)

Note: It's a good idea for leaders to try this ahead of time to get a feel for the right cornstarch and water ratio.

Pour the cornstarch into a bowl. Add water. As you are adding the water, stir the mixture with your hands; this is the best way to gauge consistency. The goal is to add enough water that the mixture will flow very slowly.

Encourage kids to dig their hands into the mud, mix it up, and feel the texture. As they explore, they will begin to see that they can squeeze it into a ball, but when they open their hands, it turns into a liquid. They can also try rolling it into a ball. The quicker they move their hands, the longer the mud will stay in a solid form. The ball may even bounce. They can try hitting it too. If they hit it hard enough it may even break. But if it sits still, it becomes goo again! Ask them open-ended questions about their observations, such as:

How does the mud feel?

What happened to the mud when you _____?

What other cool things have you done with stuff you can find around your house?

What do these kinds of experiments tell you about God?

Afterward, end with a short prayer, thanking God for making the world and being creative when He did it!

Option 2: Watch It Grow!

 **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- 1 large bowl filled with potting soil
- 1 bowl of seeds
- peat pots or cups (one for each child)
- water in a small watering can

Invite the group to pot their own plants! For younger children, you may want to let them explore the texture of the dirt and seeds before they plant and ask them open-ended questions like:

What do you see in each container?

How does it feel?

Is it cold or hot?

What do you do with _____?

What happens when you put _____ and _____ together?

Why do you think that happens?

Tell me about ...

Then have them fill their peat pots with soil, plant a couple of seeds, and give them a good watering. Encourage the kids to water their plants every day and keep them in a sunny spot. In a few days, they will see one of the wonders of God's creation pop up!