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The
Catholic Family Connections Bible

Leader Guide

**PRAY IT
STUDY IT
LIVE IT®**

Leader Guide for

***The Catholic Family
Connections Bible***

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Printed in the United States of America

4404

ISBN 978-1-59982-108-5

*“[The word] is something
very near to you, in your
mouth and in your heart.”
(Deuteronomy 30:14)*

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Introduction

Welcome to the *Leader Guide for “The Catholic Family Connections Bible.”* Designed as a companion piece to *The Catholic Family Connections Bible*, this guide includes activities for families, adults, teens, and elementary school children. Because it covers so many group configurations and age-groups, this guide can be a flexible help in preparing Scripture classes, activities, retreats, and other events for any and all groups. Let’s take a quick look at how this guide can help you to teach the Bible to the families, adults, teens, and children in your parish.

Tag That Activity!

Each activity centers on a particular biblical passage describing a particular biblical event or theme, whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. Each activity is tagged with the age-group for which it is intended: Elementary, Teen, Adult, or Family. After choosing the Scripture passages or events you will be teaching, you can easily find the activity best suited to your participants.

Elementary Activities

As elementary children (grades 1 through 6) vary greatly in age and in understanding, look for the included adaptations for older elementary children and younger elementary children. Many of the elementary activities are hands-on, as children learn by doing. Others provide opportunities for creative involvement through artwork and song. Collaborative efforts in short plays based on biblical events (including the opportunity to dress in costume) help to make learning about the Word of God in the Bible both accessible and enjoyable.

Teen Activities

The teen activities rely on interaction with both teacher and peers, as well as on creative opportunities to express the teachings of the Bible in contemporary terms. Teens are encouraged to think through the events and themes recorded in the Bible, often aided by contemporary films and music, and to apply these themes and teachings to their own lives.

Adult Activities

Most adults have some knowledge of the Scriptures but may be fuzzy on the details and meaning of the events of salvation history recounted in the Bible. These activities provide opportunities for adults to discuss these biblical events in a friendly and casual format, thus integrating new information with what they already know and believe.

Family Activities

The activities for families engage family members in group experiences that potentially include all family members (except, of course, the infants!). The activities are designed so families can do them at home, or they could be offered as the focal point of a family Bible study sponsored by the parish. Options and suggestions are given to accommodate various age-groups. The family activities provide a gateway to family fun and biblical learning at the same time!

Activity Masters

Where appropriate, activity masters are provided to facilitate learning. Each activity master is labeled with a number, its age-group, and the session number. In order to keep duplication of numbers to a minimum, the activity masters are numbered consecutively throughout the book, from 1 to 39.

Prayer Sessions (Opening and Closing Prayers)

At the end of this guide, you will find opening and closing prayers for eighteen biblical themes, based on the structure of the Liturgy of the Hours. These prayer sessions provide an overview to the entire Bible, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation. Note that for the prayer services and throughout this guide, the New American Bible translation has been used.

Connection to *The Catholic Family Connections Bible*

In *The Catholic Family Connections Bible*, the introductions to each book of the Bible (one provided by the New American Bible and the other a summary from Saint Mary's Press) are particularly worth reading. In addition, *The Catholic Family Connections Bible* provides a wealth of material, through its various features, to aid in understanding the message of the Scriptures. In some of the activities in this guide, reading and discussing these features is suggested. However, these features are supplementary; the sessions in this guide can be completed without them. It is important, however, that each participant have a Bible in order to participate fully in the activities.

We at Saint Mary's Press hope you enjoy the variety of activities provided in this *Leader Guide to "The Catholic Family Connections Bible."* Our aim is to please all of the people (children, teens, adults, and families!) all of the time. However, knowing that this is not always possible, we hope that with this guide we have given you a tool that pleases *you*—as parent, catechist, or parish leader—at least *most* of the time!

Session 1

Creation

Genesis, chapters 1–2

Elementary

A Creation Mural

Making a creation mural will help the children to appreciate and care for all of God’s gifts.

Gather the following items: a sheet of white newsprint; a roll of masking tape; sheets of blank drawing paper, one for each participant; crayons or markers, several for each participant; several bottles of glue; several pairs of scissors; copies of “Activity Master 1 (Elementary Session 1): Creation Chant,” one for each participant; and small squares cut from magazine pictures and outlines of creation figures on plain paper, if working with older elementary children.

1. Tell the creation account in Genesis, chapter 1, to the children in your own words, or read aloud the account in Gen 1:1—2:3 with expression and gestures.
2. Divide the large group into six small groups, one for each day of creation: (1) light (day and night); (2) water (the sea); (3) earth (plants, seeds, and fruits); (4) lights in the sky (sun, moon, and stars); (5) sea creatures and birds; (6) wild animals, cattle, and creeping things, with man and woman. Then ask the children what God did on the seventh day. (He rested!)
3. Post a sheet of newsprint on a wall. Lightly separate (with pencil) the space on the paper into six areas. Label each area with a number for the day. Give each small group its assignment: to draw part of God’s creation to cut out and glue to the mural. Give each child a sheet of blank drawing paper and crayons or markers. Take some time with each small group to talk about what they might draw. For example, some in the first group might draw daytime, others draw the night. Emphasize that each person’s drawing can be different, even though each small group has the same topic.
4. The children may cut out their figures and glue them on the mural, or they may glue the whole drawing. Help the children to find the correct section of the mural.


**Activity
Master 1**

5. When all have finished pasting their pictures, affirm their work as reflecting so well the beauty of God's creation. You may want to end with the call-and-response chant, accompanied with a steady clap, as on "Activity Master 1 (Elementary Session 1): Creation Chant."

Note: You may want to have older elementary children make their creation figures as paper mosaics. Have available magazine photos cut into squares of about ½ inch. Divide them into colors: red, blue, black, brown, green, and so on. They will usually not be purely one color. Have the children outline the figure (a tree or an animal, for example) and glue the appropriate colors onto the figure, and then glue the figure onto the mural.

Teen

Creative Presentation of the Creation Story

The young people make the first Genesis story come alive with their own creativity.

Gather the following items: sheets of poster board, one for each participant; several boxes of crayons and markers; several pairs of scissors; several rolls of tape; sheets of white and colored construction paper; several cardboard tubes from paper rolls; several bottles of glue, and miscellaneous craft papers.

1. Call on several participants to read aloud Gen 1:1—2:3, each reading one or two paragraphs.
2. Divide the large group into seven small groups. Assign a different day of creation to each group and say something like this to the young people:
 - Today each small group is responsible for reading from Genesis the Bible passage associated with its assigned day of creation and preparing a creative, nonverbal way to present that day to the other groups. You may use any of the materials here to present your day. (*Display the craft materials.*) In using the art materials, try to make your piece three-dimensional, not just flat art. You may also use music (if there is a selection available) and nonverbal drama to accompany your presentation. Each presentation should run no longer than 4 minutes. The presentations should be respectful of the Scriptures, bring out the beauty of creation, and be fun as well. You will be given about 30 minutes to prepare your presentation. I will be coming around to help you with ideas.
3. Ask the groups to give their presentations in biblical order. After the presentations, invite the young people to discuss any insights or reflections that resulted from preparing or watching them.

Adult

The Creation of the World

God created the world out of love and human beings in his image and likeness. This activity helps us to recognize the goodness of all creation and when our creative activity is "in the image of God."

Key Verse: “God saw that it was good.” (Gen 1:10)

Gather the following items: a whiteboard or sheet of poster board with black, green, red, and blue markers.

1. Prepare for this activity by dividing the whiteboard or poster board into seven sections, labeled 1–7 for the days of creation. Explain that we are going to start at the beginning, both literally and figuratively, with the story of creation.
2. Distribute the markers to four different people and explain that the colors refer to the different categories of creation:
 - black: elements, such as light, wind, sky, land
 - green: plants, such as fruit trees, plants with seeds
 - red: animals, including birds, creeping things, cattle
 - blue: humanity
3. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Gen 1:1—2:3. As each category of creation is mentioned, have the person with the appropriate color marker write that word on the whiteboard or poster board under the appropriate day.
4. Ask each person with a marker to read aloud what he or she wrote on the board. Point out that humans were created on the same day as mammals, not birds or reptiles. Ask the participants to discuss why humans might have been created the same day as cattle and wild animals. Discuss what is different about the creation of man and woman as opposed to the rest of creation.
5. Refer back to the reading from Genesis. Have the participants note the first time that God calls creation “good” (verse 18, the third day). Ask them to talk about why God might have waited until that point to say his work was good. What about the work made it good? Would it have been possible for God to create something that wasn’t good?
6. Have the participants form small groups to discuss the following questions:
 - When you create something good, do you recognize that it is good?
 - Are you willing to accept praise for your creative abilities? Why or why not?
 - Is acknowledging that you have created something “good” being prideful? Why or why not?
 - Why is it so hard to accept compliments about our creative endeavors?
7. Gather the participants back into the large group and ask each person to state one good thing she or he can do that is creative. Model with the following formula, using your own example:
 - I bake chocolate chip cookies that my family loves. I know that my cookies are very good.

After each person states what he or she is good at, have the rest of the group affirm by saying, “And God saw how good it was.”
8. Close the session by asking a volunteer to read aloud Gen 1:31: “God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.”

God Created the World

The Bible opens with the story of creation. Children in particular need to understand that everything God made is good. Because they themselves are made by God, they too are good and loved by God. (Some adults need to hear this as well.)

Gather the following items: several pictures of creation (plants, animals, etc.); gingerbread dough, a gingerbread person cookie cutter, and candies for decoration; or premade gingerbread people cookies and candies for decoration; and a platter to hold the finished cookies.

1. Have a parent or leader begin by explaining that God made everything in our world, from the rocks and dirt to the plants and animals and humans. The parent or leader should emphasize that God made everything in the world and that God knew everything he made was good.

Note: You may want to do step 2 after step 3 if you are going to be baking gingerbread people. It will help to pass the time while the cookies are baking. If you are simply decorating the cookies, then do step 2 first.

2. Hold up pictures of plants, animals, and so on, or go for a short walk. Point out various items of creation and ask:
 - ▶ Did God make this?
(YES!)
 - ▶ Because God made it, is it good?
(YES!)

Be sure to point out or talk about some of the not-so-nice things, like bugs or snakes, to emphasize the fact that everything God made is good, even the things we don't especially like.

Continue until it's time to take the cookies out of the oven or the children start to get bored (5 to 10 minutes).

3. If you have access to a kitchen, you can make and bake gingerbread people. Otherwise, have the gingerbread people already baked and have the participants decorate them. (Don't let adults get away with just watching. Have them decorate a cookie as well!)
4. As you cut out and/or decorate the gingerbread people, explain how God made all of us, just like we are making these cookies. Talk about how even though the cookies are all made from the same dough, each one looks a little bit different. Just like the cookies, we are each unique and special, but just like each cookie, we are each very, very good. We aren't making bad cookies, and God does not make anything that is bad.
5. Ask each person to talk about what makes his or her cookie special.
6. When the cookies are finished, put them on a platter in the middle of the table and ask the following questions:
 - ▶ Who made the world?
(*God made everything in the world.*)

- ▶ Did God make anything that is bad?
(God can't make anything bad. Everything God makes is good, including you and me. Point out that although God only creates goodness, bad things exist in the world because people sometimes go against God's will and make wrong or sinful choices that lead to suffering. Examples of bad things in the world include bullies, crime, and poverty.)
 - ▶ Does God love everything he made?
(God loves everything he made, even the snakes and bugs.)
7. Finish by eating the cookies (or sending them home with the participants).



Creation Chant

Leader: Who made the DAY?

Children: GOD made the day!

Leader: Who made the NIGHT?

Children: GOD made the night!

Leader: Who made the DAY and the NIGHT?

Children: GOD DID!

Leader: Who made the SEA?

Children: GOD made the sea!

Leader: Who made the EARTH?

Children: GOD made the earth!

Leader: Who made the SEA and the EARTH?

Children: GOD DID!

Leader: Who made the SUN?

Children: GOD made the sun!

Leader: Who made the MOON?

Children: GOD made the moon!

Leader: Who made the STARS?

Children: GOD made the stars!

Leader: Who made the SUN and the MOON and the STARS?

Children: GOD DID!

(Continue with the pairs BIRDS and the CREATURES OF THE SEA;
ANIMALS and the CREEPY CRAWLY ONES; the MAN and the WOMAN.)

Last verse:

Leader: And on the seventh DAY

Children: And on the seventh DAY

Leader: What did God DO?

Children: What did God DO?

Leader: He RESTED!

Children: He RESTED!

Leader: He DID!

Children: He DID!

All: HE DID, HE DID, HE DID! AMEN!

Session 2

The First Sin *Genesis, chapter 3*

Elementary

Who Hates Rules?

The children engage in an activity without rules to learn the reasons for rules in our lives.

Gather the following items: team sport balls or board games.

1. Read aloud the account of the first sin in Genesis, chapter 3, with expression and gestures. Recall that God made a rule for the man and woman to follow: that they should not touch the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden.
2. Have the children play a game of basketball, soccer, or some other team sport. Tell them that today there are no rules! (Be sure to maintain a safe environment.) Or, bring a checkers game or other board games and set up the games in small groups for the children to play. But again, there are no rules!
3. After a short period of time, the children will surely start to become a little frustrated, angry, or bored. When this becomes obvious, call the games to an end. Process the experience with the group. Use the following questions as discussion starters:
 - ▶ How did you feel when you first heard that the game would have no rules? So what happened?
 - ▶ Did you become frustrated or angry or bored? Why?
 - ▶ When you play a game, how do rules help you play?
4. Recall Gen 2:15–17 to the children or read it aloud. Present these thoughts in your own words:
 - ▶ God gave human beings this rule because he cares for us, much as a parent gives a child the rule, “Look both ways before you cross the street.” This direction or limitation is given out of love and concern.
5. Read aloud Gen 3:1–6. Explain that the serpent wants to lead Adam and Eve away from God. Discuss these verses with the following questions:
 - ▶ What reason does the serpent give for God not allowing Adam and Eve to eat from the tree?
(*The serpent says that God doesn’t want them to be as powerful as he is.*)
 - ▶ Why did Adam and Eve believe the serpent?

(The serpent was lying, but Adam and Eve trusted the serpent's words more than they trusted God's words to them.)

- ▶ How can we sometimes be like Adam and Eve in our choices?
(We can sometimes go against God or our parents and teachers. We can believe people who are lying because we like what they're saying. We should listen to our parents and teachers, not to people who lie or who lead us the wrong way.)

6. With the entire group, discuss rules the children have been taught to follow. Write these on the board. For each rule, discuss the reason for it and explain the way it helps us to listen to our parents and teachers, to be safe, or to make good choices in our lives.



**Activity
Masters
2 & 3**

Note: For older elementary children, you may want to supplement this activity with “Activity Master 2 (Elementary Session 2): Adam and Eve” and “Activity Master 3 (Elementary Session 2): Adam and Eve.”

Teen

The Effect of Sin: Distance

Gather the following items: four sheets of light cardboard (from cereal boxes) for four large labels.

This activity invites the young people to reflect on the effects of sin described in Genesis, chapter 3, and then to consider how sin in their own lives can distance them from God, themselves, others, and nature.

1. Ask five volunteers to stand before the group and read aloud the parts for the characters in Genesis, chapter 3: narrator, serpent, woman, man, and God. Quietly direct the individuals who have the parts of the man and the woman to move farther from each other and from God as they read aloud their lines.
2. After the reading, ask the group what they observed about the characters. Then make the following comments in your own words:
 - ▶ This story of disobedience to God shows how sin can affect our lives. Sin separates us from God and others, and from ourselves and nature.
(Ask the young people to explain this concept from the story.)
 - ▶ Before they sin, the man and the woman in the story are in a harmonious relationship with all that is around them. After they sin, they think about themselves only, and they stop looking at God, each other, the world, and even their innermost selves.
3. Divide the large group into four small groups, labeling them “God,” “Myself,” “Other People,” and “The Natural World.” Ask each group to come up with at least three things someone can do to create a distance between themselves and the entity identified by the group’s label. Then tell the groups each to plan a brief pantomime that presents one of those actions and shows the separation that can occur. The groups should be creative and include all the members in their presentations. Allow the groups 10 to 15 minutes to plan and rehearse their pantomimes.
4. Invite each group in turn to present its pantomime, and ask the rest of the large group to guess what is being portrayed. Discuss the points the

groups bring out in their presentations. Conclude by saying this in your own words:

- ▶ God knew what the man and woman needed in order to be in harmony with the world around them. God knows what we need today as well. In the Scripture passage, sin is portrayed as the temptation to presume that we know better what we need than God does. Observing what brings us closer to, or distances us from, others, ourselves, God, and the world is a step toward learning what God wants for us.

Adult

Disobedience and the First Sin

Adam and Eve's disobedience brings alienation and Original Sin. In this activity, the participants examine how all sin begins first in thought and how, by taking their thoughts captive, they can resist temptation.

Key Verse: "The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil!" (Gen 3:22)

Gather the following items: sheets of blank paper, envelopes, and pens or pencils, one of each for each participant; a large bowl; and a pitcher filled with water.

1. Ask a volunteer to briefly recount the story of Adam and Eve in her or his own words. Write on a board some of the key words or phrases she or he uses, such as "eating an apple," "the snake," "the devil."
2. Divide the large group into five small groups, representing the narrator, Adam, Eve, the serpent, and God. Have each group read Genesis, chapter 3, and list all the "facts" relating to their character in the story. For example, Eve is the only one who spoke to the serpent, and God realized that Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruit only after seeing that they were clothed and not naked.
3. Gather the participants back together in the large group and ask someone from each small group to point out the differences they discovered between the story as we all "know" it and the actual account in Genesis. For instance, there is no mention of an apple, only "the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden"; the serpent is never directly identified as the devil; and the reason Eve ate the fruit was to gain knowledge. Take time to allow people to discuss what might have surprised them, what they might have not realized, and what they assumed was in the story but really wasn't.

Explain that the reason an apple was associated with the forbidden fruit was because of a word play in Latin. *Malus* means apple and *Malum* means evil. In the plural, they are the same word: *Mala*.

4. Discuss the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve for Adam and Eve.
5. Discuss how relationships were altered between the people and God, between man and woman, and between people and creation.

6. Next, ask everyone to close their eyes and sit quietly for a few moments. Then say, in your own words:

► I want you not to think about a purple sheep. Under no circumstances are you to think about a purple sheep with pink horns. You must not think about a purple sheep with pink horns and a big white bow around its neck.

Then tell everyone to open their eyes and ask three or four people to say what they had been thinking about. When the point has been made that everyone immediately envisioned a purple sheep, explain that all sin, including that of Adam and Eve, first begins in the mind.

7. Read aloud Gen 3:1 and show how the serpent got Eve to focus on the one thing God didn't want her to think about. Explain that the sin began not with action but with thought. Point out how Eve convinced herself that the fruit was good to eat, pleasing to the eye, and desirable for wisdom *before* she actually picked it.

8. Ask a volunteer to read aloud 2 Cor 10:3–5. Then discuss the following questions as a large group:

► What does it mean to “take every thought captive”?
 ► What could Eve have done when the serpent first introduced the thought of the fruit?
 ► What sorts of strategies might we use to take thoughts of temptation captive when they first enter our mind?

(List these on the board.)

9. Distribute the paper, envelopes, and pens or pencils. Ask the participants to each write down the statement “Take every thought captive in obedience to Christ” and then to list one or more areas where worry or temptation are troublesome in their lives. Ask them to seal their lists in the envelopes. Emphasize that no one will ever see what they have written, and then collect the lists. Have each person place their list in the bowl while saying, “In obedience to Christ, I take these thoughts captive.” When everyone has placed their lists in the bowl, remind the participants of the phrase “Deliver us from evil” in the Lord’s Prayer. Then pour water over the “thoughts” to snuff them out. As you slowly pour the water, recite the Lord’s Prayer together as a closing prayer.

Family

The First Sin in the World

This story deals with the first sin in the world. All of us need to understand that it was this first sin that brought so much pain and evil into the world. It is because of sin that Jesus came to make our world right again.

Gather the following items: stiff paper; scissors; crayons, markers, or paint; glitter, cotton balls, or other decorative items to make puppets; a piece of fruit; and apples or apple pie, enough for everyone to snack on.

1. Ask a parent or leader to begin by explaining the following in their own words:

- ▶ Life is full of choices. Every choice we make causes something else to happen. Sometimes our choices are good and make people happy. Sometimes our choices are bad and make people unhappy. Today we are going to learn about Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God. Because of their decision, all sorts of other bad things, like sickness and suffering, have come into the world.
2. Read aloud Genesis, chapter 3, or retell the story of Adam and Eve. Be sure to have read Genesis, chapter 3, beforehand to refresh your memory and get the facts straight. (For example, Adam and Eve didn't eat "an apple"; rather, they ate of "the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.")
 3. Make finger puppets for Adam, Eve, and the serpent. If you have more than three participants, make puppets that represent various animals and the angels who guard the gates of Eden.
 - **Step 1:** Draw the outline of the body, not including the legs, for Adam and Eve. Make just a head for the serpent.
 - **Step 2:** Cut out the figure.
 - **Step 3:** Color in details like eyes, hair, and other features.
 - **Step 4:** Decorate with yarn for hair, pieces of paper for snake scales, and so on. Use your imagination. Make them as creative as you want.
 - **Step 5:** Cut two holes large enough for a child to put his or her fingers through to serve as legs for Adam and Eve. Cut just one big hole for the serpent, for a child's fingers to poke through to make it "slither."
 4. Choose three participants to play the roles of Adam, Eve, and the serpent. Choose another participant to be the narrator, the voice of God.
 5. Have the actors act out the story of Adam and Eve with the puppets. You may want to have a piece of fruit in the center of the table.
 6. When the skit is over, gather everyone together and ask the following questions:
 - ▶ What was the choice Adam and Eve made?
(Adam and Eve had to choose between obeying God or listening to Satan, and they chose to listen to Satan.)
 - ▶ Why did God have to punish them?
(God punished them because they disobeyed his order not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden.)
 - ▶ What promise did God make?
(The promise was that one day someone would come and crush the power of evil. That person is Jesus.)



Adam and Eve

Read the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:4—3:24, then fill in the blanks in the statements below. To find out if your answers are correct, find each of your answers in the word search. Put the unused letters from the word search in the spaces at the bottom of the page to spell out a fact about Adam and Eve.

1. When the Lord God created the earth, nothing was growing on it because there was no ___ ___ ___ and no man to cultivate the ground.
2. The Lord God formed man out of the clay, or soil, of the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ .
3. The Lord God planted a garden in ___ ___ ___ ___ .
4. The tree of ___ ___ ___ ___ was planted in the middle of the garden.
5. There was a stream, or river, in the garden that divided into ___ ___ ___ ___ branches.
6. The job of the ___ ___ ___ was to cultivate and care for the garden.
7. The man was allowed to eat of any tree except the tree of the knowledge of ___ ___ ___ ___ and bad.
8. The man gave names to all the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ .
9. The woman was made from one of the ___ ___ ___ ___ of the man.
10. The snake tempted the woman to eat the ___ ___ ___ ___ .
11. The man and the woman realized that they were naked and sewed together some ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ . (TWO WORDS)
12. They hid among some ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ when they heard the Lord God in the garden.
13. The man named his wife Eve because she was the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ of all human beings.
14. The ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ made clothes from animal skins for them. (TWO WORDS)
15. The Lord God sent the man and the woman out of the garden and placed a flaming ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ outside it to guard the tree of life.

A	D	A	L	O	R	D	G	O	D
A	D	N	M	A	F	R	N	D	G
D	R	I	E	V	I	E	D	O	N
N	O	M	S	B	G	I	O	I	E
U	W	A	S	E	L	D	A	R	F
O	S	L	S	O	E	R	B	U	I
R	E	S	Y	E	A	R	D	O	L
G	N	E	D	E	V	G	T	F	M
O	M	O	T	H	E	R	D	+	A
T	I	U	R	F	S	+	+	+	N

_____.



Adam and Eve

The story of Adam and Eve, the first humans, reveals some basic truths about what it means to be human.

In the story from the Book of Genesis, God creates Adam, whose name means “human being,” by forming him from the earth and breathing life into him. Then God creates a woman from Adam’s flesh, so that Adam will have a companion just like him. The woman’s name, Eve, means “living.” God puts Adam and Eve in the wonderful Garden of Eden, where they live in peaceful friendship with God, each other, and all of creation. In the garden they have everything they need to be happy.

Unfortunately, a tricky snake persuades them that what God has given them is not enough. He says that if they eat the fruit of a tree that God has placed off-limits, they will become just like God. Rather than trusting God, they listen to the snake and eat the forbidden fruit.

This first disobedience is called Original Sin, and it caused Adam and Eve—and every person after them except Jesus and his mother, Mary—to be separated from God, one another, and the rest of creation.

Although human beings continued to disobey God, God did not abandon them. Instead, he overcame the damage of Original Sin through the saving work of his son, Jesus.

REFLECTION

Answer these questions after you have read about Adam and Eve.

1. Imagine you could put Adam, Eve, and the serpent on trial in a courtroom. Who would be most guilty in the case of the first sin? Who would be least guilty? Do any of these characters deserve the most blame? Why or why not?

2. Adam and Eve did not know they were naked until they sinned. Their sin made them ashamed of whom they were, and they wanted to cover up. How do people today try to “cover up” the bad feelings they have when they sin? Why do you think we have those feelings of shame after we sin?

Bible Passages about Adam and Eve

Genesis 2:4–15

God creates a man, animals, and a woman.

Genesis 3:1–6

Adam and Eve eat from the forbidden fruit tree.

Genesis 3:7–13

Adam and Eve hide from God.

Genesis 3:14–24

God punishes and banishes Adam and Eve.

Session 3

Sin Spreads

Genesis 6:5—9:17

Elementary

Noah and the Rainbow

The children learn the story of Noah and make individual rainbows as reminders of God’s promise of life and love.

Gather the following items: two copies of “Activity Master 4 (Elementary Session 3): Rainbow Pattern” for each child, several boxes of crayons or markers, several pairs of scissors, several bottles of glue, a hole puncher, a roll of ribbon or string; and several different colors of cellophane for each child, if working with older elementary children.

1. Explain to the children that sin—breaking God’s rules—did not stop with Adam and Eve. Sin spread throughout the world, and God did not like it. So he decided to destroy the world with a great flood and then start over again. He chose Noah to build an ark, or a large boat. In the ark, Noah and his family, with two of every animal on the earth, would be saved.
2. Summarize Gen 8:1—9:17 for the children. Explain that ever since the time of Noah, God promised never again to send such a flood, so big that it would destroy the whole earth. As a sign of that promise, God put a rainbow in the sky. Every time we see a rainbow, we can remember that God promised to give us life.
3. Explain to the children that they are going to make a rainbow to remind us of God’s promise. Give each child two copies of “Activity Master 4 (Elementary Session 3): Rainbow Pattern.” Have the children color both sides of the rainbow with crayons or markers. Then ask them to glue both sides together. At the top of the rainbow, punch a hole and string the rainbow with a ribbon or string for hanging. Allow the children to take their rainbows home as a sign of God’s love for them.



Activity Master 4

Note: You might like to have older elementary children make “stained-glass” rainbows. Ask them to cut out the bands of the rainbow on each handout, leaving the frame. Then have them glue bands of colored cellophane to the inside of one rainbow, and then glue the two frames together. The children can then color the frames black and punch a hole for hanging.

Outrageous Requests

The movie *Field of Dreams* (Universal Studios, 1998, 107 minutes, rated PG) and Bill Cosby's "Noah" comedy bits, on audio (*Bill Cosby Is a Very Funny Fellow, Right!*, Warner Brothers, 1995) and on video (which can be found through an Internet search), invite the young people to reflect on God's outrageous requests and the courageous responses of human beings. You may choose either one as a catalyst for discussion during this activity.

Gather the following items: a copy of the movie *Field of Dreams* or a copy of Bill Cosby's *Bill Cosby Is a Very Funny Fellow, Right!* with his classic "Noah" comedy routine (which can also be found on video on the Internet), the appropriate player, examples of modern people who have responded to God's outrageous requests, several sheets of blank paper, and several pens or pencils.

1. Begin the session by asking volunteers to read about the call of Noah, the Great Flood, and the Covenant in the following segments: Genesis 6:11–22, Genesis 7:1–5, Genesis 7:17–23, Genesis 8:6–12, Genesis 8:15–22, Genesis 9:8–17. Address any questions the young people may have about the content and biblical meaning of the story.
2. If time permits, show the first 40 minutes of the movie *Field of Dreams* or play Bill Cosby's comedy sketch about Noah (available on the Internet or on video—the longer version takes about 8 minutes to play, or on audio CD as mentioned above), all of which give a modern interpretation of Noah's courage in following an unusual call. If you choose *Field of Dreams*, consider playing the entire film. Although the first 40 minutes is enough to encourage reflection on this topic, the whole movie delivers several meaningful messages.
3. Ask the group to think of real modern people who, like the main character in the movie or Noah, have responded to God's outrageous requests. Offer a few examples of your own. Engage the group in a discussion on the following questions:
 - What do their examples, the example from the movie or the comedy routine, and the story from the Bible teach about trusting God?
 - What do they teach about what God wants for us?
4. Divide the large group into small groups of four or five and ask each group to come up with an outrageous request that God might make to a group of teens today. Distribute the paper and pens or pencils to each small group, and explain that after writing this request down, each group should pass the idea on to another group, who will act out a teen response to it for the large group. When all the groups have written down a request and acted out a response, lead the whole group in a discussion about the following questions:
 - How does God call young people?
 - What are the risks and challenges of God's call?
 - How do we learn to trust God?
 - What are some ways young people can make a difference in the world?

Variation: In step 3, instruct the young people to find and share newspaper, magazine, or Internet stories about people who have responded to God's outrageous calls.

Adult

The Spread of Sin

Humanity is mired in sin and God must destroy all except Noah's family. In this activity, the participants see how the story of Noah is as much a reminder of God's deep mercy and love for his faithful ones as it is a punishment for sin.

Key Verse: "See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you: the birds, the tame animals and all the wild animals that were with you — all that came out of the ark." (Gen 9:9–10)

Gather the following item: a map of the Middle East that includes Israel and Turkey.

1. Explain the following in your own words:
 - ▶ We are going to look at the story of Noah and how God rescues those who are faithful to him. It's a story we all know, but there are some things in it that you might not realize. First, let's look at all those animals in the ark. But before we do that, we need to know something about how the Jewish people in Old Testament times thought about animals in general.
2. Divide the large group into two smaller groups. Ask one group to read Leviticus, chapter 11, and another to read Deuteronomy, chapter 14. Have them identify the animals mentioned in each chapter as "clean" or "unclean."
3. Reassemble and write on the board a list of clean and unclean animals. Ask the participants to discuss what it is they think makes an animal clean or unclean. (One thought is that the unclean animals are carrion eaters or scavengers.)
4. Next, ask one person to read aloud Gen 6:18–21. As the person reads, write on the board what Noah took with him in the ark (his wife, his sons, their wives, two of all birds, beasts, creeping things).
5. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gen 7:1–3. As this person reads, write on the board what this passage says Noah took with him (his household, seven pairs of clean birds and animals, two pairs of unclean animals).
6. For a moment of humor, ask which animals the participants would have preferred Noah to leave behind. Then discuss why one account says Noah took two pairs of all animals and the other says he took seven pairs of clean animals. Point out the following:
 - ▶ God takes great care not only to save Noah from the Flood but also to be sure he and his family will have animals for food and clothing. Thus he provides more of the "clean" animals.

- ▶ The story of Noah is really the story of God's first salvation of those who remain faithful to him, a story that reaches fulfillment in Jesus, who offers salvation to all who follow him.
7. Write the following questions on the board. Divide the two large groups into smaller groups of three or four and have them discuss:
 - In what ways is the story of Noah's rescue like the story of our salvation?
 - What did Noah have to do to receive his "salvation"?
 - What do we have to do to receive our "salvation"?
 - Read Luke 17:26–27. How do Jesus' words about Noah apply to our own time?
 - What should Christians be doing in this time?
 - God made sure that Noah was cared for. Do you believe God will do the same for us in our times?
 - How can we use the rainbow (see Gen 9:13) as a reminder of our own salvation?
 8. Lead a discussion by inviting volunteers from each small group to share the group's answer to each of the questions with the large group.
 9. Show a map of the Middle East that includes Israel and Turkey. Explain that Genesis says the ark landed on the mountains of Ararat (see 8:4).
 10. End by praying together Psalm 85, "Prayer for Divine Favor."

Family

God Saves Noah

The story of Noah and the ark reassures us that even when we sin, God continues to love us. When we obey him, like Noah did in building the ark, we can find a way out of our troubles. Whenever we see a rainbow, we are reminded of God's love.

Gather the following items: gelatin treats (see step 1) and utensils for eating; magazine cutouts of animals or outlines of animals that the participants can color and cut out; crayons or markers and scissors, if coloring and cutting out animals; a large outline drawing of an ark; a roll of masking tape; a roll of double-stick tape; a blindfold; and a picture of a rainbow.

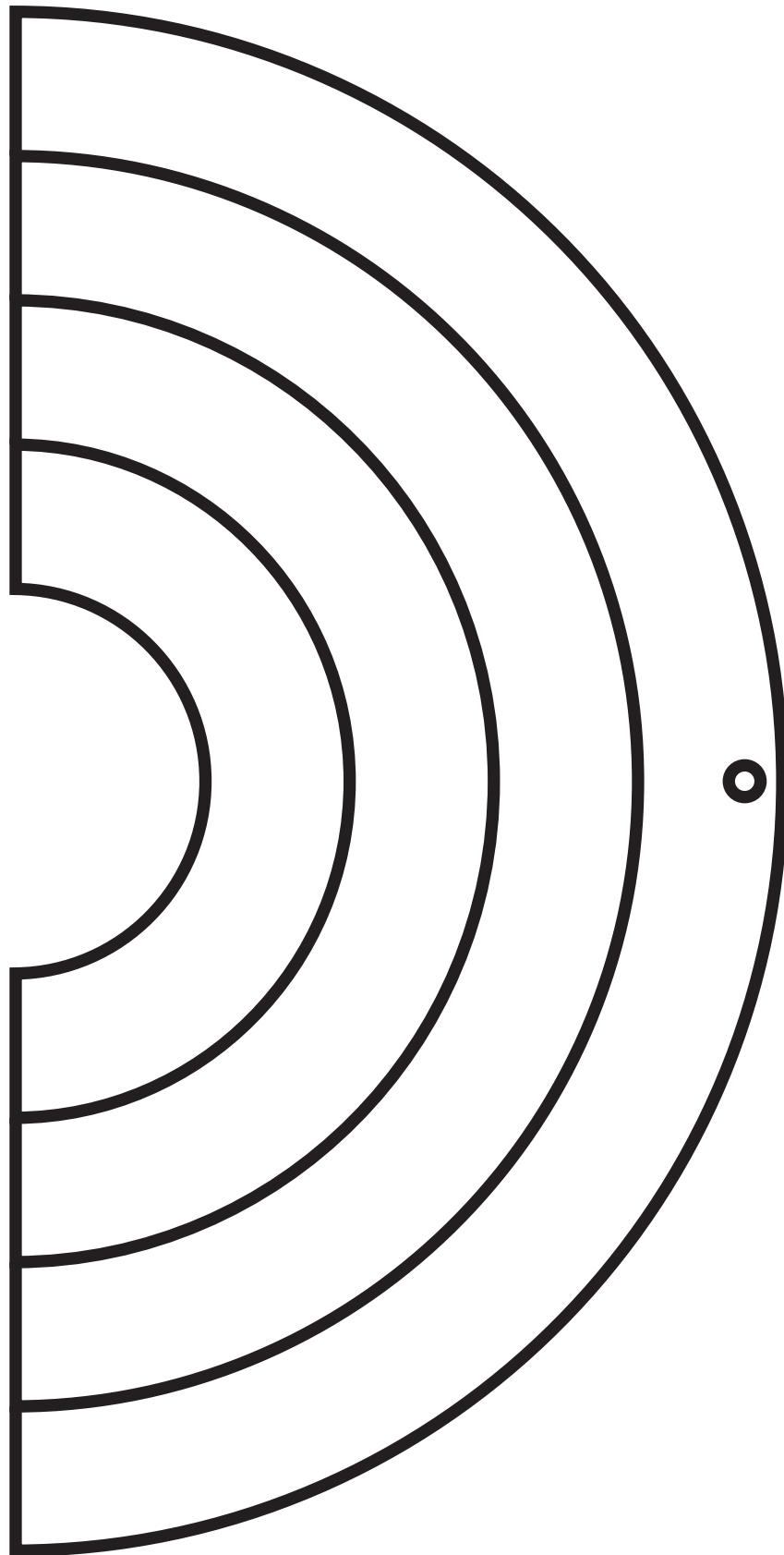
1. A day or two before the session, prepare pans of several colors of gelatin. The rainbow colors of purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red would be ideal, but have at least three different colors. After the gelatin is set, cut into squares and layer in clear plastic cups to create a rainbow treat. Make enough for each participant to have one at the end of the activity.
2. Begin by retelling the story of Noah, the Great Flood, and the ark. Be sure to read the account in Genesis beforehand so that you are familiar with the details. Search the Internet for a video about a modern-day reconstruction of the ark to provide a sense of how big it was and what it might have looked like. (Be sure to mention that the rainbow is the sign

of God's love for us and his promise never to destroy the earth with water again.)

3. Play "put the animal in the ark," a variation of pin the tail on the donkey. Create the outline of a large ark and tape it to a wall or door. Use magazine pictures or outlines of various kinds of animals. Let each person select one animal and put double-stick tape on the back. Blindfold the person, turn him or her around three times, and have him or her try to put the animal in the ark. If you want to spend more time on the activity, have the children cut out and color the animals before using them in the game.
4. When the game is over, ask the following questions of the whole group:
 - ▶ Why did God want to send a flood to destroy the earth?
(There was so much sin in the world, God wanted to start over.)
 - ▶ What did Noah do?
(He built an ark and took two of every kind of animal on it, just as God told him to do.)
 - ▶ What promise did God make? What sign of that promise appeared in the sky?
(The promise was that God would never destroy the world with water again. The sign of the promise is the rainbow.)
5. Hold up a picture of a rainbow and remind everyone that a rainbow is the sign of God's promise. Close by distributing the rainbow treats you prepared before the session. Top with puffs of whipped cream if desired.



Rainbow Pattern



Session 4

The Abrahamic Covenant

Gen 17:1—18:15

Elementary

Abraham and Sarah: The “Eye Popper” Activity

The children learn that Abraham and Sarah trusted God, set out to a new land, and became the ancestors of a great nation. Like Abraham and Sarah, the children are led to trust in the God of surprises.

Gather the following items: a bag of “eye poppers” party favors.

1. In this activity, the children use the surprising nature of eye popper party favors as a way of talking about the surprising nature of God. Purchase a bag of eye popper party favors at a party supply store or from an online vendor. The theological idea in this activity can be communicated with just one eye popper, but children enjoy the surprise of having a handful of poppers thrown into the air for them to catch! Tell the children to keep the poppers as a reminder that God is full of surprises.
2. Introduce the children to God’s surprising work in Abraham and Sarah’s life by reading Gen 15:1–6. Explain that God’s promise came true, and that Abraham and Sarah, even though they were old, had a son. At first Sarah did not believe this could happen, and she laughed about it. Then read Gen 18:13–15. One year later, Abraham and Sarah’s son, Isaac, was born. This was God’s surprise for Abraham and Sarah. Then throw the poppers into the air, saying: “Surprise! Abraham and Sarah had a son! They named him Isaac! Isaac was a surprise from God!”
3. Allow the children to play with the poppers for a while, turning them inside out and upside down and waiting for the surprise jump into the air. Then settle the group and ask the following questions:
 - ▶ What was so surprising about the birth of Isaac?
(*Abraham and Sarah were very old, and very old people do not have children.*)
 - ▶ What does this tell us about God?
(*God sometimes changes the way we think or do things. God chooses people we might not choose. He chooses weak people and makes them strong. He chooses those who are humble and ready to listen, not the ones who are great and too proud to listen to him.*)
 - ▶ What does this tell us about God’s love?
(*God loves everyone. He loves the old and the young, the rich and the poor, adults and children. Sometimes he shows his love in surprising ways.*)

- End the activity by reading aloud Gen 22:17. Introduce the verse by saying that this is what God said to Abraham. After reading the verse, explain that Abraham did become the father of many peoples. He is the father of the Jewish people and those who are Christians too. We call him our father in faith because we look to him as an example of the way we want to believe in and trust God. The people of Islam also call Abraham “our father” and consider him a great prophet.

Teen

Abraham and Trust

Using a continuum to plot times that Abraham trusted God and times he mistrusted God, as well as reflecting on their own experiences, helps the young people to see that even the spiritual journey of a pioneer of faith in God shares some of the characteristics of their own spiritual journey.

Gather the following items: copies of “Activity Master 5 (Teen Session 4): “The Ups and Downs of Trust” and pens or pencils, one of each for each participant.



- Distribute “Activity Master 5: The Ups and Downs of Trust” and pens or pencils to the group and review the activity directions with the young people. Then choose several volunteers to read aloud the passages from the Book of Genesis. Divide the chapter readings among three or four readers. After each reading, allow each participant to make an individual assessment if desired. Ask them to connect their dots.
- Then ask each participant to write in seven events or phases of their own lives in the boxes, and then place a dot at high, medium, or low trust.
- If time permits, set up a continuum along one wall of the meeting room, designating one end “High,” the middle “Medium,” and the other end “Low.” For each Scripture reading about Abraham’s life, ask the young people to stand at the spot on the continuum that matches their graph for it. Invite discussion after each reading if you wish.
- Then lead a discussion with the young people about the graphing of their own faith journey. Ask volunteers to share some or all of their life events or phases. Then discuss the following questions with the group:
 - In what ways does your own faith journey resemble Abraham’s? In what ways does it differ?
 - What made trusting easier or more challenging for Abraham? What makes trusting easier for you? When do you find it more difficult to trust?
- Conclude the discussion with comments like these:
 - All spiritual people, even biblical models of faith and saints, find it difficult to trust at times. But faith-filled people keep trying again, with God’s help, even when their trust has been challenged. Knowing that there are similarities between ourselves and those people can reassure us that we can grow spiritually, despite our doubts. It can also remind us that God has a call for us, as he did for Abraham.

Between God and Abraham

God starts the process of forming a special people to be a blessing for the nations, the descendants of Abraham and Sarah. In this activity, the participants look at how we may limit ourselves by our perceptions that we are too old (or too young) to do God's work.

Key Verse: "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said: I am God the Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. Between you and me I will establish my covenant, and I will multiply you exceedingly." (Gen 17:1-2)

Gather the following items: sheets of blank paper, pens or pencils, and copies of "Activity Master 6 (Adult Session 4): Serenity Prayer," one of each for each participant.

1. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Gen 12:4, 16:16, chapter 17, and 25:7, all of which talk about Abraham's age at various stages of his life, including his move from Ur, having Ishmael, fathering Isaac, and finally his death. Call attention to the places where his age is clearly stated.

2. On the board draw a timeline from 0 to 175 and write the significant events of Abraham's life on it. Explain that Abraham did not actually live to be 175 years old but that the Scripture writers used this high number to indicate that Abraham lived a very long life. Note that almost everything we associate with Abraham happened in his old age.

Tell the participants that Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote the Little House on the Prairie books in her sixties, Colonel Sanders was sixty-five when he founded Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Mother Teresa was in her forties when she founded the Missionaries of Charity.

3. Ask the participants to share what ages they think are "young" and "old" in today's society. Use the following questions to spark some discussion:
 - ▶ What makes a person old?
 - ▶ What makes a person young?
 - ▶ How should an old person act?
 - ▶ How should a young person act?
 - ▶ If you didn't know how old you were, how old would you be?

4. Share stories of seniors who accomplish feats considered amazing for their age. For example, someone may have heard about a senior running a marathon, doing demanding volunteer work, or completing a college degree. Discuss how learning these stories can change minds about what "old" looks like.

5. Divide the large group into small groups of three or four. Distribute a sheet of blank paper and pen or pencil to each person and ask that everyone write down at least one thing they believe God wants them to do before the end of their lives. Allow time for discussing the following questions:
 - ▶ Do I feel I can't do this at my age?
 - ▶ What would I need to have in order to accomplish this?
 - ▶ Do I believe this is something God really wants me to do?

- ▶ Using Abraham as an example, discuss how God can make a way for us even when things seem impossible.
6. Bring the entire group back together and reread Gen 12:4: “Abram went as the LORD directed him.” Discuss how Abraham first paid attention to what he believed God was asking, took the step he could take at the time, and trusted God for further direction as time went on. Emphasize that when God asks us to do something, it doesn’t matter how old or how young we are. All that matters is that we take the first step; the rest is up to God.
 7. Ask each participant to take a few minutes to pray over the things they believe God is asking them to do right now, at the age they are today.
 8. Distribute “Activity Master 6 (Adult Session 4): Serenity Prayer” and close the session by having the participants read it aloud as a group.



**Activity
Master 6**

Family

The Story of Abraham

God continues the process by which he will eventually save the world by giving Abraham and Sarah a son. This son is the start of a great family that extends all the way to Jesus.

Gather the following items: a box of star stickers, enough for each participant to have a small pile of stars; small sheets of black paper, one for each participant; pictures of the participants as babies; 4-x-4-inch squares of white paper, markers, and scissors for making nameplates; a roll of tape; a picture of Jesus; and a digital camera.

1. Read Gen 17:1–9, 15–22, the story of the promise of Isaac, to refresh your memory of the story of the Abrahamic promise. If older children are present who might know the story, ask them to retell it; otherwise briefly relate it, emphasizing that even though Abraham and Sarah didn’t have any children, God promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars (see Gen 15:5).
2. Distribute a sheet of black paper and small pile of star stickers to each participant. Have each person stick as many stars on his or her sheet as possible in approximately 3 minutes. Encourage the participants to fill the page with stars.
3. After the 3 minutes are up, have each person look at her or his sheet. Talk about how many stars their sheets have and then have them imagine filling a sheet as big as the room with stars. Explain that that gives us an idea of what God meant when he said he would give Abraham countless descendants. Read aloud Gen 15:5: “Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so, he added, will your descendants be.”
4. If the participants brought pictures of themselves as babies, have them each tape their pictures directly in the middle of their sheets of stars. Then discuss the following points:

- Each one of us is part of the family of God.
- God loved Abraham and Sarah and Isaac, and he loves each of us just as much.

If some of the participants didn't bring baby pictures, have them write their name on a square of paper, decorate it, and then tape their finished nameplate in the middle of their sheet of stars.

5. Gather all the star pictures together and make a collage on a wall or board. Post a picture of Jesus in the very center, and explain that Jesus is part of every family and that we are all part of the family of God.
6. You may wish to have each person, one by one, stand in front of the collage so you can take a digital picture of each participant. Then you can print it and give it out at the next session.



The Ups and Downs of Trust

Read or review the Bible stories about Abraham listed below. Then assess Abraham's level of trust in God in each account (high, medium, or low) and mark a dot at that level on the scale below the Bible cite. When you have assessed the trust level in all the accounts, connect the dots and make a graph. Below the graph, in a different color ink, write some important events in your own life and graph your own level of trust in God during those events. Compare the two graphs.

Abraham's life	Gen 12:1-9	Gen 12:10-20	Gen 15:1-6	Gen 16:1-6	Genesis, chapter 17	Gen 18:16-33	Gen 22:1-19
High _____ Medium _____ Low _____							

My own life							
High _____ Medium _____ Low _____							



Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.
Amen.*

(Reinhold Niebuhr)

Session 5

The Journey to Egypt *Genesis, chapters 37, 42–45*

Elementary

The Forgiveness of Joseph

In this activity, the children use their listening skills to learn the events of Joseph's life, his forgiveness of his brothers, and the Israelites' move to Egypt.

Gather the following items: sheets of blank paper and pens or pencils, one of each for each participant; and copies of "Activity Master 7 (Elementary Session 5): Joseph," one for each participant, if working with older elementary children.

1. Recall to the children that Abraham and Sarah had a son called Isaac. Isaac had a son called Jacob, and Jacob had a son called Joseph. Explain that today they are going to learn about Joseph and Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers.
2. Distribute the blank paper and pens or pencils. Tell the children to listen carefully to the beginning of the story of Joseph as you read aloud Gen 37:3–4.
3. Remind the children to write their names at the top of their papers. Then give the following eight directions, leaving time between each directive for the children to carry out the task. Ask the children to write a number 1, and then do what is directed, then write a number 2, and so on:
 1. Jacob had ten sons. Draw ten open circles in a row across your page.
 2. Jacob's favorite son was Joseph. Fill in one of the circles.

Now read aloud Gen 37:12–24.

3. Joseph's nine brothers were jealous, so they threw Joseph into a well. Draw a rectangle vertically—that is, standing up—and draw Joseph's circle inside it.

Now read Gen 37:28–36.

4. Some traders found Joseph and got him out of the well. Draw the rectangle well again and draw Joseph's circle next to it.
5. The traders took Joseph to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Draw a crown, and draw Joseph's circle next to it.

Now explain that Pharaoh had two dreams: in the first one, seven thin and scrawny cows ate up seven fat cows; in the second one, seven thin ears of corn swallowed seven fat ears of corn. He asked Joseph what the

dream meant. Joseph told him that seven years of abundance were coming, but they would be followed by seven years of famine. Joseph gave this advice (read aloud Gen 41:33–36). Then Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the food of the land.

6. Draw a loaf of bread, and draw Joseph's circle next to it.
7. Joseph's family in Egypt was hungry. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to find food. They met Joseph again. Draw nine open circles in a row across your sheet of paper. Then draw Joseph's circle next to them.
8. Joseph's brothers asked Joseph to forgive them. And Joseph did! Joseph brought his family to stay with him in Egypt. And that is how the people of Israel came to Egypt. Draw Joseph's circle in the center with the circles of his nine brothers around him.

Explain that Joseph told his brothers that God meant him to come to Egypt to save lives (read Gen 45:4–8). The brothers went back to their father and told him that his son Joseph was not dead after all, but alive in Egypt. And he came with all his family to live near his son Joseph in Egypt.

4. If time permits, you may want to ask the group to act out the account of Joseph and his brothers. Ask for volunteers to play the roles of Jacob (the father), the nine brothers, Joseph, the Midianite traders, and Pharaoh.
5. Ask the children to take their papers home to see if they can recall the story of Joseph from their drawings about it.



Activity Master 7

Note: For older elementary children, you may want to supplement this activity with “Activity Master 7 (Elementary Session 5): Joseph.”

Teen

The Journey of Joseph

If time permits, you may want to arrange a viewing of the film *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (PGD/Polygram, 1993, 78 minutes, not rated), which takes its inspiration from the story of Joseph in the Book of Genesis. Whether your group views the film or not, the activity helps the young people to grasp the importance of these chapters of Genesis.

Gather the following items: the film *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (PGD/Polygram, 1993, 78 minutes, not rated) and a TV and appropriate player, if viewing the film; and five large, colorful quilts or shawls (for a “dreamcoat” for each small group).

1. Divide the large group into five small groups. Assign each group one of the following passages, and ask the groups to read their assigned passage as well as the chapter before and the chapter after it:
 - Genesis, chapter 37. (Joseph's brothers become jealous, and Joseph mysteriously disappears.)
 - Genesis, chapter 39. (Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of assault, and Joseph goes to jail.)
 - Genesis, chapters 40–41. (Joseph's dream interpretation gains him release from prison.)

- Genesis, chapter 42. (Joseph’s brothers make their first journey to Egypt.)
 - Genesis, chapters 43–45. (Joseph’s brothers make a second trip to Egypt, and Joseph has a startling revelation.)
2. Ask the small groups to present these sensational stories as brief newscasts, highlighting the important events, interviewing characters who were present, consulting authorities, and speculating about future developments. Mention that the use of humor, within reason, is fine. Give the small groups about 20 minutes to plan their newscasts. Give each small group a “dreamcoat” for Joseph to wear.
 3. Ask the small groups to present their newscasts in biblical order. After the newscasts are shared, discuss the stories and characters with the large group. Note any insights that came from the reading, preparation, or presentation. Help the young people to understand the purpose and meaning of the story of Joseph and his brothers.
 4. At the end of the session, if you will be teaching the Exodus event in a following session, read Exodus 1:1–14 to the young people. Tell them that this verse recounts the growth of the Israelites as a people in Egypt, the arrival of a king “who knew nothing of Joseph” (and therefore had no respect for the people of Israel), and the subsequent oppression of the Israelites as slaves.

Adult

The Journey to Egypt

In the story of the sons of Jacob, we see that Abraham’s descendants are far from perfect, but God works in spite of their sin. The same is true for those of us who trust in the Lord; God has promised to work in our lives despite our sinfulness and failures.

Key Verse: “So it was not really you but God who had me come here.” (Gen 45:8)

Gather the following items: a copy of the film *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (PGD/Polygram, 1993, 78 minutes, not rated) and a TV and the appropriate player; or a recording of the song “Any Dream Will Do,” from the same musical, and the appropriate player; and sheets of blank paper and pens or pencils, one of each for each participant.

1. To set the scene for the story of Joseph, show the film clip of “Any Dream Will Do” from the Broadway musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, or play the song “Any Dream Will Do” from the same musical. (Lyrics for this song are available on the Internet.)
2. Explain that the account of Joseph is an important account, because it is evidence of God’s providence toward his People, and evidence that it was because of Joseph that the Jews first came to Egypt not as slaves but as invited guests. Ask several volunteers to take turns reading aloud Genesis, chapter 37.

3. Divide the large group into five smaller groups. Assign each small group one of the following chapters: 41, 42, 43, 44, 45. Have the groups read their assigned chapters either silently or aloud to one another and appoint someone to summarize the events of that chapter.
4. Gather the large group and ask the summarizers to recap their chapters in order. Then ask the participants to find Gen 46:1–7 and to follow along as you read these verses aloud.
5. Use the following questions to initiate discussion about the importance of Joseph and the promises of God:
 - ▶ How did Joseph’s dream about the wheat sheaf come true in his life? What was the reaction of the brothers to this dream? What might you think their reaction would have been if they had known what it really meant?
 - ▶ What were Pharaoh’s two dreams? What was Joseph’s interpretation? How did Joseph’s life and role in Egypt change as a result of these dreams?
 - ▶ Chapters 42 and 43 describe Joseph’s reunion with his brothers. Remembering how Joseph was treated by these brothers, how does he treat them? What is his attitude toward them—within himself and outwardly? What effect does the relationship of Joseph to his brothers have on their father, Jacob?
 - ▶ In chapter 44, how did the brothers prove that they had changed and that they no longer took a brother’s life for granted?
6. Ask the group to consider the relationships in their own lives. Sometimes close relationships can be taken for granted. We can quietly dismiss the opinions of those whom we have known for many years. Ask:
 - ▶ How does this account of Joseph and his brothers help us to value our relationships?
7. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Rom 8:28: “We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” Discuss the following question:
 - ▶ How does this New Testament verse apply to the story of Joseph?

Now refer back to Gen 45:8 (“So it was not really you but God who had me come here.”) as evidence of God’s work in Joseph’s life.

Read (or sing) the chorus lyrics to the opening song, “Any Dream Will Do.” Then discuss the following questions with the participants:

 - ▶ What is the world still waiting for?
 - ▶ Is the light of our dreams dimming?
 - ▶ Is it true that “any dream will do”? Why or why not?
 - ▶ How can Jesus be said to be the fulfillment of our greatest “dream”?
8. After a few moments of reflection, distribute the sheets of paper and pens or pencils and ask the participants to write down at least one dream they have had that seems to be dimming or that they are still waiting to come true and then to answer the following questions:
 - ▶ Is this something I truly want?
 - ▶ What is preventing this dream of mine from coming true?
 - ▶ Joseph eventually saw how God brought good from his enslavement in Egypt. What evidence of God’s work in your life can you see as you wait for your dream to be fulfilled?

Encourage the participants to briefly share some of their dreams and responses if they are comfortable doing so. Allow individuals to ask for and receive prayers of intercession over their dreams.

9. Close the session by praying this hymn of praise:
 - Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
 - Praise him ye creatures here below.
 - Praise him above ye heavenly host.
 - Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Family

Joseph's Coat: Option 1

Joseph and his coat of many colors is another example of how God can bring good out of what seems to be bad. The entire story may be too complicated for younger children, so the focus of this session is on Joseph's coat, his brothers' jealousy, and their reconciliation.

Gather the following items: For option 1: an outline of a jacket on a sheet of newsprint; strips of white, yellow, green, black, brown, silver, red, blue, pink, orange, and gold paper or cloth, one of each; a roll of tape; a recording of the song "Joseph's Coat" from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (PGD/Polygram, 1993, 78 minutes, not rated) (clip available on the Internet) and the appropriate player. For option 2: a copy of the film *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (PGD/Polygram, 1993, 78 minutes, not rated) and a television and the appropriate player.

1. Place an outline of a jacket on the table or hang it on a wall and distribute the strips of colored paper or cloth randomly among the children in the group. Tell the story of Joseph and his multicolored coat. As you relate the story, ask the children to listen carefully for color words. Each time you come to a color, have someone tape a strip of that color onto the jacket. By the time the story ends, you should have created a "coat of many colors."

Here are some suggestions for color words in the story (feel free to make up your own as well):

- Joseph tended flocks of WHITE sheep.
- His twelve brothers worked in fields of YELLOW wheat.
- Their father gave Joseph a beautiful coat of many colors. This made his brothers GREEN with envy.
- They thought about killing him, but they put him in a BLACK well instead.
- When some traders came by on their BROWN camels, the brothers sold Joseph to them to become a slave for twenty pieces of SILVER.
- They told their father that Joseph was dead and showed him Joseph's coat with RED blood from a sheep on it.
- This made Jacob BLUE with sadness. He thought that an animal had killed Joseph.
- But Joseph wasn't dead. Instead he was taken to Egypt to work for the king, called Pharaoh, who wore a PURPLE robe.
- Eventually, after many years, Jacob learned that Joseph wasn't dead and came to Egypt to meet him. His brothers were PINK with embar-

rassment, but they were very sorry for what they had done. When they asked Joseph to forgive them, he did.

- He gave them good food to eat, like ORANGES, and they celebrated being together again with a meal served on beautiful GOLD dishes.
2. When the jacket is complete, discuss the following questions:
 - Do you ever feel jealous of your brothers and sisters?
 - How can you turn your jealous feelings into good feelings toward your brothers or sisters?
 - How does God want us to treat our brothers and sisters and all people?
 3. End the session by playing the song “Joseph’s Coat” from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. The film clip is available on the Internet. Allow the children to dance if they want.

Joseph’s Coat: Option 2

If time permits, and especially if the group has some older children, consider showing the movie *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (PGD/Polygram, 1993, 78 minutes, not rated). Follow the movie by asking reflection questions such as the ones in step 2 of option 1.



Joseph

Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, was deeply resented by his brothers. Their father's favoritism toward Joseph was annoying enough, but Joseph made matters worse by boasting of dreams in which his family bowed down before him.

Joseph's brothers finally sold him into slavery in Egypt. There, God gave him the ability to correctly interpret the dreams of his fellow prisoners. Word of Joseph's talent eventually reached Pharaoh, who called on Joseph to interpret his own dreams. Joseph predicted that seven years of great prosperity would be followed by seven years of terrible famine. Impressed, Pharaoh placed Joseph in charge of overseeing the entire land for the purpose of storing up enough grain to outlast the famine.

When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain during the famine, Joseph hid his identity from them and threatened to make the youngest brother, Benjamin, his slave. When he saw his brothers' brave attempts to save Benjamin from slavery, though, Joseph revealed who he was and forgave them. He told them that God had used their evil to save the family from starvation.

By forgiving his brothers rather than getting even with them, Joseph made it possible for the family to prosper in Egypt, and eventually grow into the nation of Israel.

REFLECTION

Answer these questions after you have read about Joseph.

1. When we first meet Joseph in Genesis 37:3–11, we learn that he has at least two special gifts. Which one does his father give him? Which gift does God give him? Ask yourself the same questions: What gifts has God given me? What gifts have other people given me?
2. The story in Genesis 37:12–36 is a pretty serious case of sibling rivalry. Joseph's brothers are so jealous of him that they sell him into slavery! What are the main causes of rivalry between brothers and sisters in families? Are there attitudes or actions that you think can prevent rivalry or make it happen less?
3. Joseph's life has interesting twists and turns. What looks bad at first (like slavery or jail) turns out for the best in the end. Have any of your bad experiences ever turned out to be good experiences later? If so, why?

Bible Passages about Joseph

Genesis 37:1–36

Joseph is sold into slavery.

Genesis 39:1–19

Joseph works for Potiphar and is falsely accused by his wife.

Genesis 39:21—40:23

Joseph is in jail and interprets prisoners' dreams.

Genesis 41:1–36

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and becomes governor of Egypt.

Genesis, chapters 42–46

Joseph's brothers journey to Egypt and his family moves to Egypt.

Session 6

The Call of Moses

Exodus, chapters 2–4

Elementary

The Story of Moses and a Moses Basket

In this activity the children make a basket with reminders of the life of Moses in it, especially the reminders concerning God’s call to Moses.

Gather the following items: copies of “Activity Master 8 (Elementary Session 6): A Moses Basket” and scissors, one of each for each participant; several crayons for each child; several rolls of tape; and copies of “Activity Master 9 (Elementary Session 6): Getting to Know Moses,” and pens or pencils, one for each participant, if working with older elementary children.

1. Explain to the children that, after many years, the Israelites in Egypt were made to be slaves. They were oppressed by the Egyptians. The Pharaoh even ordered that all baby boys born to the Israelites be killed. One mother, Miriam, wanted her son to live. She put him in a basket and floated him toward a spot in the river where he would be found by Pharaoh’s daughter. Pharaoh’s daughter raised him as her own. Eventually Moses found out that he was really an Israelite. He became a shepherd, and one day, as he was tending his sheep, God set a bush on fire. But the bush did not burn up. Moses was curious about this burning bush, and when he came close to it, he heard God speak to him. God revealed himself to Moses and told him to go to Pharaoh and ask him to release the Israelites from slavery.
2. Tell the children that they will be making Moses baskets to remind them of the call of Moses. Distribute copies of “Activity Master 8 (Elementary Session 6): A Moses Basket.” First, ask the children to cut out each corner section. These sections also have drawings on them. Ask the children to color the drawings and then cut them out.
3. With the basket figure remaining, the children should cut the sides on the dotted lines, so that all sides are even and then fold the sides up and tape them together to make a basket. They should then put their drawings into their baskets. These are Moses baskets, with reminders inside about the life and call of Moses.
4. Form the children into pairs. Have the children in each pair take turns pulling the drawings from one child’s basket, putting them in order, and talking through the story of Moses as they do so. The children can then



**Activity
Master 8**

pull out the drawings at random and explain what part they play in the life and call of Moses.

5. Direct the children to take their baskets home and tell the story of Moses to their families.



**Activity
Master 9**

Note: With older elementary children, you may want to use “Activity Master 9 (Elementary Session 6): Getting to Know Moses.”

Teen

God’s Self-Introduction

God’s self-introduction to Moses in Ex 3:6 invites the young people to reflect on the people in their own lives who have shared something about God with them.

Gather the following items: three lined index cards for each participant; pens or pencils, one for each participant; and several boxes of crayons, markers, and colored pencils.

1. To prepare for God’s self-introduction in Exodus, chapter 3, choose several volunteers to read aloud Exodus, chapter 2. Then ask the young people to silently read chapter 3. Note that God assures Moses by telling him that the One who is speaking to him is truly the God of his honored ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
2. Give each person three index cards and a pen or pencil. Then ask the young people to think of three trustworthy people who have shared with them something appealing about God and write one name on the lined side of each card. Under the name, ask the young people to describe briefly that person’s relationship with God, and what he or she shared about God. Also include one or two ways the young person has encountered God in his or her own life (i.e., seeking God in the Scriptures, prayer, worship, or life events).
3. On the blank side of the index card, ask the young people to portray the person who is named on the other side. They can do this realistically (by drawing a portrait) or symbolically (perhaps by drawing symbols of that person’s good qualities), using the crayons, markers, and colored pencils you have provided.
4. When all have finished, invite the participants to share with the group something about the people and relationships they described on their cards. Note any qualities of people and relationships that are commonly mentioned.

Moses Answers God's Call

Even when the Chosen People were enslaved in Egypt, God raised up a champion, Moses, to lead them to freedom. However, Moses was a reluctant hero who had to be prodded into action. Like Moses, we sometimes doubt our own abilities and must be encouraged to obey God's call.

Key Verse: But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Ex 3:11)

Gather the following items: sheets of blank paper and pens or pencils, one of each for each participant; slips of paper, six for each participant; a basket to collect all the slips of paper; and a paper shredder.

1. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each participant. Then have them read Exodus, chapter 4, and list all the excuses Moses came up with for not doing what God asked. Share these with the group, making sure the following points are covered:
 - ▶ They won't listen.
 - ▶ They won't believe me.
 - ▶ I'm not good with words.
 - ▶ I really don't want to do it.
2. Then ask what response God made to each of Moses' reasons for not obeying.
3. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Isa 6:5–7 and Jer 1:6–9. Then ask the following questions:
 - ▶ What do Isaiah and Jeremiah have in common with Moses?
(*They all immediately have reasons why they can't do what God is asking.*)
 - ▶ In all cases, what does God do when his chosen ones protest they "can't do it"?
(*He delivers them, and they do what they think they cannot.*)
4. Hand out at least six slips of paper to each participant. Ask the young people to write five excuses they commonly use for not doing certain things, one on each piece of paper. Examples include: "I don't want to," "It's too hard," "I don't have time." Collect all the excuses in a basket. Now, on the last slip of paper, have the participants write something they know they should do for their spiritual benefit that they don't (i.e., pray daily, go to Confession, tithe, say grace). Give suggestions if people appear stuck.
5. Have one person stand up, select five excuses from the basket, then read aloud the statement he or she just wrote. For example: "I know I should pray daily," adding "but I don't because . . ." Then have the person read the five excuses he or she selected ("I don't have time," "I don't want to," etc.). Go around the room in this fashion until everyone has read his or her statement along with five randomly selected excuses. Allow enough time for spontaneous amusement.
6. Let the participants talk about how they felt hearing someone else's excuses attached to their statements. Write the most common excuses on

the board. Discuss how our excuses are very similar to those of Moses and other biblical figures.

Remind participants that there is “nothing new under the sun” and that just as Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah first questioned God’s call but finally cooperated, so too can we come to a place of cooperation and change if we truly desire it.

7. Place the paper shredder at the front of the room. Model the following exercise for the participants, by saying the following in your own words:
 - ▶ One of the things I know I should do is (*read your statement*). Starting today, with God’s help, I will do away with all false excuses. I will obey the call of the Lord in my life.

Put the five excuse slips you drew through the shredder. Then invite the participants to come forward and make their statements. As each participant does so, take his or her excuses and put them through the shredder.

8. Close by reading together Psalm 23, “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” or by singing “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” by John Foley, SJ, from Oregon Catholic Press, or a similar hymn.

Family

Moses and the Burning Bush

God spoke to Moses in the form of a burning bush. The message of God, “I will be with you,” is the same message we receive today. No matter what we are asked to do, God will be with us.

Gather the following items: a children’s Bible account of the story of Moses or a copy of the film *VeggieTales: Moe and the Big Exit* (Big Idea, 2007, 52 minutes, not rated) and a television and the appropriate player; several sheets each of red, yellow, orange, and white tissue paper; a bare branch or a line drawing of a bush; and a bottle of glue, if using the line drawing.

1. The story of Moses is long and complicated. This activity focuses on one small portion of his story. You may want to give an overview either by reading the story from a children’s Bible account or by viewing *VeggieTales: Moe and the Big Exit*, a retelling of the story as an animated Western.

Be sure to cover the following points in relating the story:

- ▶ Moses saw a burning bush and decided to investigate.
- ▶ When he got near, he heard God tell him to take off his shoes.
- ▶ God told Moses that Moses was going to go to Egypt and rescue the people who were slaves and take them to a new land of freedom.
- ▶ Moses doubted that he could do this, but God promised to give him all the help he would need.

2. Help the children to get a “feel” for the story by discussing the following questions:
 - ▶ How would you feel if you saw a shrub burning in your backyard?
 - ▶ Would you want to go look at it? Would you be scared?

3. Distribute the sheets of tissue paper equally among the children and direct them to tear the sheets into strips. Don't worry about length or size. Let the children have fun tearing. When there is a nice pile of strips, attach them to the bare branch or line drawing by tying or gluing them. Fill the branch so that it looks like it is burning.
4. Set the branch in the middle of the floor. Have everyone take off their shoes and sit around the "burning bush." Talk about how God spoke to Moses in the bush. Moses had to listen carefully to God, just like we have to listen carefully to the Word of God in the Bible. Play the old-fashioned telephone game by whispering the following sentence, or one of your own choosing, in the first person's ear. See if you can get all the way around the circle without the sentence changing:

► "God has a special plan for each of us, but we have to listen carefully."

If the sentence changes, emphasize how important it is to both speak and listen carefully. If the sentence doesn't change, congratulate everyone for being such good listeners. If you have time, play another round.