

date: 4/16/17

Bible Passage: Genesis—Revelation (Easter)

The Big God Story

REMEMBER VERSE

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.
Psalm 145:8

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

Throughout the process of telling God's story to the elementary kids in our ministry, many kids have realized how wonderful it is to know Him. One child told her father that she was amazed to learn that she is a part of God's story just like Moses is. Another girl, a longtime member of our community, told a leader that she finally wanted to be God's child. Why? Because she just realized that she is a part of His story.

The Big God Story is compelling, inspiring, and packed full of God's overwhelming love for the people He created. The more I read Scripture in the mind-set and context of the bigger story, the more I am floored by how succinctly and miraculously God has woven His redemptive story throughout history. He has taken such care and love in telling His story exactly the way He wanted to tell it. Throughout His story, we see Him as a patient, long-suffering, kind, generous, sovereign, and loving God. We see that God brought His Son to earth exactly at the perfect moment to be the perfect Redeemer. The Big God Story is compelling proof of His love for us, and I'm amazed that I get to be a part of it.

Tori Funkhouser
ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

In this curriculum year, we've heard how God entered into covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. We've seen how God used these covenants in a process of progressively revealing Himself and His plan of redemption. These covenants laid the foundation for and help us understand the coming of the new covenant, which began in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God gave Jeremiah a description of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31–33:

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant ... This is the covenant I will make with [them] ... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

God had promised to protect and preserve Israel, but Israel forfeited the blessings God had promised in the Mosaic covenant through her disobedience. And since the Mosaic covenant was the mechanism by which Israel was able to enjoy the blessings God had promised, there needed to be a new covenant that would accomplish this same purpose—a covenant that would apply to Gentiles as well as Jews.

The new covenant helped the people of God understand how the blessings of God promised in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants would be experienced in everyday life. And the new covenant included the ultimate blessing of promising forgiveness of sins through the coming of the Messiah. The new covenant also replaced the Mosaic covenant in now enabling the law of God to be written on hearts instead of tablets of stone. The only way for God to reconcile Himself to mankind was through His Son’s death. It was God’s perfect fulfillment of the promise of redemption He’d made in Genesis.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God’s Word

Before you share The Big God Story this week, spend time reading it in this lesson. As you read God’s story in its entirety, ask Him to give you a glimpse of how sweet and amazing His love is. Ask God to fill you with a sense of thankfulness for the perfect sacrifice: Jesus’ death on the cross. Pray God will give you a sense of awe when you think about His power and sovereignty over all of creation.

Then pray the children will feel awakened to God’s power, sovereignty, and love for them. Pray they will experience Him in new ways and be compelled by the story of God’s love for His creation. Pray that, out of this experience with God, they will ask Him for the desire to serve others.

SMALL GROUP SECTION

EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day’s portion of The Big God Story.

God has been working in the lives of His people from the beginning of time. Invite children to participate in these EXPLORE activities to get them thinking about God’s redemptive plan and His work in the world throughout all of history.

Building the Timeline

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story People cards](#) (see Resources)
- [Beginning of Time and Present signs](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Optional: string (10')

PREPARE AHEAD

Print and cut apart The Big God Story People cards. Print the Beginning of Time and Present signs. Designate a space along the wall for your timeline. (Optional: Tape string to the wall as a timeline.) At the left end of the timeline, tape the Beginning of Time sign, and at the right end of the timeline, tape the Present sign. Print the Timeline image and keep it out of sight.

RELATE

Throughout The Big God Story, God showed His love and faithfulness to His people by providing for them, fulfilling His covenants with them, and redeeming them from their sins. Hold up the cards. These are some of the people whom God used to show the world who He is. Let's see if we can remember the order of their lives.

Fan out the people cards facedown in your hands, and allow each child to choose one to two cards until all of the cards have been passed out. Encourage the children to show their cards to one another and work together to place the cards on the timeline in the order the people appear in The Big God Story. As each child is ready to tape her card to the timeline, help her make sure the card is in the right place, and briefly remind the kids of what God did in that person's life.

Once all of the cards are taped to the timeline, pull out the printed Timeline image and have the children gather around you and check your timeline against the image.

LARGE GROUP
SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)
- [Remember Verse animation](#) (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. Psalm 145:8

Connect

Question

Who's your favorite person from the Bible and why?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Genesis—Revelation

Storytelling Technique: Illustrating The Big God Story

The Big God Story

SUPPLIES

- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline animation](#) (see Resources)
- [Storytelling Example image](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Butcher paper (white; 2 sections of the same length, each at least 7')
- Tape
- Paint markers (red, yellow, green, blue)
- Large permanent marker (black)
- Flashlight or flameless candle
- Optional: apron or smock, paper towels

PREPARE AHEAD

For this week's storytelling you will use paint markers to illustrate The Big God Story on a giant "canvas." As necessary, refer to the Storytelling Example image to show you approximately how the finished product should look. (If you prefer, you might ask another leader to draw while you share the narrative.)

SET UP

Create a giant canvas by taping one section of butcher paper above the other (with about an inch of overlap). Tape the giant canvas to the wall at the front of the room. Referring to the Storytelling Example image, draw the timeline at the bottom of the canvas with the black permanent marker. Place the flashlight or flameless candle at the front of the room. Set the paint markers and black permanent marker on the ground near the canvas.

RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. **The Big God Story began in a beautiful garden called Eden.** Take green paint marker and draw a few tree- and bush-like shapes on the timeline. **God created the first people, Adam and Eve, to be in relationship with Him and to live in this garden with the animals.** Take yellow paint marker and draw a sun in the upper-left corner. **Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, and their sin destroyed their relationship with God. They had to leave the garden.** Take black paint marker and draw a large “X,” slightly tipped to the left, over the trees/bushes. **But God promised that one day a Redeemer would come to restore the relationship between people and God.** Use black pen or marker to turn the “X” into a cross.

After many, many years, the world became so evil that God decided to destroy all living things in a flood—all except Noah, his family, and at least two of every animal. Use blue paint marker to draw rain coming down from the top of the paper toward “Noah” on the timeline. **They survived the flood inside an ark, and after the water went down, God promised Noah to never again destroy all living things with a flood.** Use red, yellow, green, and blue paint markers to draw a large rainbow that ends above “You & Me.”

Noah’s family filled the earth, and from them came a man named Abraham. Abraham also received a very special promise from God! Invite kids to turn to Genesis 17:6–8 in their Bibles. **God told Abraham, “I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you ... The whole land of Canaan ... I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God” (vv. 6–8).** Use red paint marker to draw several stick figures above “Abraham.” **This nation would be called Israel. Also, the Redeemer, whom God had promised hundreds of years earlier, would come from Abraham’s family line.**

Abraham and his wife, Sarah, waited 25 years for God to fulfill His promise to give them a child to keep their family line going. Finally, God gave them a son named Isaac. When Isaac grew up, he had a son named Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel. Then Jacob, or Israel, had 12 sons. Take black paint marker and write “12” above “Jacob.”

One of Jacob’s sons, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt. There God allowed Joseph to rise to power under Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Eventually, Joseph’s family moved to Egypt because God gave Joseph the ability to keep his family alive during a seven-year famine, when there wasn’t much food to eat. Use yellow paint marker to draw lines coming up from “Joseph” to look like grain. **Later, the Egyptians forced the Israelites into slavery. The Israelites cried out to God and begged Him to save them.**

God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When they traveled in the wilderness toward the Promised Land, God made a covenant with Moses and His people. Invite kids to turn to Exodus 19:5. **God said, “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.” So God gave the people the Law to show them how to live.** Take blue paint marker and, above “Moses,” draw two vertical rectangles with arched tops to look like two tablets.

Even so, the Israelites grumbled and complained. They didn’t trust God. Because of this, the people spent the next 40 years wandering in the wilderness. During this time, a new generation grew up with a new respect for God and His power. After Moses died, these people were led by a man named Joshua. Finally, after years of battle, God conquered the Promised Land that He had set aside for His people.

The Israelites settled down to raise families. During this time, God gave the Israelites leaders called

judges. The Israelites went through a cycle of being faithful to God, then disobeying Him, then returning to Him, then disobeying Him—over and over again. This time of the judges lasted for more than 450 years until the people cried out for a king because they wanted to be like the countries around them. God gave them the kind of king they wanted, and this king followed God for a time but eventually turned his back on God. God rejected him for his pride and disobedience. Then God anointed David as the second king. Use yellow paint pen to draw a crown above “David.” God made a covenant with David and promised that the Redeemer, the Son of God, the forever King would come from David’s family line. Use red paint pen or marker to draw a cross above the crown.

David had a son named Solomon who became king and was the wisest man ever to live. Use black paint marker to draw a simple structure above “Solomon.” **Solomon built the temple for God at Jerusalem, but eventually his heart became divided, and he allowed worship of false gods.** Later, God allowed the nation of Israel to split into two nations. The north was Israel, but the south was Judah. The promised Redeemer, Jesus, would be born out of Judah.

Hundreds of years later, something strange happened. *Tech: Dim the ceiling lights and turn on the flashlight or flameless candle.* God was silent. He was still working and moving in the lives of His people, but He chose not to speak through prophets or judges for 400 years—or until the beginning of the New Testament. *Tech: Turn on the lights and turn off the flashlight or candle.* Use blue paint pen to draw a horizontal line above “400 Years of Waiting.”

In the first pages of Matthew and Luke, we see that the promise God made in the garden (refer back to the cross on the left side) **and the promise He made to David** (refer to cross in the middle) **remained true for thousands of years! And in a small town called Bethlehem, the Redeemer, Jesus, was born!** Encourage kids to clap, cheer, and celebrate.

When Jesus was 30 years old, He began His ministry. He called 12 men to be His disciples, cared for the poor, healed the sick, raised the dead, and saved the outcast. Jesus never, ever sinned. But, after three years, He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, once and for all. Use black paint marker to draw a large cross above “Jesus.” Use red paint pen to draw a red heart around the cross.

The story gets even better: Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead! Use yellow paint pen to draw rays fanning out from the cross above “Jesus.” **God’s love is so powerful that it conquered death! And after Jesus returned to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to live inside everyone who chooses to trust and obey Him. The Holy Spirit gives us power to live for Jesus and play our part in The Big God Story.** Point to “You & Me.” **And one day Jesus will return to earth to make everything new, and He will rule forever and ever!** Use yellow paint marker to draw a large crown over “Our Future with Jesus” and color it in. Then tell a personal story of how you became a part of The Big God Story.

SMALL GROUP SECTION

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: The Big God Story

Encourage children to look up the following verses in their Bibles.

Questions for Younger Kids

- **What is something you really liked about The Big God Story?**
- **How does it feel to know you're a part of The Big God Story?**
- **Who is the promised Redeemer?** Luke 1:67–69; Galatians 3:13
- **What did Jesus do to redeem the world?** Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18
- **Have you asked Jesus to be your Redeemer? If not, would you like to?**

Questions for Older Kids

- **What stood out to you in The Big God Story?**
- **How does it feel to know you're a part of The Big God Story?**
- **How did the relationship between God and the Israelites show how much God loves the people He created?** Genesis 6:18; 17:7; 2 Samuel 7:23; Isaiah 48:17
- **How does the promised Redeemer fit into The Big God Story?** Genesis 3:15; 12:3; 2 Samuel 7:13–16; Matthew 27–28
- **What is a redeemer? What does it mean to redeem?**
- **Who is the promised Redeemer?** Luke 1:67–69; Galatians 3:13
- **What did Jesus do to redeem the world?** Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18
- **Have you asked Jesus to be your Redeemer? If not, would you like to?**

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

As you bless your kids, tell them they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely share the joy and love they have received from God.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. Then open a Bible and read 1 John 4:9–12:

This is how God showed His love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Instruct kids to place their timelines on the floor in front of them as you bless them.

May you know how much God loves you, so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross as the final sacrifice for your sins. May you feel encouraged to know that you're a part of The Big God Story!