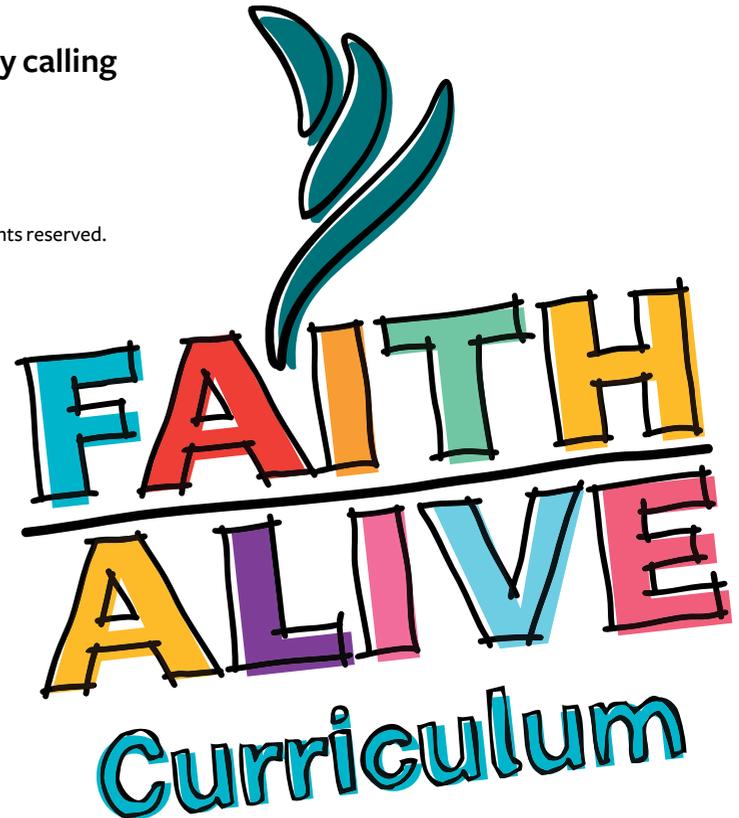


Sample

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▶ Tell the Story. Live the Story.

Dear Family:

Today your child began a new theme in church school called “God’s Beautiful World—Spoiled.” The four sessions in this unit focus on God’s creation of the world, our fall into sin, the tragic story of Cain and Abel, and the tower of Babel.

Through a variety of dramas, stories, games and other hands-on activities we will be exploring what God’s Word teaches us through these stories from Genesis. We’ll find out what these stories mean for our lives today and how we need to respond to them.

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Memory Challenge

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.

Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?

Those who have clean hands and a pure heart.

—Psalm 24:1-4a (TNIV)



Memory Challenge

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

Those who have clean hands and pure hearts.

—Psalm 24:1-4a (NRSV)



The Fall

Reader's Theater (based on Genesis 3)

Characters

- Adam
- Eve
- Reader 1
- Reader 2
- Reader 3
- Reader 4

Arrange Adam and Eve in front of the group, pantomiming actions. Readers sit on the sides, with Readers 1 and 2 across from Readers 3 and 4.

Scene 1: The Way It Was Supposed to Be

[Adam pantomimes pulling weeds, digging in the earth, and wiping the sweat from his brow. Eve pantomimes grinding grain between two stones.]

Reader 1: Adam works hard and long under the hot sun.

Reader 3: The weeds are stealing the goodness from his soil. He must pull out the weeds so his plants won't die.

Reader 2: Was this the plan when God created the earth?

Reader 4: No. God gave the man a perfect garden where weeds did not grow in the grain.

Reader 1: What about the woman? Did she always have to work so hard?

Reader 3: No. God made her to be Adam's special helper, walking side by side with him.

Reader 2: The work God had given to the man and the woman pleased them. Their food delighted them. Everything was good.

Reader 4: Until the man and woman thought they wanted more.

Scene 2: The Wrong Source of Wisdom

[Adam and Eve put down their work. They sit with their heads in their hands as if weeping.]

Reader 1: A serpent also lived in the perfect garden. This serpent was crafty, clever, and quick-thinking. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Reader 3: The serpent gave the woman a chance to show how smart she was. "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," she said. "But God did say, 'You must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden.' And God said, 'You must not touch it or you will die.'"

Reader 2: Now the serpent had a chance to explain it his way, perhaps hoping the woman would trust him more than God. "You will not die," he said. "God knows that when you eat the fruit your eyes will be opened. Then you will be like God. You will know good and evil."

Reader 4: The woman looked at the fruit. Why shouldn't her eyes be opened to see what God could see? God had told them not to eat from the tree because knowing evil would make them die. God had said everything was made good just for them. But perhaps that was because God didn't want to share some things with them.

Reader 1: The fruit looked so good, so beautiful. Its fragrance made her mouth water.

Reader 3: Besides, it would make her wise. Why shouldn't she be as wise as God?

Reader 2: So she took a piece of the fruit and ate.

Reader 4: She also gave some to her husband, who was with her.

Reader 1: Now the man and woman had what the serpent promised—a new understanding. But it wasn't good. They were ashamed of themselves and of their bodies. They sewed fig leaves together and made clothes for themselves.

[Adam and Eve cover their faces with fingers spread apart, moving their fingers as if they were leaves.]

Reader 3: Then they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden. The sound of God was like a cool and pleasant breeze. Usually the man and the woman eagerly went to God. They always had so many good things to talk about.

Reader 1: But this time the man and his wife hid behind the trees. What would they tell God?

Reader 3: The Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Reader 2: The man said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden. I was afraid because I was naked. So I hid myself."

Reader 4: God said, "Who told you that you were naked?"

Reader 2: "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

Reader 4: The man said, "The woman gave me the fruit from the tree. So I ate it."

Reader 2: Then God spoke to the woman. "What have you done?"

Reader 4: The woman said, "The serpent tricked me. That is why I ate it."

Scene 3: Punishment

[Adam and Eve stand again, going back to pantomiming their work. They swat flies as they work.]

Reader 1: The Lord God cursed the serpent, causing him to crawl on his belly.

Reader 3: The Lord God also told the serpent that the children of the woman would crush the serpent's head and the serpent would strike their heel. That was God's way of saying that there would always be a struggle between good and evil in the world. But one day a descendent of the woman would come and defeat the evil one, once and for all. That promise was fulfilled when Jesus came.

Reader 2: To the woman God said, "I will give you pain when you give birth to children."

[Eve groans, then folds her arms as if holding a baby.]

Reader 4: The child comes with pain but also with blessing and promise.

Reader 2: God has not removed the blessing of new life to fill the earth.

Reader 1: To Adam God said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree which I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. It will produce thorns and thistles." *[Adam moves faster, as if working harder and harder.]*

Reader 3: "You will sweat and work hard to produce your food."

Reader 1: "And when you die you will return to the ground."

Reader 3: "You were made from dust. When you die you will return to dust."

Reader 2: Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living.

Reader 4: To make clothes for Adam and Eve, God took the life of an animal.

Reader 2: The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve.

Reader 1: Then the Lord God sent them out of the perfect garden.

A Pocketknife at School

Shauna gripped the small pocketknife in her fist. She had planned to be the first one in the classroom, but two boys arrived before she did. They were cleaning the gerbil cage and laughing at the antics of the small creatures. When she was sure they weren't looking, she dropped the knife on Maria's desk.

The morning bell rang and the classroom buzzed with noisy students. Shauna sat in her seat and hid behind her math book.

"Hey, look," called out John Paul. "Maria has a knife!"

Shauna put her head down to keep from smiling. This was going better than she had imagined. Finally the perfect Maria would get into trouble. At home Shauna's mother was always asking why Shauna couldn't be more like Maria. And at school Miss Jackson was always displaying Maria's work as the example to follow.

A group formed around Maria's desk. Then Miss Jackson came over. She picked up the knife and escorted Maria out to the hall.



In a few minutes, Miss Jackson returned without Maria. She called the class to order and gave an assignment. No one dared do anything except begin. By recess time, Maria had not yet returned to the classroom.

Shauna listened to the conversations of her classmates.

"I can't believe Maria would break the rules like that."

"Maybe she didn't know the rules included pocketknives."

"It probably belongs to her brother."

"He's a real jerk. Maybe Maria is like that too."

Shauna squirmed. This was turning out worse for Maria than she'd planned. But Shauna figured it wasn't her fault if Maria's brother had already given her a bad reputation.



At lunchtime Maria returned to the classroom. She didn't say anything. Neither did Miss Jackson.

Two other students were called down to the principal's office in the afternoon. They too returned without saying anything. An hour later, just before dismissal, Miss Jackson stopped at Shauna's desk and asked her to report to the principal.

"What does she want?" Shauna asked.

"She's speaking to everyone who arrived early this morning."

Shauna replied loudly, "This is more fun than a fire drill."

A couple of people laughed.

The laughter helped her get out of the classroom, but once she walked down the hall, she didn't feel so confident.

The secretary ushered Shauna into the principal's office.

Shauna's mom sat in a chair across from Mrs. Foster's desk.

Shauna dropped into another chair, feeling as if the room had spun out of control.

Mrs. Foster held up the knife. "Your mom says that this knife came from your house. What do you have to say?"

Shauna slumped down into her seat.

"I'm suspending you for two weeks. By that time I want some answers. And then we'll decide if you'll be allowed back into school or not."

Shauna didn't dare look at Mom.

Mom didn't speak until they got home. "Do you know how disappointed I am in you?" she said. "I've worked hard so I could afford to send you to a better school. Unless you come up with a reasonable explanation, you'll return to your old school."

Mom didn't have to explain that in the old school there was more fighting going on than learning. It was a scary place. Shauna went to her room and stayed there.



In the morning Mom dropped Shauna off at Grandma's house. Grandma didn't say anything about the incident. Instead she sat down at the piano and asked Shauna to sing along. They sang all of Grandma's favorites: "Jesus Loves Me," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," and every other song Grandma knew about Jesus and God's children.

Every once in a while, Shauna studied Grandma's face to see if Grandma was upset. But her face never showed anything but love.

By the end of the afternoon, Shauna decided that Grandma could see how ridiculous the accusations were. "Accidentally leaving a knife on Maria's desk shouldn't have made everybody get so upset, right, Grandma?"

"It was wrong," Grandma said. "You almost caused an innocent person to get into serious trouble."

"But I know that you love me. And you won't send me back to my old school."

"It's not my decision," Grandma said.

"Nothing bad happened to Maria," Shauna shouted. "Why is everyone against me?" She ran out to the porch. Why couldn't someone be on her side? She picked up a pebble and threw it on the sidewalk. It must have hurt Mom to admit that the knife belonged to her daughter. And Maria. Was she scared, thinking she'd be blamed for having a knife in school?

Shauna went back into the house. "Grandma, how can you sing when you know I've been bad?"

Grandma pulled Shauna close. "Thinking of Jesus and remembering he is the one that can fix our broken ways is my only joy."

Shauna let herself go limp in Grandma's arms. She felt terrible. "Forgive me, Jesus," she whispered.

Then Shauna lifted her head. "Grandma, I need to go to school. I need to tell the principal, Miss Jackson, the truth. And Maria too."

"I'll go with you," Grandma said.

They walked silently for the first few blocks.

"Grandma," Shauna said, "I know I have to do this, but it's going to be so embarrassing saying that I did it on purpose so that everyone would think less of Maria. And because I wanted the praise that she gets."

"I know," Grandma said. "But I'll be there with you."

"What will happen to me?" Shauna asked.

"I don't know," Grandma said. "Schools have to have rules. If your school wasn't tough about certain rules, it would become as unsafe as your old school."

"I'm scared," Shauna said. "Can we sing?"

Escape the Z!

Game Cards

My neighbor paid me \$5 to rake her leaves. I had to give up bike riding with my friends to do this miserable job, so I don't see why I should give up any of my money for the church offering. **Proud thought: All that I earn is mine.** *Move up 2 steps.*

What if my birthday party isn't the best one? I'll beg Mom to spend more money on food, games, and prizes. **Proud thought: I deserve to have the best and have everyone honor me.** *Move up 2 steps.*

I'm embarrassed to tell my friend at school that I'm a Christian. She may think I'm weird or something. **Proud thought: What others think of me is more important than what Jesus has done for me.** *Move up 2 steps.*

Jodie thinks she is so great. She always shows off that she puts a dollar in the Sunday school offering plate. **Proud thought: Other people are more proud than I am.** *Move up 1 step.*

I get good grades and I'm kind of cute, so everyone at school likes me and wants to my friend. Why I should I talk to the losers nobody likes? **Proud thought: I'm too good for some people.** *Move up 2 steps.*

We just moved into a new house. It has a swimming pool and a basketball court. Everyone will think I am pretty special. **Proud thought: The things I own make me important.** *Move up 2 steps.*

The teacher gave me an A on the big science project. I'm telling other kids about it. I bet no one else has gotten an A. **Proud thought: I am the best.** *Move up 1 step.*

I gave the most cans for the food drive so I did more than my part. I don't need to stay around to help put the food into bags. **Proud thought: I don't have to be a servant when I've already given my share.** *Move up 1 step.*

No one ever gives me a chance. No one even waits for me when they go to the lunchroom. No one asks me to join their team. **Proud thought: I deserve more than I get.** *Move up 1 step.*

Becky stole a candy bar from the store. I'm sure that's why she's grounded for a week. I would never do such a thing. **Proud thought: When I tell about what others have done wrong, it makes me look good.** *Move up 1 step.*

Every Sunday my mother drags me to the nursing home to visit Grandma. She doesn't understand that I have to practice my soccer skills every day if I want to play for the team. **Proud thought: My time is mine.** *Move up 2 steps.*

I know I do stuff that's wrong. Jesus sees what is in my heart, yet he still loves me and forgives me. **Humble thought: I need Jesus' forgiveness.** *Move down 2 steps.*

I studied for my test, but I'm afraid I'll get nervous and choose the wrong answer. I asked Mom to pray for me. Just knowing God listens and cares helps. **Humble thought: I need to depend on God.** *Move down 1 step.*

We had a potluck dinner at church. There were lots of good things to eat, and the pastor made sure I had a place to sit. It was fun. **Humble thought: I'm thankful for people who care about others.** *Move down 1 step.*

Thanking God first thing in the morning changes my day. This morning I thanked God for the rain, for my umbrella, and for a good sandwich in my lunch. **Humble thought: All that I have comes from God.** *Move down 2 steps.*

When my grandma's friend went to the hospital, our church school class made her a card. She wrote us back and said our card was her favorite. It made me happy. **Humble thought: Cheering up others brings true joy.** *Move down 2 steps.*

I lied to my mom about having homework. When I went out to play, I knew Jesus saw my lie. I put the ball away and did my homework. **Humble thought: On my own I can't always do what's right. I must go to Jesus for forgiveness.** *Move down 1 step.*

When I wasn't feeling good at school, I called Mom. She had to leave her job at the office and take time to pick me up. I thanked her when she came. **Humble thought: Saying "thanks" shows we care about others.** *Move down 1 step.*

My teacher put my artwork on the bulletin board. It made me feel special. Then I remembered I didn't say anything to James when his math work was displayed. I hope it isn't too late. **Humble thought: God has given each one of us abilities.** *Move down 2 steps.*

When Kevin beat me in the final round of the spelling bee, I was disappointed but I smiled and congratulated him. **Humble thought: It's good to recognize the achievements of others.** *Move down 2 steps.*

I hit a softball through my neighbor's garage window. At first I ran away and didn't say anything. But after talking with Dad, I knew I had done the wrong thing. So I went over and apologized and agreed to pay for a new window. **Humble thought: God uses others to show us the right thing to do.** *Move down 1 step.*



Some of the kids at school think it's cool to talk dirty. The other day I told a couple of kids I wished they wouldn't do that. **Humble thought: Sometimes it takes courage to speak out.** *Move down 2 steps.*



Escape the Z! You may return to Start and the home of humility.



Escape the Z! You may return to Start and the home of humility.



Game: T . R . A . D . E . S .

Punch out game cards. Follow instructions in step 4 of session 2.

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My church school teacher asked us to take time for reading our Bibles and praying every morning. It’s hard to get up so early. But I got everything ready the night before and there was time in the morning. Starting the day with God is like starting with a good friend.

JOY

We had a day off from school. Everyone told stories of the fun day they’d had. My dad and I didn’t do anything special but my grandma came home from the hospital. I don’t think anyone is happier than I am.

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Josh really bothers me. He always wants to be with me, but he can’t even kick a soccer ball straight, and he can’t throw a football more than a few feet. If he wants to play with me, he’d better improve.

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I always have to wait for my little sister after school. She takes forever to close her backpack and say goodbye to her teacher. When I wait for her, my friends go ahead without me. Her smile when she sees me makes it worthwhile.

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We corrected math papers in class today. I corrected Sean’s paper. He missed ten problems. I told some other kids at recess time. They said Sean never does well in math. He’s not very smart and he spends his recess standing by the fence. What a loser!

SELF-CONTROL

On Wednesday afternoons I hate doing my homework after school while everyone else is outside playing. But if I don’t do it then, I can’t go to Boys’ Club at church. We’re using the woodworking tools tonight. I think I’ll do my homework now.

HATEFUL

Megan told the teacher that I had gum. The teacher called me to the front of the class and I had to spit it out. Accidentally on purpose, I knocked Megan’s paper on the floor and stepped on it. Now she’ll have to start over on a clean piece of paper.

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My best friend decided she had more fun with another friend. I was mad and sad at the same time. I prayed and tried clever things to get her back, but nothing worked. Then I noticed Leah didn’t have a friend. I will be her friend. Deep down inside it feels right. Thank you, God.

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LOVE

Everyone at school, including my friend Cameron, laughed at me when I spelled busy with a “z” instead of an “s.” But when Cameron was chosen Student of the Day I said, “Congratulations.” He told me once he spelled busy with a “z” too.

FAITHFULNESS

My church school teacher asked us to take time for reading our Bibles and praying every morning. It’s hard to get up so early. But I got everything ready the night before and there was time in the morning. Starting the day with God is like starting with a good friend.

JOY

We had a day off from school. Everyone told stories of the fun day they’d had. My dad and I didn’t do anything special but my grandma came home from the hospital. I don’t think anyone is happier than I am.

RUDE AND PROUD

Josh really bothers me. He always wants to be with me, but he can’t even kick a soccer ball straight, and he can’t throw a football more than a few feet. If he wants to play with me, he’d better improve.

PATIENCE

I always have to wait for my little sister after school. She takes forever to close her backpack and say goodbye to her teacher. When I wait for her, my friends go ahead without me. Her smile when she sees me makes it worthwhile.

MEAN WORDS

We corrected math papers in class today. I corrected Sean’s paper. He missed ten problems. I told some other kids at recess time. They said Sean never does well in math. He’s not very smart and he spends his recess standing by the fence. What a loser!

SELF-CONTROL

On Wednesday afternoons I hate doing my homework after school while everyone else is outside playing. But if I don’t do it then, I can’t go to Boys’ Club at church. We’re using the woodworking tools tonight. I think I’ll do my homework now.

HATEFUL

Megan told the teacher that I had gum. The teacher called me to the front of the class and I had to spit it out. Accidentally on purpose, I knocked Megan’s paper on the floor and stepped on it. Now she’ll have to start over on a clean piece of paper.

PEACE

My best friend decided she had more fun with another friend. I was mad and sad at the same time. I prayed and tried clever things to get her back, but nothing worked. Then I noticed Leah didn’t have a friend. I will be her friend. Deep down inside it feels right. Thank you, God.

DISOBEDIENT

My parents make me get up every Sunday morning for Sunday school. You’d think at least once I could sleep in late. Well, they can force me to go, but they can’t force me to listen and have a good time. It’s boring always talking about God.

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