

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PRETEEN SECTION

Make sure your parents read the Bible story too! You may read together, or separately.

BIBLE STORY: THE FIRST PEOPLE (GENESIS 3-5)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He asked to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

Notice: *Did God really say not to touch the fruit?*

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Notice: *Where was the man when all this was happening?*

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

Notice: *Why is being naked suddenly a problem?*

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

Notice: *Does anyone take responsibility for what they did?*

Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.
And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

Pro Tip! *One of the punishments for what happened is humans and snakes will always be fighting. What do you expect will happen in the next Bible story? Do you think we'll find people fighting with snakes?*

To the woman he said,

"I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.
It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

Notice: *What do you think of these punishments?*

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach

Notice: *Does God give up on humans?*

out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

Pro Tip! *The Tree of Life will return at the end of the Bible. God will find a way to bring humans back to life eternal.*

THE NEXT GENERATION

Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

Notice: *Do you think Cain was right to be angry?*

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”
“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Pro Tip! *I thought people were supposed to fight with snakes? Why are they fighting with each other? Have we become like snakes?*

The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

But the Lord said to him, “Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Notice: Does God give up on Cain?

Cain made love to his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch.

Enoch had children, and they had children. His great-grandson was named Lamech.

Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. One day, Lamech came home and said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young boy for slapping me.
If Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times.”

Notice: Why do people suddenly start praying to God?

At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord.

After that, Adam and Eve’s descendants continued to have children. Until one day, many generations later, a child was born who was named Noah.

When Noah was born, his dad told everyone, “Noah will bring us relief from the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed.”

Pro Tip! The ground was cursed because of what Adam did wrong. Do you think Noah will fix this mess like his dad predicts?

When Noah grew up, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

LET’S SUMMARIZE!

Answer each question yourself.

What is God doing in this story?

What does this story tell me about God?

What does this story tell me about me?

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

MEMORY WORK: THE LORD'S PRAYER

Memorize the translation of the Lord's Prayer we use in worship. This translation uses words that you may not be familiar with, but I will provide some comments to help you understand what these words mean.

This week, try to memorize just the first 7 lines.

You may already have the Lord's Prayer memorized? If so, begin trying to memorize the books of the Bible. Try doing just 5 per week.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

*"Daily bread" is a stand in for
all the things we need to live.*

*"Trespasses" means going
where we aren't supposed to.
You might also see the word
"sins" or "debts" here in some
versions of the Lord's Prayer.*

THINGS TO NOTICE

"Daily bread" is all the things you need to live. What all do you need to live?

Have you ever done something you weren't supposed to? This is a "trespass" or "sin".

Sometimes versions use "debt" instead of "trespass". What do you owe when you do wrong?

What does it mean for God to forgive you? How do you forgive others?

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PARENT SECTION

As you discuss questions with your preteens, these thoughts might help you go deeper.

CONVERSATIONS – BIBLE

Did God really say not to touch the fruit?

No, God never said that. I wonder who told the woman not to touch the fruit? Remember, she wasn't around when God gave the command to the man. Why would changing the rules be a problem? Has anyone ever changed the rules on you?

Where was the man when all this was happening?

He's right beside his wife. The whole time! Why didn't the man do anything to stop this?

Why is being naked suddenly a problem?

I think it's because they are embarrassed and ashamed. Notice they try to hide from God. They don't want anyone to see their problems. Do people today use clothes to hide problems? Do you ever try to hide when you've done something wrong?

Does anyone take responsibility for what they did?

Nope. The man blames the woman. The man even blames God! The woman blames the snake. No one says they are sorry or asks for help. Why is it so hard to take responsibility for our mistakes, especially when we know we've been caught? Why is it so hard to say sorry?

What do you think God would have done if they told the truth and said sorry?

What do you think of these punishments?

These seem like big punishments, don't they? What I notice is God says our problems and mistakes change our relationships with each other and the world. The serpent was made when God was looking for a partner for Adam, and now people and snakes are going to be enemies. The woman was supposed to be the man's partner, and now their relationship is different. Adam was made from the dirt, and now the dirt is cursed!

When you do something wrong, how does that change your relationships with those you hurt? What can be done to fix the damage?

Does God give up on humans? Does God give up on Cain?

Both times, no! God makes the first humans clothes and goes with them out of the Garden. God protects Cain. God continues to love and care for us after we've messed up! When you mess up, you may be punished, but I bet your parents continue to love and care for you.

Do you think Cain was right to be angry?

Maybe? Maybe he just misunderstood God. Maybe Abel needed some extra love today, and God was doing something really nice for Abel, and Cain felt slighted. Do you ever feel jealous when other people get good things or special attention and you don't? Do you think that happens because they meant to be mean to you?

What do people suddenly start praying to God?

First Cain killed someone, and now Lamech! Lamech killed a boy just for slapping his face. That's pretty bad. But Lamech also feels like what he did was right. Adam and Eve felt bad. Cain didn't feel bad, but he didn't celebrate either. Lamech is celebrating. What happens when we start celebrating bad things?

Have you ever felt happy when someone else got hurt? Maybe you thought, "Finally, they are getting what they deserve!" It's a scary world when people celebrate doing bad things. Maybe that's why people suddenly start praying to God. They need help!

LET'S SUMMARIZE!

I've put in some of my answers but remember: Our answers don't have to be the same. You may have heard and seen things I didn't even notice!

What is God doing in this story?

Showing up when there's a problem. Like a parent, giving punishment but also love.

What does this story tell me about God?

God continues to care for people even after they do wrong.

What does this story tell me about me?

I remember that God made me good, but it's clear I have an enormous capacity to do bad. And when I do bad, it really messes things up.

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

I may be punished when I do wrong, but God will always love and care for me.

CONVERSATIONS – LORD’S PRAYER

“Daily bread” is all the things you need to live. What all do you need to live?

Have you ever looked at Maslow’s hierarchy of needs? Look at the images on the next page. Did your list of needs include all these things?

Have you ever done something you weren’t supposed to? This is a “trespass” or “sin”.

Trespassing is going where we don’t belong. Like 10-year-olds don’t belong in a theater showing an R rated movie. But we also don’t belong in a fight with a friend, and we don’t belong in front of the TV after bedtime. Where are some places you’ve gone that you don’t belong? When you’re somewhere you don’t belong, what happens?

Sometimes versions use “debt” instead of “trespass”. What do you owe when you do wrong?

Debt is what we owe. If we break a window, we might owe money to fix it. If we interrupt a teacher, we might owe them an apology. If we tell a lie about a friend, we might owe everyone the truth. When have you owed someone something? Was it easy to repay?

What does it mean for God to forgive you? How do you forgive others?

Forgiveness is like God helping you out of the places you don’t belong, like how the man saved the lost sheep. If your sibling trespasses against you by going through your things (somewhere they don’t belong), how would you help them out of that problem without creating a bigger problem?

Forgiveness is like God saying you don’t owe God anything for what you did wrong. If a friend takes one of your pencils or crayons without asking, is it easy to forgive them? What if they took your Xbox or Play Station? Would it be easy then? Do you think it’s easy for God to forgive us?

Mostly, forgiveness is a sign of love. How does God show us love when we do something wrong? How do your parents show you love when you do something wrong? How do you show love to those who do something wrong to you?

