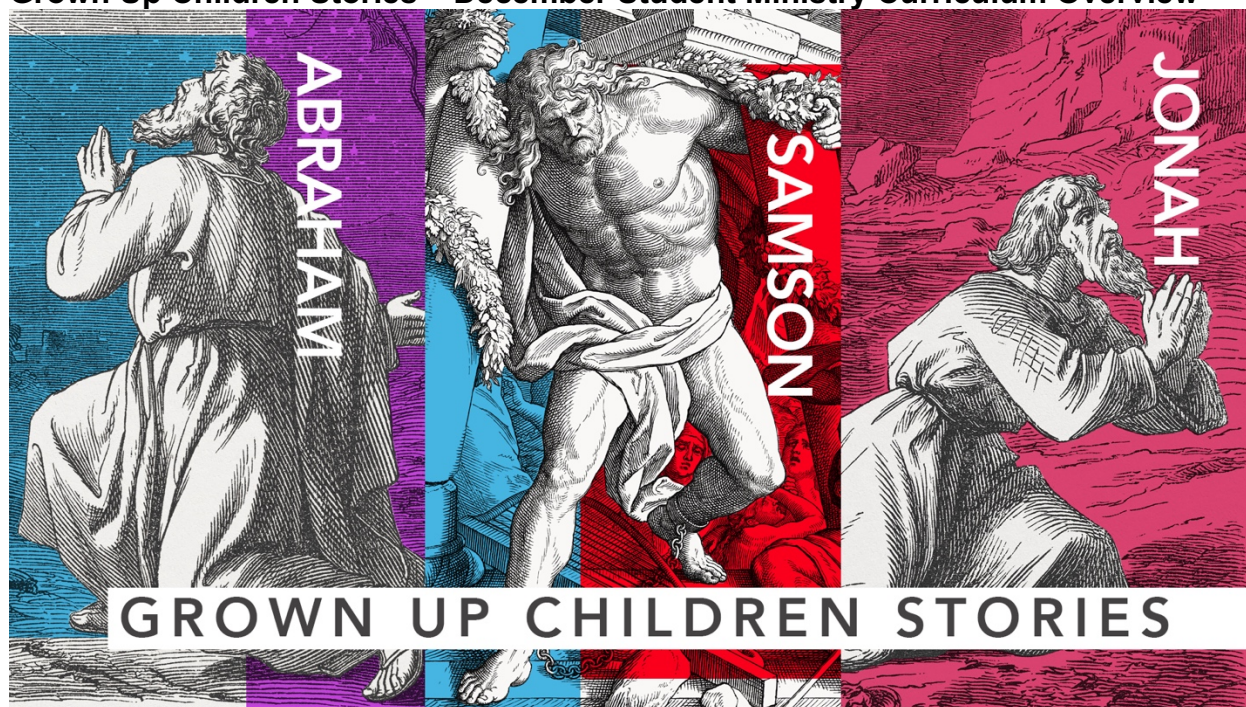


Grown Up Children Stories – December Student Ministry Curriculum Overview



As a child, you may have heard some common bible stories from a children's bible. When you get older, we should take some time to revisit these classic stories to understand a little more of what the bible has to say, explore the story a little deeper, and understand these well-known bible characters. Jesus shows up in the Old Testament, let's explore some childhood passages together while we learn more about Abraham, Samson, and Jonah.

Week 1 – Dec 3 - Abraham

Main Point: **Trust God and learn to follow where He leads you**

Main Passage: Gen 22:1-14 (Gen 11-25, Gal 3:6-9, Rom 4, Hebrews 11)

The Beginner's Bible Page: pg 46 Visitors

Jesus Connection:

- Isaac & Jesus are long awaited "beloved sons"
- Both sons carry wood leading to their death
- God provides the sacrifice substitute

Week 2 – Dec 10 - Samson

Main Point: **Doing what is right in the Lord's eyes, not your own, will lead you to faithfully following God.**

Main Passage: Judges 13:5; 16:28 (Judges 13-16)

The Beginner's Bible Page: pg 146 Samson

Jesus Connection:

- Birth Story, similar to Jesus. Angel shows up to say coming child. Similar to Jesus' story, show up to Mary
- Betrayed for silver & taken away bonded
- Blinded/ Blindfolded

Week 3 – Dec 17 – Jonah

Main Point: **You never realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.**

Main Passage: Jonah 1-3 (Matthew 12:40-41, 2 Kings 14:25)

The Beginner's Bible Page: pg 257 Jonah and the Big Fish

Jesus Connection:

- Sacrifice Story (relate back to Abraham & Isaac, point to Jesus)
- Matthew 12:40-41
- Jesus & Jonah 3 Days Darkness/ Separated

Devotionals for Grown Up Children Stories



Over this series, we have 3 devotionals planned out that go along with each bible character in this series. The Watermark Bible has great resources to help students understand the bible character and draw a connection to Jesus. An animated video helps to bring the information to life that is illustration of what is read in the bible. The devotions are available on the Bible App Plan, follow the link for each devotional.

Week 1 – Abraham & Isaac - 3 Day Devo

- Bible App Plan Link - <https://www.bible.com/en/reading-plans/29080>

Week 2 – Samson – 3 Day Devo

- Bible App Plan Link - <https://www.bible.com/en/reading-plans/33020>

Week 3 – Jonah – 3 Day Devo

- Bible App Plan Link - <https://www.bible.com/en/reading-plans/30363>

Grown Up Children Stories – Abraham Week 1

Main Point: **Trust God and learn to follow where He leads you**

Main Passage: Gen 22:1-14 (Gen 11-25, Gal 3:6-9, Rom 4, Hebrews 11)

The Beginner's Bible Page: pg 46 Visitors

Jesus Connection:

- Isaac & Jesus are long awaited “beloved sons”
- Both sons carry wood leading to their death
- God provides the sacrifice substitute

Message Start:

Everyone remembers story time as a young child. Some can remember going to the library in elementary school, sitting in a circle, and listening to the teacher read a book. Maybe you can remember climbing up into the lap of your grandma or grandpa as they told stories of when they were younger. We loved hearing these stories, and most of us can still remember them to this day.

[AUTHOR NOTE – I set up an oversized recliner on stage, and I sat in it while giving the intro. I also gave the first part of the intro with the tone of a kindergarten teacher. When I got to the next part of the intro, I stood up and resumed my normal speaking tone to emphasize the transition from “kid stuff” to a more grown up approach.]

This week we are beginning a new series called Grown Up Children's Stories. For the next few weeks, we are going to look at some of the stories you probably heard as little kids, but we are going to dive a little deeper into the heart of the Scripture.

1 Corinthians 13:11 ESV *“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.”*

As middle school/ high school students, you are past the childish ways of thinking, and today we are going to take a deeper look at the story of Abraham.

Story Time

[AUTHOR NOTE –Give as much energy as you can to reading the story like you would to a group of children. Tell the story as if your group was hearing it for the first time.]

[Read from The Beginner's Bible (accessible from the Nursery/ Young Children's in KidCity)
Read story on page 46 – Visitors]

Welcome to story time children. We are going to read from this handy dandy bible, hehe. Come around, move closer, make sure you can see now...

READ CHILDREN BIBLE STORY OF ABRAHAM

Thanks for listening, now time for bed. Kidding kidding.

As a child growing up, you may have heard about Abraham. Let's work as a group, lean in and learn more about him.

Ask Crowd: Who is Abraham? What was Abraham known for?
(take some answer across the room)

[Get a gauge on understanding. Even if some know much about Abraham, there is a good chance students in the room will have NO understanding. Be inviting into learning together]

Growing up you may or may not have heard about Abraham. The children's bible is GREAT at starting the story, entry level into knowing what's going on. But as we get older, the bible is filled with more layers, more understanding, and we see there is more going on. Let's dig deeper into the character of Abraham, what I do know,

Main point: Trust God and learn to follow where He leads you

If you were around about a month ago, we started our family series in the book of Matthew 1:1-2 – Jesus' genealogy begins with Abraham. It's good for us to understand what is happening in the bible, the historical account/ record of what happened. Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Simply states, Abraham was the father of Isaac. And so the genealogy begins.

Abraham's backstory – *(move quick through this part)*

- Call of Abraham – Gen 12:1-4a
 - ¹The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ²“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” ⁴So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran
- He is 75, no kids. I (God) will make you a GREAT nation.
 - God will NEED to show up for that to happen.
 - Traveled around to his new land.
- The Lord makes a Covenant with Abram(ham)
 - What can you give me since I remain childless... Gen 15:2
 - Gen 15:4-5 - ⁴Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”
 - Abram's response: Gen 15:6 - ⁶Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
 - Gen 17 – God makes a covenant with with Abram, changes his name. Reminds Abraham of the promise, nations and kings will come from this everlasting covenant.
- There's so much... seriously read this stuff for yourself.
 - Abraham has a child with Sarah's servant Hagar, has a baby name Ishmael
 - Side note, Ishmael is recognized as the spiritual father of Islam.
 - Let's jump ahead to Gen 21 – Isaac is born
- God keeps his promises, Isaac is born.

Gen 22 – God has honored his promise of a son to Abraham!

- v1 – God tested Abraham...

- Gen 22:2 - ² Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

WHAT!! Your kids bible won't mention this part of Abraham's life. God was testing Abraham, let's dig into this section together.

1. This isn't the FIRST Experience with God

- a) Abraham has had many conversations, covenants, opportunities to connect with God. God was very much present for Abraham.
- b) Abraham trusted God's promise and knew Him to be good and trustworthy.

2. Abraham didn't think Isaac would Die

- a) Gen 22:5 – He (Abraham) said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then **we** will come back to you.”
- b) Imagine Isaac's question: Gen 22:7b - Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”
- c) Gen 22:8 - ⁸ Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

3. The Test

- a) Gen 22:9-14 - ⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

¹² “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram^[a] caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

- b) Can you imagine yourself in this situation? God has directly connected with you, several times over YEARS, and God tests to see your faithfulness.

When we dig into this story of Abraham and Isaac, we can make a connection all the way to Jesus. In just a few weeks, we will celebrate Jesus for Christmas. ‘Unto us a child is born.’ We will celebrate! When we examine what's going on in Abraham's story, we need to make the connection all the way to Jesus. Follow me here on how we can see Jesus threaded into this story.

This story of Abraham & Isaac Points to Jesus –

- Gospel Connection 1 - Both Isaac and Jesus are long awaited “beloved sons”
 - Isaac beloved son of Abraham and the covenant son of promise (Gen 22:2, Heb 11:17)
 - Jesus was the beloved Son of God (John 3:16)
- Gospel Connection 2 – Both sons carry the wood leading to their death
 - Isaac carries the fire wood on his back (Gen 22:6)
 - Jesus carries the cross (John 19:17)

- Gospel Connection 3 – God provides the sacrifice substitute
 - God provides a ram as a sacrifice substitute (Gen 22:8)
 - God provides Jesus as the 'lamb of God' as a substitute for our sin, that we deserved the punishment of death, yet Jesus took our place.

Why was a sacrifice needed?

- At the beginning of Gen 1 – God creates humanity to rule WITH Him in the garden, it was Good.
- BUT humanity turned it's back on God.
- God didn't introduce death into the equation; humanity did. God's problem (and ours) is figuring out how to deal with it.
- Sacrifice is the death of one thing so something else can have a new life

Abraham was faithful and obedient in following God. Father Abraham... he followed God and it impacts all of us. As we wrap up, let's read what Paul had to say about Abraham:

Galatians 3:6-9 - ⁶ So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Main point: Trust God and learn to follow where He leads you

Obedience paired with action will change our own hearts and influence everyone around us. Abraham was very impactful for you and I, maybe you didn't even know who he was before. Let's be thankful for the example he set for us.

Let's pray and then head into small groups.

Pray

Dismiss to Small Group

WEEK 1

CONVERSATION GUIDE

ABRAHAM



THIS SERIES: GROWN UP CHILDREN STORIES

THE BIG IDEA

Trust God & learn to follow where He leads you.

THE BIBLE

Genesis 22:1-14
Gen 11-25, Gal 3:6-9, Rom 4, Heb 11

Jesus Connection

- Isaac & Jesus are long awaited "beloved sons"
- Both sons carry wood leading to their death
- God provides the sacrifice substitute

1. **Icebreaker:** Share a childhood memory of story time or a memorable story someone told you.
2. What are your thoughts on the concept of "Grown Up Children's Stories"? How do you feel about diving deeper into familiar childhood stories from the Bible?
3. **Understanding Abraham:** Before today, what did you know about Abraham? What is he known for?
4. **The Journey of Abraham:** Reflect on Abraham's journey, leaving his homeland at 75 with a promise from God. How do you think he felt, and what challenges might he have faced?
5. **Covenant with God:** Discuss the significance of God's covenant with Abraham. How does this relate to the idea of "Leveling up your faith and following where God leads"?
6. **Testing of Abraham:** How would you have felt if you were in Abraham's shoes when God asked him to sacrifice Isaac? How does Abraham's response reveal his faith?
7. **Gospel Connections:** Explore the connections between the story of Abraham and Isaac and the Gospel. How do you see Jesus threaded into this narrative?
8. **Sacrifice and New Life:** Discuss the concept of sacrifice as seen in the story. How does the idea of sacrifice bringing new life apply to us today?
9. **Galatians 3:6-9:** Read the passage from Galatians about Abraham's faith. How does having faith connect us to Abraham, according to Paul?
10. **Application:** How can we apply the lessons from Abraham's faith to our lives? In what ways can we "Trust God" and follow where God leads us?

WHO IS YOUR ONE?

ABRAHAM

AT-A-GLANCE



CHILDHOOD:

- Abraham's family was from Ur, a very influential city in Mesopotamia.
- His father, Terah, took the family north to Harran, which is where God spoke to him about moving to Canaan to become a great nation.



MARRIED: SARAH

- Abraham married Sarah, who gave birth to his famous son Isaac.
- He also had another child, Ishmael, with Sarah's servant Hagar. It is believed that Ishmael's descendants became the people of Islam, while Isaac's descendants became the people of Israel.
- Abraham also married Keturah, and had several children with her. But he left his entire estate to Isaac.

Birth of Jesus

Birth: Approx. 2166 BC

2000's AD

Death: Approx. 1991 BC

CLAIMS TO FAME:

- 1 Abraham became father of Isaac, even though his wife was 90 and he was 100.
- 2 Abraham obeyed God when asked to sacrifice his son Isaac, only to have God intervene and provide a ram as a substitute.

FAMOUS QUOTES:

"Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." *Romans 4:3*

"Now then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith." *Galatians 3:7-9*



Bible Lookups: James 2:23, Genesis 12, Hebrews 11:8

Grown Up Children Stories – Samson Week 2

Main Point: **Doing what is right in the Lord's eyes, not your own, will lead you to faithfully following God.**

Main Passage: Judges 13:5; 16:28 (Judges 13-16)

The Beginner's Bible Page: pg 146 Samson

Jesus Connection:

- Birth Story, similar to Jesus. Angel shows up to say coming child. Similar to Jesus' story, show up to Mary
- Betrayed for silver & taken away bonded
- Blinded/ Blindfolded

Message Start:

Gather around children for another story time. We are continuing in our series Grown Up Children Stories and today we will investigate a Superhero with mighty strength. Story time is fun! Make sure you can see the pictures... Gather around.

[AUTHOR NOTE – I set up an oversized recliner on stage, and I sat in it while giving the intro. I also gave the first part of the intro with the tone of a kindergarten teacher. When I got to the next part of the intro, I stood up and resumed my normal speaking tone to emphasize the transition from “kid stuff” to a more grown up approach.]

Today we are going to chat about who Samson was and draw a connection to Jesus. The story of Samson is told in the Old Testament book of Judges. So, just a quick background on the book: it tells how the Israelites went through a cycle which was repeated over and over.

1. They followed the Lord
2. They did evil in the sight of the Lord
3. They faced the consequences of their disobedience
4. They cried out to the Lord
5. The Lord sent a judge to save/rule over them
6. They lived in peace

Today's story is about a guy named Samson, basically a marvel superhero that could rival Thor.

Let's read together.

Story Time

[AUTHOR NOTE –Give as much energy as you can to reading the story like you would to a group of children. Tell the story as if your group was hearing it for the first time.]

[Read from The Beginner's Bible (accessible from the Nursery/ Young Children's in KidCity)

Read story on page 146 – Samson]

READ CHILDREN BIBLE STORY OF SAMSON

This is a great story. We learn about Samson and who he was. But let me tell you, when you step out of the children's bible, there is more to the story, more going on with Samson than a children's bible will tell us.

Samson shows up in Judges 13-16.

[\[Samson's backstory – go through quick, give a snapshot overview of his story\]](#)

Samson was born a Nazarite. This means he couldn't cut his hair or beard, could not touch anything deemed "unclean," and could not partake in wine or any form of the fruit of the vine. Here's a few notes on what happened in Samson's life:

1. Dedicated to God from birth
2. He wanted to marry a Philistine girl (an enemy of Israel)
3. He killed a lion, and later ate honey out of its carcass
4. He made a bet with 30 guys to solve a riddle
5. He told his wife the answer to the riddle, who then told the guys
6. He killed 30 other guys and took their clothes to pay off the bet
7. When he returned from his killing spree, his father-in-law had given his new wife to his best man!
8. Shared his secret of his strength with wife & she back stabbed him
9. Arrested, eyes gouged out, and mocked by Philistines
10. Samson Cried out to God for strength one last time – on the pillars he knocked down pillars, crashing the temple, & killing 3,000 philistines

The takeaway from Samson's story is that we want to be faithful to follow God, we have to make sure that we are not doing what is right in our eyes but doing what is right in the Lord's eyes.

Main point: Doing what is right in the Lord's eyes, not your own, will lead you to faithfully following God.

The children's bible gives a brief overview of Samson's story. Let's go back to a few points and dig in and see what we can learn. All parts of the bible are good for us to learn, understand, and see how it connects with Jesus.

1. **Sight:** Right in Own Eyes.
 - a. Judges 17:6 – ⁶ In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.
 - b. Without a King, God's people did their own thing. Not focused on God, but focused on their self
 - c. Samson in own eyes/ own pride
 - d. Judges 14:3b (ESV) - ... But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."
 - e. Judges 14:7 (ESV) - ⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she was right in Samson's eyes.
 - f. Samson was lead by his own desires and passions. Often times it generated by what he saw with his eyes that caused him to lose focus on where God was leading him.
 - g. Enemy removed Samson's eyes – No Sight – Judges 16:21 - ²¹ Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes...
 - h. It's interesting that his enemy took out Samson's eyes as punishment. For Samson, this could have helped him to focus on God, not his own desires.
2. **Strength** – He was strong since his birth, with a charge to not cut his hair
 - a. Filled with Spirit of the Lord
 - b. Judges 14:6 - ⁶ The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands
 - c. Judges 14:19 – ¹⁹ Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of everything

and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he returned to his father's home.

- d. Judges 15:14-15 - ¹⁴ As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. ¹⁵ Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.
- e. No question, Samson had incredible strength. There were times he did NOT use his strength to honor God but to benefit himself. This was his disobedience.
- 3. **Sin** – Samson threw away his gift
 - a. His sin becomes his downfall (most of us can relate to this)
 - b. Judges 16:19-21 – ¹⁹ After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. ²⁰ Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him. ²¹ Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison.
 - c. Samson has given both Strength and Eyes to people, rather than to God
 - d. Samson wasted his gift
- 4. **Sovereignty** of God
 - a. Define Sovereignty of God – “God’s sovereignty is his right and power to do all that he decides to do.”
 - b. God is showing up... look at this - Judges 16:22 - ²² But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.
 - c. Samson’s story looks doom and gloom, in prison, mocked, with no eyes, haircut resulting in no strength. Thankfully, it doesn’t end at this place
 - d. Judges 16:28 - ²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the Lord, “Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.”
 - e. Samson Calls on God even in this low moment, we see God show up.

This story of Samson Points to Jesus –

- Gospel Connection 1 – Similar Birth Story
 - **The Angel** of the Lord **announces** to Manoah’s wife (Samson’s mother) **that she will conceive and bear a son** who will begin to **save** (Heb *yasha*) Israel from the Philistines (Judg 13:3-5).
 - **The Angel** Gabriel **announces** to Mary, Joseph’s wife, **that she will conceive and bear a Son**; his name will be called Jesus (Heb *yeshu*), for **he will save** his people from their sins (Luke 1:26-27, 31; Matt 1:20-21).
- Gospel Connection 2 – Betrayed for silver & taken away in bonds
 - Samson is shorn of his hair, **betrayed, and delivered to his enemies for silver** (Judg 16:18). **He is taken away in bonds** (Judg 16:21).
 - Jesus is **betrayed and delivered to his enemies for silver** (Matt 26:14-16). **He is taken away in bonds** (John 18:12).
- Gospel Connection 3 –
 - Samson **is blinded** (Judg 16:21).
 - Jesus **is blindfolded** before the chief priests and the Council, who seek to kill him (Mark 14:65).

This connection to Jesus is amazing to see. It helps to inspire us to keep digging into the bible and seeing where Jesus shows up. We will be celebrating Christmas in a few weeks, it is interesting to see Samson's birth story similar to Jesus' by seeing an angel show up on the scene and announcing a baby is coming, who will save the people.

We are thankful that Jesus was born, so we will celebrate in great ways this Christmas season. Samson was born to save God's people of Israel. Jesus was born to be the savior of the world.

In the last moments of Samson's life, he cries out to God. You are NEVER too late to cry out to God and allow Him to use you.

Judges 16:28-30 - ²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." ²⁹ Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, ³⁰ Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

God CAN use you!

He WILL use you.

Focus your eyes on Him and less on yourself.

Watch what God WILL do in your life.

Main point: Doing what is right in the Lord's eyes, not your own, will lead you to faithfully following God.

Let's pray and then head to small groups.

Pray

WEEK 2

CONVERSATION GUIDE

SAMSON



THIS SERIES: GROWN UP CHILDREN STORIES

THE BIG IDEA

Doing what is right in the Lord's eyes, not your own, will lead you to faithfully following God.

THE BIBLE

Judges 13:5, 16:28
Judges 13-16 Samson's Story

Jesus Connection

- Birth Story, similar to Jesus. Angel shows up to say coming child. Similar to Jesus' story, show up to Mary
- Betrayed for silver & taken away bonded
- Blinded/ Blindfolded

1. **Icebreaker:** Share your favorite childhood superhero and why you loved them.
2. **Series Introduction:** What are your thoughts on exploring "Grown Up Children Stories"? How does it feel transitioning from childhood versions to a deeper understanding of these stories/characters?
3. **Samson's Story:** Reflect on the children's Bible version of Samson's story. What surprised you or stood out in the adult version that wasn't in the children's Bible?
4. **Samson's Background:** Summarize Samson's background and his unique Nazarite vow. How did these factors shape his life?
5. **Strength and Sight:** Discuss Samson's strength and his struggle with doing what is right in his own eyes. How did his physical strength sometimes lead him away from faithfulness?
6. **Samson's Downfall:** Explore Samson's moments of disobedience and how they contributed to his downfall. How can we learn from his mistakes in our own lives?
7. **Sovereignty of God:** What does "Sovereignty of God" mean, and how did it play a role in Samson's story? Share instances in your life where you've seen God's sovereignty at work.
8. **Gospel Connections:** Examine the connections between Samson's story and Jesus. How does Samson's birth story resemble Jesus', and what similarities do you see in their experiences?
9. **Application:** How can we apply the main point, "Do what is right in the Lord's eyes, not your own, will lead you to faithfully following God," to our lives? Share practical ways to focus on God's will over personal desires.
10. **Closing Thoughts:** Reflect on the idea that it's never too late to cry out to God and allow Him to use you. How can this encourage and inspire us in our faith journeys?

WHO IS YOUR ONE?

Grown Up Children Stories – Jonah Week 3

Main Point: **You never realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.**

Main Passage: Jonah 1-3 (Matthew 12:40-41, 2 Kings 14:25)

The Beginner's Bible Page: pg 257 Jonah and the Big Fish

Jesus Connection:

- Sacrifice Story (relate back to Abraham & Isaac, point to Jesus)
- Matthew 12:40-41
- Jesus & Jonah 3 Days Darkness/ Separated

Message Start:

Welcome friends. If you've been with us the past few weeks, we are in this series 'Grown Up Children Stories.' We are looking into some common, well known children bible stories to see more layers to the story. When we were kids growing up, it was good for us to get an idea of these stories and characters. If we only stay there, we miss out on the 'MORE' that is offered in the bible. More depth. More understanding. More of Jesus.

[AUTHOR NOTE – I set up an oversized recliner on stage, and I sat in it while giving the intro. I also gave the first part of the intro with the tone of a kindergarten teacher. When I got to the next part of the intro, I stood up and resumed my normal speaking tone to emphasize the transition from "kid stuff" to a more grown up approach.]

Today we are going to chat about Jonah and draw a connection to Jesus. Who has heard of the story of Jonah before? This is a pretty well known bible story. Real quick, what do you remember about Jonah... (take a few answers) YES he was eaten by a giant fish. There's so much more to this story to dig into. There are only 3 verses that talk about the fish.

Before we read this, many of us have thought or even asked – Did this really happen? Is it fact or a story/ parable? Good the news, where you stand on that, it leads to the same place... God's grace.

However, I strongly believe that Jonah is a book that should be taken literally, here's why:

1. There are no other parables in the OT (Old Testament)
2. Jesus only spoke in parables in the NT (New Testament)
3. If you believe in the life, death, resurrection of Jesus (a much bigger miracle), then believing this story of Jonah is much easier.
4. OT book – 2 Kings 14:25 (a historical book) mentions the prophet Jonah. We know Jonah was a real person, a real prophet of God

Story Time

[AUTHOR NOTE –Give as much energy as you can to reading the story like you would to a group of children. Tell the story as if your group was hearing it for the first time.]

[Read from The Beginner's Bible (accessible from the Nursery/ Young Children's in KidCity)

[Read story on page 257 – Jonah\]](#)

READ CHILDREN BIBLE STORY OF JONAH

What's going on in this story? God told Jonah – He spoke to Jonah – this is a direct order to GO to Nineveh.

As we get started, let's understand a little bit about Nineveh.

Nineveh was BAAAAAAD. Like the worst. Think for a moment, what is the most WICKED or EVIL group of people you could think of today?

Examples: *(use your own/ relateable to your students)*

- Play sports – your rival
- We hear about wars, a country taking over another country.
- Terrorists

You see, Ninevites were bad. They were ruthless. Jonah's response of going to Nineveh was NOPE, I would imagine he was scared AND he felt they didn't deserve God's compassion. Nineveh had a reputation for their brutality & terrorism.

But God cared enough for Nineveh to warn them about the coming judgement. Jonah was the messenger that God chose.

As we start out in the book of Jonah, we see God's mercy. Let's open our bibles and dig in to what your bible says about Jonah, a little more than the children's bible will share.

Let's see Jonah's story arc:

1. Jonah's Disobedience

- a. Jonah Hears directly from God. How many of us, say something like, 'If God would just tell me... I'd follow' This is what happened to Jonah.
- b. Look at his response... Jonah 1:1-3a - The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." ³ But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish (The other way!)
- c. Jonah tries to 'Do this ON HIS OWN!' Have you ever tried that? Most of us have been guilty of DOING on OUR OWN, and NOT doing what God would have for us.
- d. Most of us can relate to this, we lean to our OWN way and NOT on God's ways.

2. Glimmer of Compassion (from Jonah)

- a. The seas are getting rough, storm is getting worse. Jonah sees he is the problem.
- b. Jonah 1:11-12 - ¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" ¹² "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."
- c. These Guys TRY to save him, TRY any other way than throw him overboard. Jonah 1:13-16 - ¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the Lord, "Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased." ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

- d. These sailors started following God! Jonah recognized he was the problem by disobeying God. He didn't want the sailors to suffer, in this moment Jonah has compassion for the sailors and sacrifices himself.
- e. God can use humility! When we have a humble response, God is ready to meet us in that place, this is what happens to Jonah.

3. Cry to God

- a. Jonah is thrown overboard and this giant fish swallows Jonah for 3 days and 3 nights.
- b. Once again we see a person crying out to God, pleading to Him in his low moment. God shows up. God has mercy.
- c. Jonah 2:2-10 - ² He said: "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. ³ You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. ⁴ I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' ⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. ⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit. ⁷ "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. ⁸ "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. ⁹ But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'" ¹⁰ And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.
- d. When we cry out to God, HE LISTENS! God Hears us! We have a present and REAL God.
- e. Jonah had been running from God, and it was only after he reached his lowest point, at the end of all he could physically do, that he was delivered. He realized he couldn't do any more on his own.

4. Second Chance to Obey

- a. God gives Jonah a second chance! This is such great news, with sin present in our lives, we all need a second chance. When we mess up, God pursues us and gives us another chance.
- b. Jonah 3:2 (ESV) - ² "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you."
- c. Arise! Get up! There's work to do. Don't focus on your past, your disobedience, yourself. Get up, there's work to do. I'm have a plan for YOU.

When we read about Jonah we see Jonah's problem was that he didn't TRUST God. He doubted God's wisdom, goodness, and justice. So, he ran from God. In Jonah's humility, God saved Him and gave him a second chance to obey.

I hope you see in this whole story, God PURSUES! God pursues me. He pursues you. He pursues YOUR ENEMIES! Woah. God's pursuit of His people, He sent Jesus.

Let's pay attention to where Jesus shows up in this story; let's build a connection to Jesus.

Jesus Connection:

- Sacrifice Story (relate back to Abraham & Isaac, point to Jesus)
 - Adam & Eve – Animal sacrifice to pay for their sin

- Abraham & Isaac – Abraham was asked to sacrifice his first born son, which hints to Jesus
- Jonah – sacrifices himself to save the people on the boat
- Jesus – sacrifices Himself to save His people and make a way back to God
- Matthew 12:40-41
 - ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.
- Jesus & Jonah 3 Days Darkness/ Separated
 - Jesus spent 3 days in the tomb, dead for 3 days. Jonah was in the belly for 3 days & nights, then spit up on dry land.
 - Jesus made a way for us to be in a relationship with God. Jesus displayed mercy, compassion, kindness. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The great news, Jesus doesn't stay there.
 - Jesus is resurrected – we celebrate Easter! He is Risen.

Let's wrap up here today.

We like stories with plot twists. The story of Jonah is pretty incredible. God sent Jonah to preach to his enemy. Jonah ran away. God sent a storm then a fish to get Jonah. Jonah was vomited up and finally went to preach. Then, the entire city repented of its wicked ways!

Here's what's interesting, **the most encouraging thing to be about this story, is if God can change Nineveh, God can change _____!**

- Our city – Raleigh, Holly Springs,
- Our State –
- Our Enemies
- You fill in the blank –
- Your own heart...

One last note, we see from Jonah in this belly of the fish, that is very relatable for each of us:

Main point: You never realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

Let's Pray and head into small groups.

WEEK 3

CONVERSATION GUIDE

JONAH



THIS SERIES: GROWN UP CHILDREN STORIES

THE BIG IDEA

You never realize Jesus is all you need
until Jesus is all you have.

THE BIBLE

Jonah 1-3
Matthew 12:40-41, 2 Kings 14:25

Jesus Connection

- Sacrifice Story (relate back to Abraham & Isaac, point to Jesus)
- Matthew 12:40-41
- Jesus & Jonah 3 Days Darkness/ Separated

1. **Icebreaker:** Share a favorite childhood story or Bible story that you've revisited recently and discovered new insights.
2. How does it feel to transition from childhood versions of Bible stories to a deeper understanding? Why do you think it's important to explore the layers of these stories?
3. **Jonah's Story:** What are some common perceptions or memories people have about Jonah's story? Discuss any preconceived notions you might have had before today's discussion.
4. **Literal or Parable:** Do you believe Jonah's story is a literal account or a parable? Share your thoughts and discuss how your perspective affects your understanding of God's grace.
5. **Nineveh's Wickedness:** Reflect on the comparison between Nineveh's wickedness and modern examples of wickedness. How does this challenge your understanding of God's grace and mercy?
6. **Jonah's Disobedience:** Discuss Jonah's initial response to God's command. Can you relate to times when you've wanted to go your own way instead of following God's plan?
7. **Glimmer of Compassion:** Explore Jonah's response when he realizes he's the cause of the storm. How does his humility and sacrifice for the sailors reflect on his character?
8. **Cry to God:** Jonah prays from the belly of the fish, and God hears him. Share personal experiences of crying out to God in difficult times and how God responded.
9. **Second Chance to Obey:** How does Jonah's second chance to obey God resonate with the idea of God giving us second chances? How can we apply this theme of second chances in our own lives?
10. **Jesus Connection:** Discuss the connections between Jonah's sacrifice and Jesus' sacrifice. How do these sacrifices pave the way for redemption, and why is Jesus considered the ultimate sacrifice?
11. **Main Point Reflection:** Reflect on the main point: "You never realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have." How does this statement apply to your life, and how can it shape your perspective on challenges and difficulties?

WHO IS YOUR ONE?

JONAH

AT-A-GLANCE



CHILDHOOD:

Jonah is listed in the Bible as the son of Amittai.

Jonah lived in a region of northern Israel, called Gath Hepher, near the Sea of Galilee when he began to prophesy, but it is unknown whether he was born and raised there.



MARRIED:

Unknown

Birth: Approx. 815 BC

Birth of Jesus

2000's AD

Death: Unknown

CLAIMS TO FAME:

- 1 Jonah was the fifth of the minor prophets listed in the Old Testament.
- 2 Jonah was swallowed by a large fish and remained in its belly for three days.
- 3 Jonah helped Nineveh to repent from idolatry when he finally obeyed God's command to prophesy there.

FAMOUS QUOTES:

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you." *Jonah 1:12*

"Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'" *Jonah 2:8-9, from the Prayer of Jonah, which he made inside the belly of the fish*



Bible Lookups: Jonah 1:3, Jonah 1:17, Matthew 12:39-40