



“This is the Story...”

Written by Talashia Keim Yoder and Daniel Yoder. Artwork by Christa and Jonathan Reuel.  
Song lyrics and music by Jonathan Reuel.

## **Week 1: God Made Matter**

Genesis 1-2

### **Intro Video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1Hjplkdy8I&list=PLiSfKtmhnBYNdDKZqJJ2xS8wuUH7JJH3&index=3&t=0s>

**Review the big story:** This is the very first story we read in the Bible. With the foundation of this story, we start to understand all other stories in the people of God.

- **Key verses:** Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7

**Tell the story:** These stories tell us that our beginnings are in God. They tell us that God created the earth and God created us, all to live in harmony with each other.

- Read Genesis 1-2
- Read pages 10-15 in the *Shine On* story Bible.

**Prime the Pump:** As you read these stories, here are some things to think about.

- **Things to notice:**
  - Notice how peacefully and intimately God works in creation. How does reading about this peaceful work feel to you when you look around at creation now? When you look at what is happening around the world?
  - To understand why this story was so radical in the ancient world, read this story (<http://www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSMarduk.html>), which tells the Babylonian creation myth.
  - Notice that the Bible tells the story of creation twice! These stories show us different perspectives on the same story. Why do you think they are both included in our Bible?
  - Notice all the times that God blesses what God creates. Say those blessings out loud. Let them be blessings for you and for the world around you.
  - Notice what the humans do on their first full day of life (hint, day 7). Why do you think their lives start this way? Can this be instructive for us?
- **Background information:**
  - The Hebrew word for “earth” is *adamah*, and the word we translate as “man” is *adam*. We are so connected to the earth. Throughout the passage, notice the relationship we are created to have with all creation.
  - The “wind from God” is the same word (*ruach*) we translate as “spirit,” and it’s a feminine noun. Right off the bat, we learn that God is not just one particular gender.
- **Conversation starters:**
  - Genesis 1:27 is a poem, and it makes a big difference in how we understand ourselves. What does it mean to be made in the image of God?
  - What images of God are in this story?
  - What wonderings do these stories inspire in you?

**Microsong: “God Made Matter”** (Listen: [https://youtu.be/M\\_f7rIDnQU0](https://youtu.be/M_f7rIDnQU0))

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

**Sing the Big Song** (Listen: <https://youtu.be/Doa8gnTzmPg>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

*God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.*

### **Go do your household project!**

The project proposal is simple. We suggest that each household (or group of people who choose to collaborate) choose a project that they will work on each week, which will culminate in a big story project. Here are a few of our ideas, but let these be the yeast that gets your ideas growing!

- Sing through the Bible playlist - find one song for each story (it doesn't have to be explicitly about the story; it could be connected to your reflections on the story).
- Bible story book: Create an illustration for each story. On the opposite page, put the story or key passages, your own summary story, or the microsong.
- Photo Journal: Take a picture each week inspired by the story. Put it together with the story, key passages, or the microsong.
- Written Journal: Write something each week as you reflect on the story.
- Poetry Journal: Write a poem inspired by the story each week.
- Lego storytelling: Create a scene (or several scenes) of each week's story. Take pictures, stop motion animation, or video of it. At the end of the series, you'll have a lego meta-story.
- Act it out every week. Record your dramas.
- Come up with a motion for each story/micro-song.
- Eat it: Cook something each week that is inspired by the story. Keep track of what you make, and at the end, you'll have an Eating the Bible Cookbook.
- Podcast: Using a simple and free podcast app, record a short podcast of your reflections on the week's story.
- Service: Find a way to enact what you have learned each week, doing and act of service that is inspired by the story. Take pictures or short videos, and at the end of the year put them together into a reminder of your year of service.
- Map: Create a large map of the “Bible lands” - maybe one that lives on a wall of your house, or one that gets rolled up each week. Create a weekly small drawing or symbol and tape or pin it to the map. Maybe you even want to connect each story with thread so you can trace the movement of the people of God.
- Hybrid: Do a different version of the project each week (maybe one week you draw it, another week you build it, and another you act it out). Keep a record of it in some way so that you can string the projects together into one big Bible project at the end.



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## **Week 2: They Tried to Hide**

Genesis 3

### **Intro Video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DFuAY2ESJ4&list=PLiSifKtmhnBYNdDKZqJJ2xS8wuUH7JJH3&index=4&t=0s>

**Review the big story:** God created the cosmos and God created humans. God called it all good. God loves us, and wants us to live in harmony with God, other humans, and all of creation.

- **Key verses:** Genesis 3:8, Genesis 3:13a, Genesis 3:19b

**Tell the story:** Even though God's intention is harmonious community, we sometimes miss the mark. This is a story about that. God set up boundaries that would help Adam and Eve grow and be healthy. They chose to go beyond those boundaries, and then they had to deal with the consequences of that decision.

- Read Genesis 3
- Read page 17 in the *Shine On* story Bible.

**Prime the pump:** As you read this story, here are some things to think about.

- We have heard and told this story so many times that we may have some assumptions about what it says that aren't really there.
  - **Try this exercise:** Write down or tell the story before you read it, then discover the things you added or left out of your telling of the story. Unpack this...
- **Things to notice:**
  - Notice that the only curses from God are toward the serpent and the ground. God doesn't curse humans. How does this change the way we hear the story?
  - Read verses 8-13, imagining it as a scene between a loving parent and their child, who just did something disobedient and is now hiding behind the couch. Imagine this as a gentle, loving God, not as an angry God stomping through the garden.
  - Read the last part of verse 19. Have you heard those words before?
  - The humans covered themselves with fig leaves. Feel a fig leaf if you can. They are very scratchy! And they would not hold up very well. Notice the care God takes of the humans, making clothes for them out of soft skins. Take a moment to imagine God creating and giving these skins to the humans.
- **Background information:**
  - Dig around in some midrash (just google "midrash of Genesis 3") to find some fascinating commentary on this passage - including ideas of what fruit Adam and Eve might have eaten. One idea in a commentary is that it was fermented grapes!
  - Verse 7 says, "the eyes of both were opened." This, the opening of eyes, is a common theme throughout the Bible. It's usually positive, involving recognition and revelation. Wonder: Is it good in this verse? Bad? More nuanced than that?

- **Conversation starters:**

- Why did God tell the humans not to eat of this tree? Did God mean “ever” or “not yet?” Why did God put it there if God didn’t want them to eat it?
- Why do you think the consequence of Adam and Eve’s actions was to leave the garden? Why didn’t God want them to live forever? Is there a blessing in this consequence?
- We often say that, “Eve eating the apple was the original sin.” Notice that Adam and Eve both ate. And it wasn’t necessarily an apple. And none of the Hebrew words we translate as “sin” are in this chapter. Maybe it’s time to look again at this story. How do you see assumptions we make on this text shaping the world around you (and the world throughout history)?

**Microsong:** “They Tried to Hide” (Listen: <https://youtu.be/8vF5Re9tzu8>)

Eve and Adam loved garden life. A serpent tricked them, they tried to hide, God came to them and gently clothed them, and clearly told them the consequences.

**Sing the Big Song:** (Listen: <https://youtu.be/IrvPjiGg4i4>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide, still...

*God loves every one of us, it’s true, and God loves the universe.*

**Go do your household project!**



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### **Week 3: On Skin and Sky**

Genesis 4-11

#### **Intro Video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9POM5RxueA&list=PLiSIfKtmhnBYndDKZqJJ2xS8wuUH7JJH3&index=5&t=0s>

**Review the big story:** God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. Adam and Eve missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them.

- **Key verses:** Genesis 4:15b, Genesis 8:22, Genesis 11:9

**Tell the story:** Here are some more stories about people who missed the mark and dealt with consequences - and some more stories about how God stuck with them. Adam and Eve had two sons, named Cain and Abel. Cain got jealous of Abel and killed him, and had to leave his home. Several generations later, the earth was full of wickedness, some serious missing of the mark. God was "grieved to his heart," and decided to make a fresh start. One man, Noah, was "righteous and blameless." God instructed him to build an ark to save himself, his family, and the animals. The waters covered the earth for many days and nights, but those on the ark were saved. God sent a rainbow as a sign of the covenant God made with Noah, to never destroy the earth with a flood again. After several more generations, the people missed the mark again. This time, they decided to put their trust in a structure instead of in God. God confused their language and scattered them.

- Read Genesis 4-11, or choose just one story to focus on:
  - Genesis 4:1-16 (Cain and Abel)
  - Genesis 6:1-9:17 (The Flood)
  - Genesis 11:1-9 (The Tower of Babel)
- Read pages 18-22 in the *Shine On* story Bible.

#### **Prime the pump:**

- **Try writing or saying what you know** about these stories before you read them. Just like with Genesis 3, you may find that you have read some things into the story that aren't actually in the Bible! Unpack that.
- **Background information for all three stories:**
  - The first 11 chapters of Genesis are called "primeval history," and the main character in them is God. Emotions are mostly assigned to God, and the passages about humans are fairly matter-of-fact. As you read this, notice all the emotions assigned to God - and all the times God talks to God's self. How does this change or resonate with your understanding of God?
  - In Genesis 4:7, we see the first mention of "sin." There are fifty Hebrew words translated into English as "sin," and this one is the most common, "hatta," which literally means "to miss the mark." Missing the mark can have minor consequences, like a mess to clean up,

or it can have catastrophic consequences. How does this definition of sin resonate with or challenge how you think about sin?

- Notice that there's always grace in the consequence. What are the gifts of grace in the consequences faced by these people who miss the mark?
- **Genesis 4:1-16 (Cain and Abel)**
  - Notice how God describes sin in Genesis 4:7. Do you ever experience sin in this way?
  - Cain is a farmer, and when he spills his brother's blood on the ground, one consequence is that the ground will no longer yield to him. Think about what that would mean for him.
- **Genesis 6:1-9:17 (The Flood)**
  - A couple different accounts of the flood get mashed together here. Were there two of every animal or six pairs? How long were they on the ark? We don't actually get a clear answer. Do you think the exact numbers are crucial to the story? Why or why not?
  - Genesis 6:11 describes the earth as "corrupt," which some say translates more accurately as "annihilated." How does the story change if we read it with that word?
  - Noah is described as "righteous and blameless." "Righteous" refers to right relationships with humans and creation, while "blameless" refers to right worship - right relationship with God. A phrase we often take to mean "perfect" really means that Noah was living in harmony with God and creation. What does it mean, here and now, to be righteous and blameless?
  - Read Genesis 8:1. The "wind" here is *ruach* - where do we know that word from? Try reading these two passages side by side.
  - Notice the parallel of the blessing of Genesis 9:1 with God's blessing in creation. There's another parallel in Genesis 9:6. If you enjoy parallels like this, consider starting a list of the times the Bible talks with itself!
  - The sign of the covenant is a rainbow. What weather has to happen for a rainbow to appear? What might that metaphor clue us into about life?
- **Genesis 11:1-9 (The Tower of Babel)**
  - Why do you think the people in Genesis 11 wanted to build a great city?
  - Do you ever want to "make a name for yourself"?
  - Why do you think God isn't a fan of their plan?

**Microsong:** "On Skin and Sky" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/1zzBLm10L8E>)

Cain got jealous and acted badly. The world got violent and God was sorry, but the mark of Cain and a rainbow sign were God's love written on skin and sky

**Sing the Big Song:** (Listen: <https://youtu.be/Gx1mkGgsAg>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide.

The world got violent and God replied with a mark and a flood and a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky,

*God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.*

**Go do your household project!**