

READ:
Genesis 1:1-1:13

Bible Biography

In the Beginning

Have you ever wondered how the world got here?

Did you ever ask, “Who made it?” or “How was it made?” The very first book in the Bible, the book of Genesis, tells us what happened.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
Created means “made something from nothing.”

At first, the earth had no shape and nothing lived on it. Water was everywhere. Can you think of a place without trees or animals or people? It was very quiet and dark.

On the first day, God said to let there be light, and there was light! God saw that the light was good. He called the light “day,” and He called the darkness “night.”

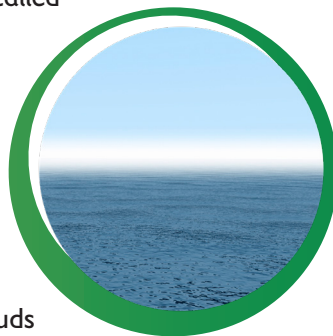
Aren’t you glad God created the daytime? If it was always night, we couldn’t see which way to go, and we might feel scared.

On the second day, God said to let there be a sky. And the sky appeared just as God said.

Look outside right now. Can you see the big, blue sky? What if there was no sky? We wouldn’t be able to see clouds or stars or rainbows. Birds and planes would have no place to fly.

On the third day, God said to let the waters come together and let dry ground appear. God called the dry ground “land” (or “earth”), and He called the waters “seas.” And God saw that this was good.

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Bible Biography

Later on the third day, God said to let the land grow all kinds of plants and trees with their different seeds and fruits.



So up from the ground sprang
all kinds of plants!

Daisies, daffodils, lilacs and lilies,
with pine trees, palm trees, red oaks
and hickories.

Bright flowers of purple, pink and green,
with leafy-branched trees, tall and lean.

And those fruits and veggies started to poke:
like green beans, apples and an artichoke!

And God saw that all the plants
and trees were good.

God is the Creator of everything in
the world. In the first three days,
He created the light, the sky, the
land, the seas, and all the plants and
trees. God did this all by Himself. He
didn't need anyone or anything to
help Him.

Our God is so great and powerful!
All He had to do was speak words and
everything was made.



What I need to remember about God our Creator:

- God is the Creator of the whole world.
- God created (or made) the world from nothing.



READ:
Genesis 1:14-2:7

Bible Biography

God Saw It Was Good

God was not done making the world.
He had a lot more work to do!

On the fourth day, God said to let there be lights in the sky. He made the sun to shine during the day and the moon and the stars to shine at night. And God saw that this was good.

On the fifth day, God said to let the sea be full of living creatures, and to let creatures fly across the sky.

So, down in the sea, swam all kinds of fish.

Red fish, purple fish (yes, there's a lot).

Green fish and orange fish with blue on the top.

Fish that were striped and fish that had spots.

Some fish with bright, rainbow polka-dots.

But not only fish were down in the sea:

Dolphins, whales, purple anemones!

Know where to look? You might get to see

Smooth, shiny seals, mighty manatees.

And up in the sky, robins and jays,

Eagles, sea gulls, and the soaring ospreys.

Bats by night. Butterflies by day.

Not only birds have high-flying ways!

God created so many wonderful creatures! He wanted them all to have baby animals and multiply so there would be lots of them in the water and the sky.



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Bible Biography



On the sixth day of creation, guess what happened? God made even MORE animals! This time He made all the animals that live on the land!

He made cows and horses (they like to eat oats)

And fluffy sheep with warm wooly coats,

Tigers and bears and the sly coyotes,

Rabbits and lizards and frisky goats.

And God saw that ALL the animals He made were good.



Later on the sixth day, God made His most special creation. Because it was so special, God made it in a different way. God took some dust from the ground and started to make a shape.

Do you have any idea what He was shaping? God was shaping the first man! God breathed into the man, and the man became alive. Later, God made a woman too, using a rib bone from the man.



The man and the woman were special to God because they were like Him in many ways. They could think and talk and make choices just like God. God gave them the important job of ruling over the earth and all the animals. He told them to have lots of children so the earth would be full of people.

Now God was done making the heavens and the earth. On the seventh day, God rested from all His work of creating. God looked at all He had made in six days, and He saw that it was very good.

What I need to remember about God's creation:

- God is good, and everything He made was good.
- People are in God's image (that means they are like God in many ways). They are His most special creation.

READ:
Genesis 2:8-3:24

Bible Biography

Adam and Eve Sin

Do you remember God's most special creation?
God's most special creation was Adam and Eve, the very first man and woman.

God put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, a beautiful place God created just for them. Everything was wonderful in the garden – the trees, the flowers, the birds, the animals – EVERYTHING!

Adam and Eve liked taking care of the garden. They liked being with the animals too. In fact, God gave Adam the job of naming all the animals. Can you imagine how he and Eve must have laughed at all the funny animals with funny names like hippopotamus or baboon?

The very best part about being in the garden was getting to talk to God. Every evening, God talked with Adam and Eve as He walked with them in the garden.

But one day, something terrible happened! A serpent came to talk to Eve. (The serpent was really Satan, but Eve didn't know that.) The serpent told Eve, "Go ahead and eat a piece of fruit from this tree."

Eve looked at the tree. This was not like any other tree. This was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil! God said Adam and Eve could eat from all the other trees in the garden, but if they ate from THIS tree they would die.

"You won't die," the serpent lied. "God doesn't want you to eat this fruit because then you would be wise like He is."

Eve looked at the fruit. It sure looked delicious. And to think it would make her wise like God!



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Bible Biography



So Eve listened to Satan and took a bite. Then she gave some to Adam, who was with her, and he ate it too.

Right away they knew they had done something wrong. (Before this time, Adam and Eve had never sinned. Sin is disobeying God by the bad things we think, say and do.)

Adam and Eve tried to hide from God. God called to Adam, "Where are you?"

"I am afraid, so I am hiding," Adam answered.

God asked if Adam had eaten from the tree He said not to eat from. (Of course, God KNEW that's what they had done.)

"Eve gave me some," Adam answered.

"The serpent lied to me," Eve told God.

What a terrible thing Adam and Eve did!

- Now they would need to find a place to live outside the garden.
- Now thorns and weeds would make it hard to grow food.
- Now bees would sting and bugs would bite.
- Now they would sometimes fight, cry and get sick.
- Now they would grow old and die someday.

All these bad things happened because of sin. Because Adam and Eve sinned, everyone else is born a sinner. All of us disobey God.

But God still loved Adam and Eve. He said He would someday send a Savior (Genesis 3:15) so that anyone could be rescued, or saved, from sin.



What I need to remember about Adam and Eve:

- Adam and Eve disobeyed God. This was the first sin.
- God said He would send a Savior to rescue people from sin.

READ:
Genesis 6 and 7

Bible Biography

Noah and the Flood

Has anyone ever told you something
and you didn't believe it?

Maybe your friend told you she saw a dinosaur. Maybe your little brother told you he really didn't eat the last cookie (and you KNOW he did).



In the Bible, a man named Noah heard something from God that seemed hard to believe! But Noah believed God, because God always tells the truth.

Noah was different from all the people on the earth. The other people were always doing bad things. They lied and stole things and hurt other people. But Noah wasn't like them. Noah was always doing GOOD things. He wanted to listen to God and do what God told him to do.

God was very happy with Noah. But God was NOT happy with all the other people on the earth. In fact, He was very sad He made them.

One day God said something very surprising! He told Noah that He was going to send a big flood to cover the whole earth. All the people except for Noah and his family would die in the flood.

A big flood? And everyone would die? That sounds hard to believe! But Noah believed God.

Then God said something even more surprising! He told Noah to build a really, really big boat.

A big boat?

That's right. God told Noah to build a big boat and to bring his family and two animals of every kind inside. All the people and animals inside the boat would be safe from the flood.

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Bible Biography

A big boat? And full of animals? What a crazy thing to hear! But Noah believed God, and he did everything God told him to do. He built the boat, which was called an ark, out of wood, and he brought his family and two animals of every kind inside.

Just think of all those animals lining up to go into the ark! All the birds came two by two: ostriches, flamingos, cuckoos and chickens, turkeys, toucans, peacocks and pigeons.

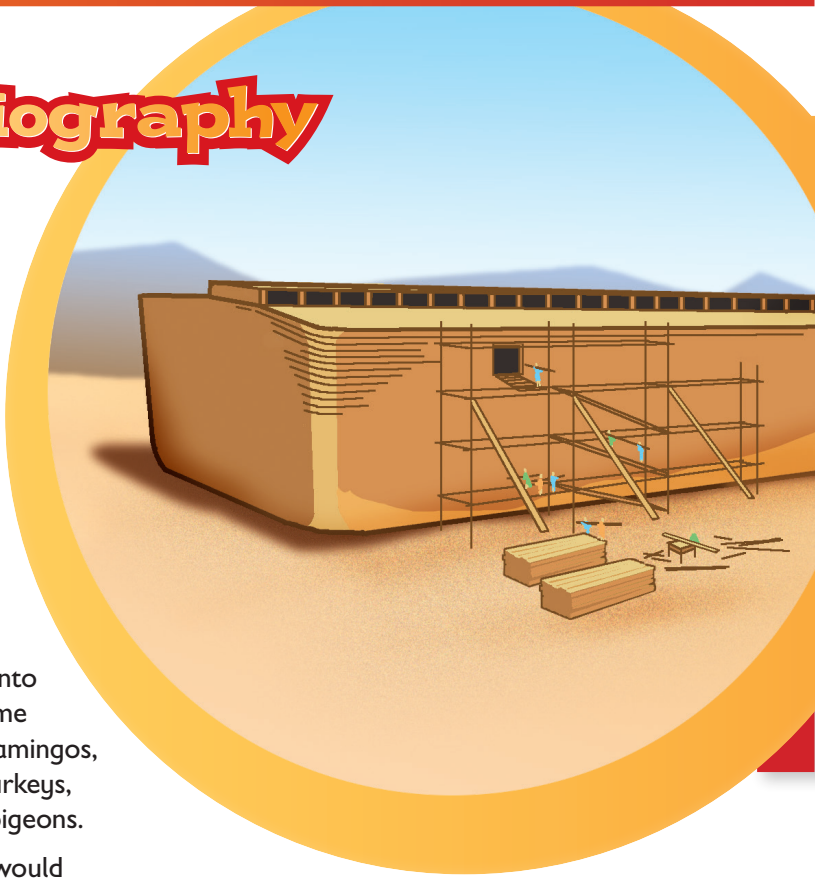
All of the land animals would be there too: elephants, rhinos, gorillas and cheetahs, camels, giraffes, kangaroos and zebras. What a loud boat ride that would be! Good thing God said make the boat BIG and bring plenty to eat!

Finally, the time came for God to send the flood to the earth. Gushes and gushes of rain fell down from the skies. It rained for 40 long days and 40 long nights.

The rains fell down; the waters rose up. The rains fell down; the

waters rose up. Higher and higher, the waters rose up – until water covered everything, even the tall mountains! All the birds, animals and people living on the land died.

But not everything died – Noah and his family were alive and dry! Their big boat floated high on the waters. Noah and his family and the animals in the ark were safe just as God said. Everything that Noah believed from God came true.



What I need to remember about Noah and the flood:

- God always tells the truth.
- God saved Noah and his family because Noah believed and obeyed God.

READ:
Genesis 8:1-9:17

Bible Biography

Noah and God's Promise

Have you ever seen a rainbow in the sky?

Rainbows are really exciting to see! They shine with so many bright and beautiful colors – like red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Sometimes big rainbows cover the whole sky!

Rainbows look so pretty. But God made rainbows to remind us of something. Do you know what? Rainbows remind us of a promise God made to Noah a long, long time ago.

Noah and his family waited inside the ark. They waited and waited for the rain to stop falling. But the rains kept on pouring and pouring. Pitter, patter. Splish, splash. Whoosh, whoosh.

Would YOU have liked living in that boat, listening to the raindrops fall on the roof? What if you had to sleep next to all those animals – even the lions and tigers? What if the boat was crowded or smelled kind of funny? Maybe you'd start wishing you could play outside where it was sunny!

FINALLY, the rains stopped falling. God didn't forget about Noah and all the animals waiting inside the ark. He sent a big wind to dry up the waters on the land. Slowly, slowly and bit by bit the waters started to disappear.

The ark stopped on the mountains of Ararat (pronounced Air-a-rat). Noah didn't know if it was dry enough to get out of the boat. So he opened a window and sent out a raven to fly over the land. Next he sent out a dove. But both the raven and the dove came back to the ark. They did not find any dry land.

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Bible Biography

After seven days, Noah sent out the dove again. This time, the dove came back with a fresh, green leaf. Good news! Leaves grow on trees, and trees grow on land! The land was getting drier.

After seven more days, Noah sent the dove out one last time. Guess what? This time the dove did not come back! She had found a dry spot to build her nest.

When the land was all dry, God told Noah and all the people and animals to come out of the ark. Finally, they could walk and run outside again. Noah was so thankful to God for saving him and his family. He gave God a special gift, called an offering.

Now here's the best part – the rainbow and the

promise! God promised Noah that He would never again send a flood to destroy the

whole earth and all the living things on it. This promise was for Noah and his family and all the people and animals after him.

Then God put a rainbow in the sky. God said that whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, He will remember His promise.

So, the next time it rains, look carefully at the sky. If the sun is shining at the same time it is raining, you may just see a rainbow! When you do, be sure to remember God's promise to Noah and all of us.



What I need to remember about Noah and the promise:

- God promised never to send another big flood to destroy the whole earth.
- God always keeps His promises.



READ:
Genesis 11:1-9

Bible Biography

The Tower of Babel

Do you know what these words mean?
Eoplepay eakspay ifferehtday anguageslay!

These crazy-sounding words are part of a make-pretend language called Pig Latin. In Pig Latin, these words mean, "People speak different languages!"

Do you know someone who speaks a different language? Sometimes people speak in make-pretend languages, like Pig Latin. Other times, people speak real languages that lots of people know. They speak languages like Zulu, Spanish, English and Chinese.

Have you ever wondered how all the different languages got here? The Bible tells us the answer.

After the flood, Noah's sons had families with lots of children. These children grew up and had their own children. After a while, lots of people lived on the earth again.

How many languages do you think the people had back then? Take a guess! You might think they had lots of languages too. But the people only had ONE language. So it was very easy to talk and work together.

God had a special plan for the people. God wanted the people to live in lots of different places, all over the earth (Genesis 9:1).

But the people did not want to move to different places! They all wanted to live together in one place. The people thought their plan was better than God's plan.

One day, the people talked to each other in the same language, they said, "Let's build ourselves a big city with a tower way up to the sky. Then we can all live in the city together. Everyone will see our tall tower and talk about how great we are."

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Bible Biography

The people started building.

Tap, tap! They thought they were strong and very smart. They thought they were even smarter and stronger than God.

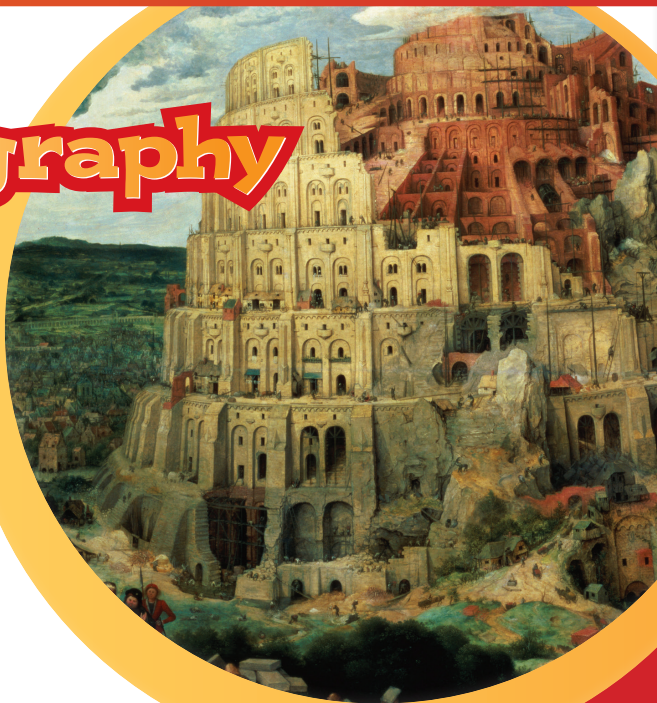
Bang, bang! The people pounded the bricks into place.

But God saw what the people were doing, and He didn't like it. He knew they would just keep doing things their own way instead of God's way. So God mixed up their language so they couldn't talk to each other anymore. Now, instead of just **one** language, there were **many** different languages on the earth!

Tap, tap! Bang, bang! Then the pounding stopped!

Think how hard it would be to play a game or build a fort with your friends if you all spoke a different language. You wouldn't understand each other! That's what it was like for the people in the city of Babel. They had to stop building the tower.

Then God sent the people out of Babel to live in lots of different places, all over the earth.



So there's your answer! That's how all the different languages got here. We have different languages because a group of people did not want to do things God's way. God's way is always the best way.

Did you know we can only get to heaven by following God's way? Jesus is God's only way to heaven. Do you know Jesus today? Be sure to talk to your Sparks leader or your parents or guardian to find out how to know Jesus and go to heaven.

What I need to remember about the Tower of Babel:

- God's way is always the best way.
- Jesus is God's only way to heaven.

READ:
Exodus 2:1-10

Bible Biography

God Saves Baby Moses

When do you feel scared?

Maybe you get scared in the dark. Maybe you get scared when you see a snake or a spider. Or maybe you get scared when you hear a loud thunderstorm.

The Bible tells us about a mom and a dad who **COULD** have felt very scared. But you know what? They weren't scared. They believed God would help them.

The dad's name was Amram, and the mom's name was Jochebed. They lived in a country called Egypt, and they were part of a group of people called the Israelites.



The king of Egypt, Pharaoh, did not like the Israelites. He made them his slaves. (That means they had to work hard for him every day, even though they didn't want to and they never got paid.) Then he made a terrible law that all the boy Israelite babies should be killed!

It would have been easy to be afraid. But Jochebed and Amram were not afraid of the king's new law. They trusted God.

When Jochebed's new baby boy was born, she saw he was very beautiful and special to God. She and Amram hid the baby in their house so the king couldn't find him. They knew God would keep their little boy safe.

The baby stayed safe in their house for a while. Then Jochebed had an idea. She made a tiny basket out of the tall plants that grew in the river.

Can you guess what the basket was for? The basket was for the baby! Jochebed hid her little boy in the basket and let the basket float in the Nile river. She let it float close to the shore, right near the river plants.



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Bible Biography

The baby had a big sister named Miriam. Miriam stood far away and watched the basket to see what would happen.

One day the pharaoh's daughter went down to the river to take a bath. Soon, Pharaoh's daughter saw the basket, and she sent one of her lady helpers to get it.

The baby's sister, Miriam, kept watching. What would happen next?

Pharaoh's daughter opened the basket, and she saw the beautiful baby. He was crying! Pharaoh's daughter felt sad for the baby. "I know this is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. (Hebrew is another name for the Israelites.)

Miriam saw her chance. She ran over to Pharaoh's daughter. "Should I go find a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for you?" Miriam asked.

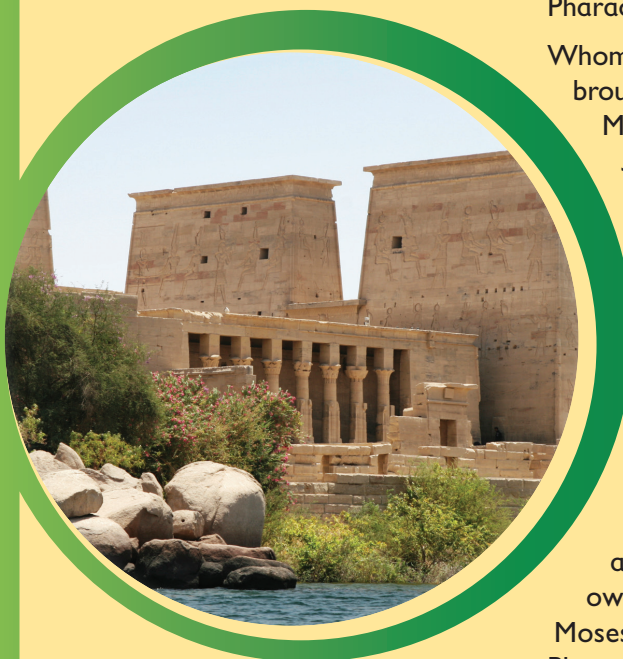
Pharaoh's daughter said, "Yes, go."

Whom do you think Miriam brought to feed the baby?

Miriam brought her mother Jochebed, who was the baby's mom too!

Jochebed got to take her little son back home. God had saved her baby boy! She didn't have to hide him anymore. When he grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter.

Pharaoh's daughter adopted the baby as her own son. She named him Moses, and Moses grew up in Pharaoh's palace.



What I need to remember about Moses the baby:

- Moses' parents (Amram and Jochebed) trusted God.
- God saved baby Moses because God had a special plan for Moses.

READ:
Exodus 3:1-4:17

Bible Biography

God Helps Moses

What things are you good at?

Maybe you're good at riding a bike, playing an instrument like the guitar or flute, or drawing beautiful pictures.

What things are hard for you to do? Some kids might not be good at sports or doing math problems or spelling new words.

You remember Moses? Moses was great at taking care of sheep, but he wasn't so good at talking to people. But God had a special plan for Moses.

Moses grew up to be a man. He left Pharaoh's palace in Egypt and became a shepherd in a desert land called Midian.

One day Moses led his sheep to a mountain. Then he saw something strange. A bush was on fire. The bush kept burning and burning, but it didn't burn up! Moses moved closer to get a better look.

All of a sudden, he heard God's voice calling from inside the bush. "Moses! Moses!" God called.

Moses said, "Here I am."

God told Moses not to come any closer. He said Moses must take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground.

Moses covered his face. He was afraid to look at God.

But Moses didn't know that God was planning to do something special. A long time ago, God promised Moses' great-great-grandfathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that He would give their children a special land all their own.

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Bible Biography

Now was the time! God had seen how the Egyptians hurt His children, the Israelites, and made them work as slaves. He was coming to save His children and bring them into the good land He promised.

Then God gave Moses a surprise! He wanted Moses to go to Pharaoh and bring God's people out of Egypt.

WHAT? What did God say? Moses didn't think he was the right guy for the job.

Moses said, "But who am I? Why would you pick ME to bring the people out of Egypt?"

God told Moses that He would be with him. Moses should tell the Israelites that the Lord, the God of their fathers, had sent him. They would listen.

"But what if they don't believe me or listen to me?" Moses asked.

Then God showed Moses His power. He asked Moses to throw

his shepherd's staff down on the ground. When Moses threw it down, it became a snake. Moses ran from it.

Then God asked him to catch the snake by the tail. When Moses caught it, it became a staff again. The Israelites were sure to believe Moses when they saw this! God gave Moses other amazing powers too.

But Moses said, "Oh, Lord, I have never been able to talk very well. I'm slow with words."

God said that He was the one who made Moses' mouth. He would be with Moses and teach him what to say.

Finally, Moses said, "Oh, Lord, please send someone else to do it."

God was angry because Moses wasn't listening to Him. But God said Moses could take along his brother, Aaron, as a helper. Aaron would talk for Moses, and God would help them both.

What I need to remember about Moses and the burning bush:

- God chose Moses to bring His people out of Egypt and into the land God promised (the Promised Land).
- God would help Moses.

READ:
Exodus 14 and 15

Bible Biography

God Saves the Israelites

One day, you and your family take a trip to the ocean.

You have fun splashing, jumping and diving in the waves together. Then you get out of the water and run and play games on the sandy beach.

All of a sudden, you see something strange! The ocean splits in two, and a group of people start walking through the opening. That's right! They walk right through it. The ground they walk on is all dry. The water on each side of them looks like two big walls.

What would you do if you saw that? Would you believe it? Would you try to walk between the walls of water too?

The Bible tells us that one day, God's people, the Israelites, walked right through the Red Sea.

First Moses and Aaron went to Egypt. A new pharaoh ruled the land. Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh, "The Lord wants you to let His people go." But Pharaoh did not want to let the people go. He liked keeping them as slaves.

So God showed His great power to Pharaoh and all the people in Egypt. He sent 10 terrible troubles, called plagues, so Pharaoh would listen to God. (You can read more about the 10 plagues in the Bible.) Finally, Pharaoh decided to let the Israelites go.

The Israelites left Egypt in a big hurry. They were finally free! God led them through the desert all the way to a place near the Red Sea. But trouble was coming.

The Israelites looked up. What was that over there? Uh-oh! Pharaoh had changed his mind. Now he came with his chariots and horsemen to take them back to Egypt.

The Israelites felt so afraid. Where could they run? Where could they hide? The sea blocked their way. "Why have you taken us here, Moses?" they said, "We're going to die!" But Moses said, "Do not be afraid. You will see the Lord save you today."

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Bible Biography

Then God told Moses to lift up his shepherd's staff and put his hand out over the sea. When Moses put out his hand, the Lord made the waters open up! The Israelites started walking through the sea on dry ground.

Close your eyes for a minute. Imagine what that was like! You would walk with a tall wall of water on each side of you. Maybe the walls would be like two big, glass aquariums! What if you could

see all the fish in the Red Sea, like bright blue and yellow angelfish with stripes on their backs? Maybe you would see golden butterfly fish, wiggly sea anemones, a giant puffer fish or a blue spotted stingray. You might even see a barracuda with mean, pointy teeth.

Pharaoh's men followed the Israelites into the sea. "I'm sure we'll catch them," they said. But God made the wheels of their chariots fall off, so they could barely drive. They got so scared that they tried to run back out of the sea.

Then God told Moses to stretch out his hand again over the sea. God closed the waters up on top of the Egyptians. All Pharaoh's horses and riders drowned in the sea, but the people of Israel walked safely to the other side.

The Israelites saw God's great power that day. They put their trust in God and sang a song to praise Him for saving them from all their Egyptian enemies.



What I need to remember about the Israelites and the Red Sea:

- Our God is great and mighty. He is the one true God.
- God saved Israel from their enemies. The Israelites would not be slaves anymore.

You are
starting

Red Jewel 4

TRIP TO A NEW LAND

Bible Biography

READ: Numbers 21:4-9

The Israelites Complain

Has your mom or dad ever told you, “Stop whining!”?
Has your Sparks leader ever said, “Don’t have such a bad attitude!”?

Complaining is easy to do. You might not like what Grandma serves for dinner. You might not like doing your school work. You might not even like the game you have to play at club one night.

But God hates complaining. (Complaining is when we whine and whine about things and have a bad attitude.) God doesn’t like when we complain to our parents or leaders, and He really doesn’t like it when we complain to Him. When the Israelites started complaining to God, they got into BIG trouble.

The Israelites were hiking to God’s Promised Land. God had helped them get through the Red Sea, so they never had to worry about being slaves in Egypt again.

God helped them in lots of other ways too. Each day, He put a cloud in front of them to show them where to walk. Each night, He put a flame of fire in front of them to guide them and give them light.

God also gave them good food to eat along the way. He sent sweet-tasting bread, called manna, every day. He sent birds, called quail, for meat. And God always made sure the Israelites had enough fresh water to drink.

But after a while, the Israelites got tired of walking in the desert. They started to complain to God and Moses. “Why have you brought us to die

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Bible Biography

in the desert?” they said.
“There’s no food or water.
And we are sick of eating
this yucky manna!”

God did not like what
the Israelites were saying.
Instead of whining, they
were supposed to be
thanking God and trusting
Him to take care of them. So
God sent poisonous snakes to
the people. The snakes bit them,
and many of the people died.

The people came to Moses and
said, “We sinned when we said
those things. Pray that the Lord will
take the snakes away.” So Moses
prayed for the people.

Then God told Moses to make a
statue of a snake and put it up on a
pole. So Moses made a snake out of
metal called bronze, and they put it
up on a pole. The people who were
bitten could look at the bronze
snake and live.

Complaining is sin, and we all do it
sometimes because we’re all sinners.
But now we have the Bible to teach
us what’s right and to correct us
when we do wrong – not poisonous
snakes! God has sent His Son, Jesus,
to die on the cross for our sin.



John 3:14-15 says: *And as Moses
lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
that whoever believes in Him may
have eternal life.*

In the desert, the people who
looked up at the bronze snake
showed they believed God would
save them. Many years later, God
lifted up Jesus on the cross. If we
believe (or trust) in Jesus, we will
be saved from our sin and live
forever with God.

Have you trusted Jesus as your
Savior? If not, talk to your parents
or Sparks leader about it today.

What I need to remember about the Israelites and the snakes:

- God wants us to THANK Him instead of complaining.
- Jesus was lifted up on the cross to save us from sin.

READ:
Numbers 13-14
and Joshua 1

Bible Biography

Joshua and Caleb Trust God

It's the day before the big game! Your team is getting ready.

"I heard the players on the other team are really big," says one of your teammates. He looks afraid.

"Yeah, me too!" says someone else. "And I heard they can kick the ball **FASTER** and **FARTHER** than anybody else."



"Listen, everybody!" says one of your good friends. "Stop being so afraid! Coach says we can beat them. We just have to play our best and do what Coach tells us to do."

Then your friend looks over to you. "What do **YOU** think?" he says.

What would you say to your friend? Would you be afraid just like the rest of the team? Or would you be different and believe in your coach and your team?

Two men in the Bible, named Caleb and Joshua, were not afraid, even when everyone else was.

The Israelites were camped near the land of Canaan. (Canaan was the land God promised to give them.) God told Moses to send out 12 spies to look over the land. Two of the spies were Caleb and Joshua.

The spies looked over Canaan for many days. They looked at everything in the land – the people, the towns, the soil, the trees, the fruit – everything! They cut off some huge, ripe grapes to bring back with them.

When the spies got to camp, they showed the people the grapes and told them what they saw. "The land is very good," they said. "But the people in the land are **TALL** and **STRONG**. They live in large cities with high walls."



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Then Caleb told the spies and all the people to be quiet. “We should go up and take the land,” he said. “I know we can do it.” Caleb remembered that God said He would help the Israelites fight all their enemies.

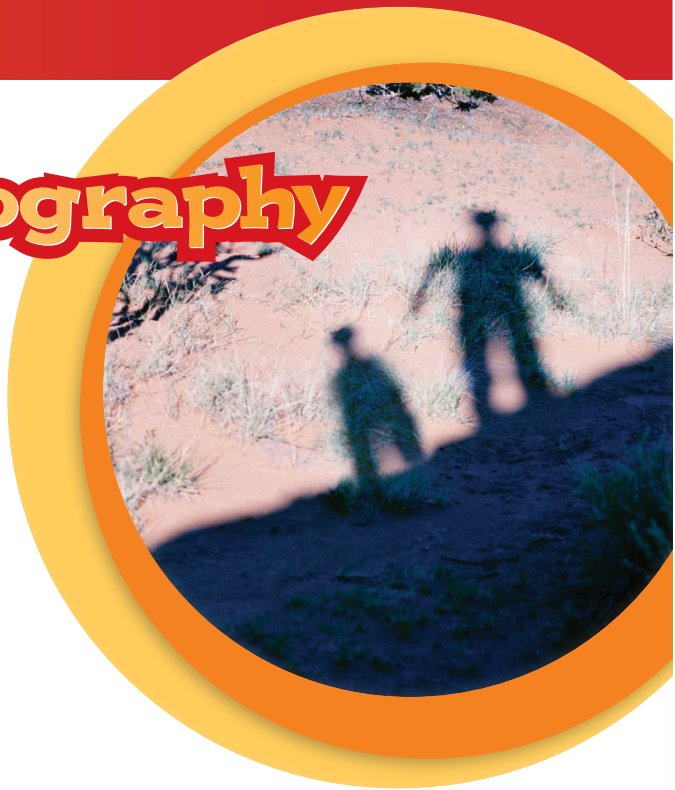
But the other spies made all the people afraid. They said, “We can’t fight those people. They are stronger than us. They are so big, and we are like little, tiny grasshoppers!”

The Israelites started crying very loud. “We’re going to die! Why did God bring us here?” they whined. They all wanted to go back to Egypt!

Joshua and Caleb said with strong voices, “Do not be afraid. The Lord is with us. He will help us fight and give us the land.”

But the people were still afraid. They did not believe God would help them.

Then God became angry with the people. He told Moses that because the people did not trust in Him, **not one of them** would enter the new land. They would have to keep walking around the desert for 40 years.



(To help kids understand how long 40 years is, tell them it’s a really long time, maybe longer than Mom or Dad has been alive.) But God said that because Caleb and Joshua trusted in Him and were not afraid like everyone else, they and all the children **would** get to enter His land.

Many years later, God’s Word came true! Caleb and Joshua stood ready to enter the land. But all of the people who didn’t trust God died in the desert. When everyone else was afraid, Joshua and Caleb were strong and courageous. God rewarded them for their trust in Him.

What I need to remember about Joshua and Caleb:

- Don’t be afraid like everyone else. Trust God like Joshua and Caleb did!
- What God says always comes true.

READ:
Joshua 23-24

Bible Biography

Joshua and the Israelites Make Good Choices

Think about the following questions, and choose what you would rather do.

- Would you rather eat a cookie or a carrot?
- Would you rather run or swim?
- Would you rather color a picture or look at a book?
- Would you rather play inside your house or go outside?

We all make choices about many things every day. Some choices we make are good; some are bad. Some choices are not important. Some choices are VERY important.

In the Bible, Joshua asked the Israelites to make a very important choice.

“Come and listen! Come and listen!” All the Israelites heard the message. Joshua was a very old man now, and it was almost time for him to die. Joshua was inviting everyone to come and hear him say goodbye.

The Israelites came from all over the land to hear Joshua talk. They felt sad but excited too. Everyone

must have wondered what Joshua, their leader, would say!

Joshua stood up. The crowd hushed. “It is the Lord your God who has helped you to fight,” said Joshua. “God will help you beat all your enemies, and you will take the rest of the land God promised you.”

“Hooray, hooray!” the crowd must have cheered. They knew God had helped them to win many battles. They were happy to be living in God’s wonderful land.

Suddenly, the crowd got silent again. Joshua was about to say something important. Everyone leaned in close to hear.

“Always obey ALL of God’s laws,” said Joshua. “And love the Lord your God only. Do not worship the fake gods that other people worship.”

Then Joshua’s face became very serious. He did not even smile! The people felt a little scared. What was he going to say now?

Bible Biography

important choice they would ever make in their whole lives.

“Choose today whom you will serve!” said Joshua. “Will you serve the Lord our God OR will you serve the gods that other people worship?”

Joshua already knew his choice. He and his family would choose to serve the Lord. But Joshua did not know what the Israelites would choose.

What choice WOULD the Israelites make? Do you remember how much they complained to God in the desert? And remember how some of their parents had been too scared to enter the land? Do you think they would choose to serve the Lord now?

The Israelites answered Joshua, “We remember all the wonderful things God has done for us! We choose to serve the Lord. He is our God.”

“Are you SURE?” asked Joshua. He wanted to see if the people really meant it.



“Yes!” said the people. “We will serve the Lord and obey His voice.”

Then Joshua took a large stone and moved it under an oak tree. The stone would stay there to remind the Israelites of the good choice they made that day.

What about you? Have you made the choice to serve the Lord? The first step is to make a choice to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior. Talk to your parent or your Sparks leader about this important choice today.

What I need to remember about Joshua and the Israelites at Shechem:

- God wants us to always obey His commands.
- We must choose to love and serve the Lord – not other gods!