

God's BIG Story

Reading | Level 5

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TO THE PARENT AND TEACHER

Welcome to *God's Big Story*! It is our joy to partner with you in the glorious task of introducing young minds to the eternal truths contained in the Word of our gracious and loving God.

This coursework is intended to serve as an aid to parents who are looking for a Christian Family Discipleship approach to the education of their children. Christian education is always parent integrated, Bible integrated, and life integrated. This is the clear philosophy of education visible in Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4, and the book of Proverbs. *God's Big Story* seeks to follow this biblical mandate by introducing children to Scripture and to the faith and life lessons to be gleaned from it. This curriculum focuses on nurturing children in the faith, in Christ, and in Christian character. Every chapter of this reading course will familiarize students with a new historical passage from Scripture and will teach the child how to learn from and apply the truths contained in each biblical account.

Best Book Approach

Nowadays it's fashionable to introduce "great books" to our children in their Christian paideia or educational training. We,

however, recommend the best Book—the Bible. If our children want to learn to read and think, the first and core content of their study must be the Bible. These are God’s stories, and our children should know all the stories of Scripture by the time they are reading on a fifth grade level.

Avoiding the piecemeal approach to Bible stories, the authors of this course instead present the whole story, the unity of Scripture, the true message intended by God. It is a redemptive story. While there may be moral lessons to glean here and there, the core message of Scripture is the work of God in redemption. This is the story the Bible presents from cover to cover and is the story focused on in this reading course. If our children learn a thousand other stories but miss this one, we have neglected our duty in their education.

The key objectives of this program are:

1. To provide the child with a clear understanding of biblical vocabulary to prepare them to read a substantive English translation of the Bible on their own.
2. To grant the child a familiarity with the full scope of biblical stories, the historical narrative of God’s revelation.
3. To master the entire theme of the Bible, the Christ-focus of Scripture, and the fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New Testament.
4. To believe the Gospel.
5. To worship God, to fear God, and to obey His Word.

Our authors have been careful to present the wide range of scriptural stories without censorship. However, care has been taken to present stories on a level of understanding appropriate for ten-year-olds.

Scriptural quotations at the beginning of each chapter are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible. This version has also been used where narratives and conversations in the text include word-for-word scriptural quotations.

God's Big Story is intended to be used in conjunction with the selection of read-aloud books that form a part of the Generations fifth grade reading curriculum.

May the Spirit of our God anoint these readings and studies to the spiritual enlightenment, the spiritual life, and the spiritual growth of the students.

Generations Curriculum Team

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CHAPTER 1

God's Creation

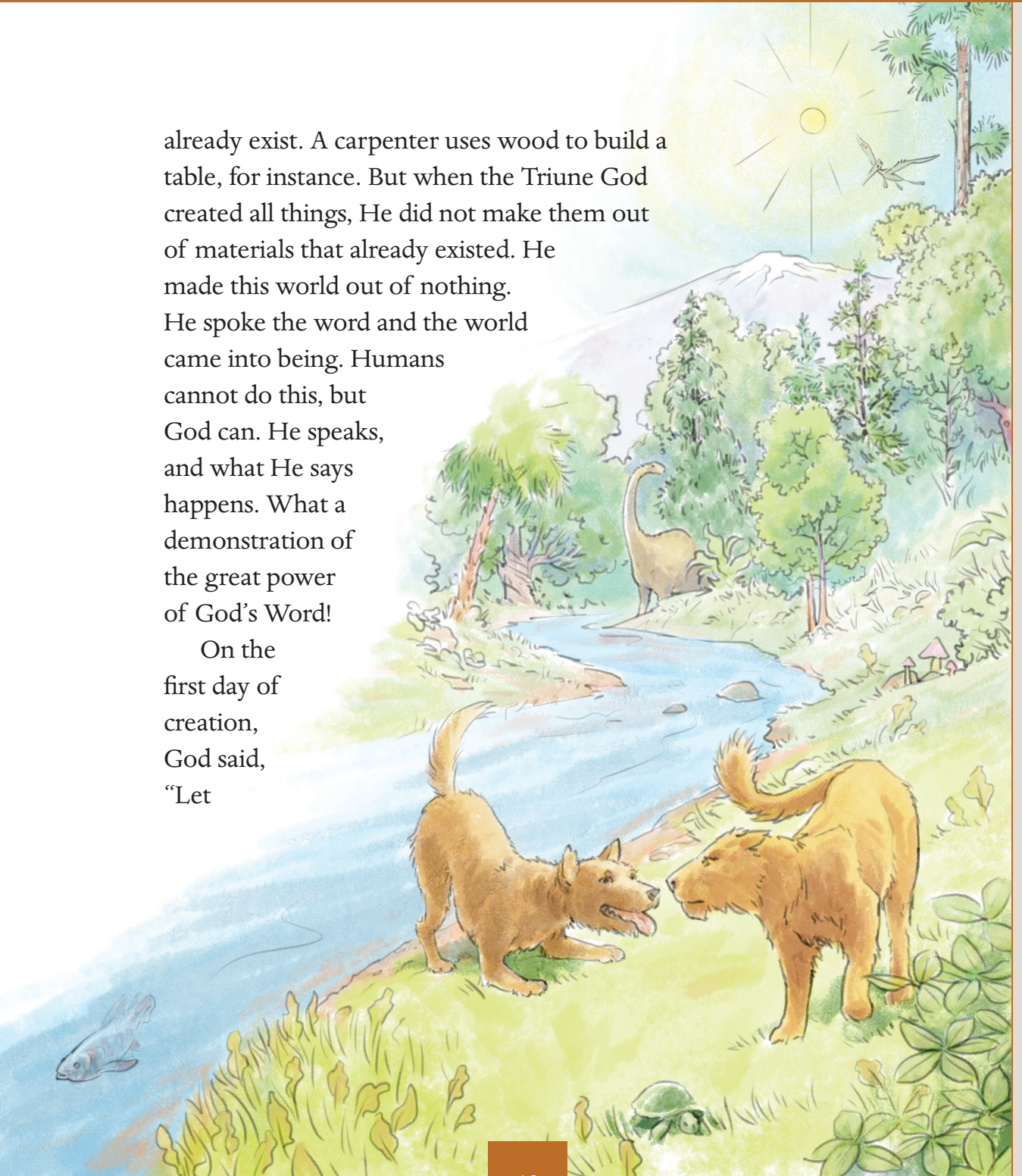
*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1)*

In the beginning there was God, the only true and living God, the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three Persons lived in perfect love and fellowship from eternity. There was never a time when they were not. They have always existed. But there was a time when nothing else existed—no trees, no mountains, no dirt, no water, and no air. Out of the overflow of their love, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit decided to create the world and everything in it. All three persons of the Trinity were involved in creation. All things were made by the Father through the Son. The Holy Spirit was also present, hovering above the waters.

When people create things, they have to use materials that

already exist. A carpenter uses wood to build a table, for instance. But when the Triune God created all things, He did not make them out of materials that already existed. He made this world out of nothing. He spoke the word and the world came into being. Humans cannot do this, but God can. He speaks, and what He says happens. What a demonstration of the great power of God’s Word!

On the first day of creation, God said, “Let



there be light!” And there was light. God separated the light from the darkness, creating daytime and nighttime. Just as God spoke and created light, He also speaks and creates light in people’s hearts so they will believe the gospel when they hear it preached. “It is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

On the second day, God separated the heavens and the earth from one another. He created the atmosphere. He separated the waters on earth from the clouds and the moisture in the sky. God was preparing the earth to be a habitable place.

On the third day, God gathered the waters of the sea together and caused the dry land to appear. This is how He created the first oceans and the land upon the earth. Then God spoke and the trees and the grass appeared, covering the newly-formed earth.

Then, on the fourth day, God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. The earth is only one planet out of many planets rotating around one star. And the sun is only a single star in a single galaxy. God made billions of other planets and galaxies on this day. God also made the angels, and it is possible He made them on the fourth day of creation.

Next, on the fifth day, God spoke and created birds and fish. He made everything that flies in the air and every creature that swims in the sea. He blessed them and commanded them to

be fruitful and multiply. God created each plant and animal according to its kind. A created kind is a category or type of animal that can only reproduce with other animals like it. For instance, dogs are a kind, but cats are a different kind. There are many breeds of dogs and cats. But a dog and a cat cannot breed to produce a cog or a dat.

On the sixth day, God made all the land animals, from the gigantic elephant to the tiny mouse. Then last of all, God made mankind, male and female. Man is very different from all the animals because God made man in His own image. He made man to be the head of creation, to rule over it in obedience to God. When God created mankind, he blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28).

God created Adam first. He put him in the Garden of Eden to take care of it. He also gave him the task of naming the animals. As Adam began to name the animals, he noticed that every animal had a mate. God had made a male and a female of each kind, but for Adam there was no female. He was all alone in the world, for there was no partner or helper for him.

God looked at His spectacular creation and called it good—all except for one thing. He said, “It is not good for man to be alone.” So God put Adam to sleep. He took one of Adam’s ribs, used it to make a woman, and brought her to the man. When

Adam saw her, he uttered the first recorded poem in human history:

*“This at last is bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.” (Gen. 2:23)*

Adam named his wife Eve. God told Adam and Eve they could eat of every tree in the garden except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was a test of their loyalty and love for God. Would they pass this test? Would they trust and obey God? What would they do?

Scripture Reading

Genesis 1:1-5, 26-28; 2:15-23

Faith Lessons

Praise God the Creator for His Wisdom — “O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions.” (Ps. 104:24)

Praise God the Creator for His Power — He spoke the word, and creation appeared all at once. “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” (Ps. 33:8-9)

Praise God the Creator for His Goodness — The Triune God didn’t have to create us, but He chose to do so out of the overflow of the eternal love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 19

From the Jordan to Jericho

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. (Heb. 11:30-31)

After Moses died, the Lord encouraged Joshua with these words, “Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua sent two spies to Jericho. These spies were sent to gather information about the city so that Israel could successfully conquer it. The two men stayed at the house of Rahab, who was a prostitute in the city. But the king of Jericho heard of their arrival and suspected Rahab. Rahab was a woman who feared the God of Israel, so she hid the spies on the roof of her house under

some flax. (At that time in that climate, most of the houses had flat roofs that could be used as extra rooms or storage areas.)

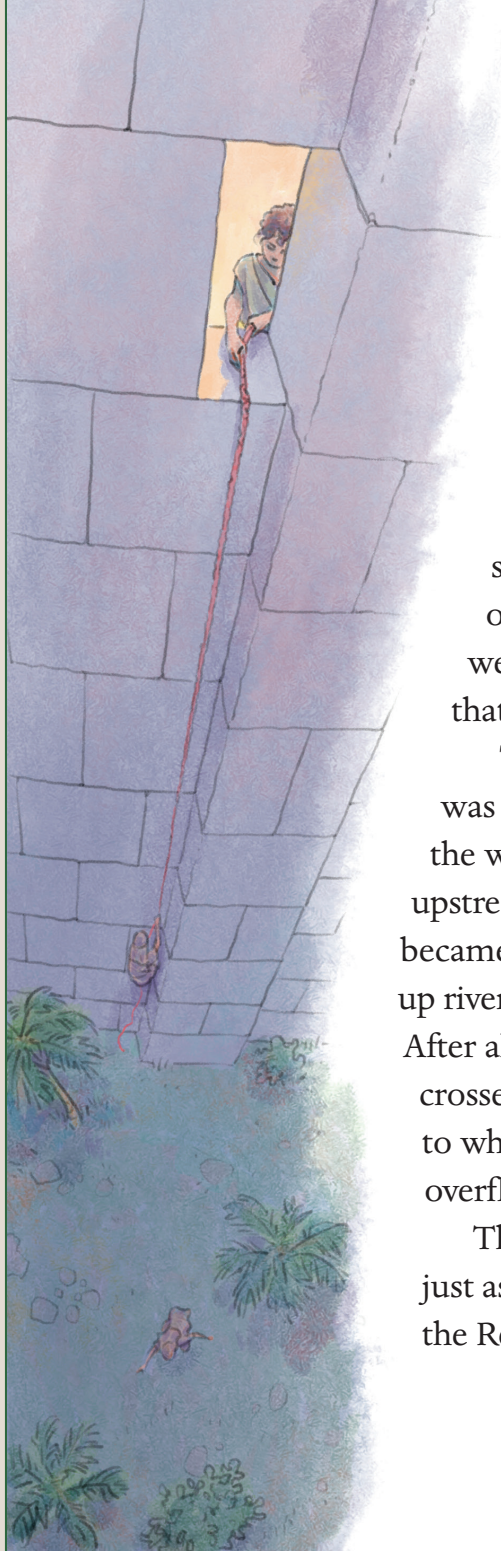
When the king's messengers asked her about the spies, Rahab replied, "The men came to me, but I didn't know who they were. They left Jericho as the city gate was being shut for the night. I don't know where they are, but if you hurry you may find them."

Rahab then visited the spies on the roof. She told them the Canaanites were afraid of the Israelites because they had heard what the Lord had done to the Egyptians. She told them she knew God would give them the land. She confessed her faith in the Lord as the one true God.

Rahab asked the two spies to spare her life and the lives of her family members. The men agreed, but they told Rahab to tie a scarlet cord to the window of her house so it could be identified. That way, it would not be destroyed along with the other houses in Jericho when the Israelites captured the city.

Rahab let the spies out her window by a rope onto the wall so they could escape the city without passing through the gates. She had remarkable faith and courage. When the spies returned safely to the Israelite camp, they told Joshua, "Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us" This news greatly encouraged the Israelites.

But a great obstacle lay in the Israelites' way. They had



to cross the Jordan River. It was springtime and the Jordan was raging and overflowing its banks. The Lord commanded the Israelites to march to the Jordan. The priests were told to walk in front, carrying the ark of the covenant. Four priests carried the ark, which was supported by two poles resting on their shoulders. The ark was the visible symbol of the Lord's presence with His people. As it went ahead of the nation of Israel, it showed that God was going before them.

The priests stepped into the water, which was an act of faith. As soon as they did so, the waters of the Jordan parted. The waters upstream stood upright like a wall, and the river became dry. Then all the people crossed the dried-up river while the priests remained in the riverbed. After all the people had crossed, the priests crossed over as well. Then the waters returned to where they had been and filled the river, overflowing its banks.

The Lord worked a miracle for the Israelites, just as He had for their fathers when they crossed the Red Sea on dry land. The Lord commanded

the Israelites to set up twelve stones to commemorate this event. The twelve stones would serve as a memorial for future generations, reminding them of what God had done, just like people erect historical markers today.

The Israelites then encamped at Gilgal. There the males were circumcised. This younger generation had not been circumcised. Because the parents had rebelled, the children were not allowed to receive the sign of the covenant. But now this new generation did. This was also an act of faith, since it made the Israelites vulnerable to their enemies.

The people then celebrated the Passover. They ate the food that grew in the Promised Land, and the Lord stopped sending the manna that had sustained them in the wilderness. Finally, after forty years of wandering in the desert, Israel had crossed over into the Promised Land, the land that God had promised to give Abraham so many years ago.

Joshua led the Israelites against Jericho. They surrounded the city, but it was a formidable obstacle. Its strong fortified walls towered above them. How could they take the city? As Joshua was thinking about this, he suddenly saw a man with a drawn sword. Who was this mysterious stranger? Joshua asked him, “Whose side are you on?”

The man replied, “No, I am the commander of the army of the Lord.” Joshua fell on his face and worshiped this one whom he now knew to be the Lord Himself. Like Moses,

Joshua took off his shoes at the command of the Commander. After this encounter, Joshua was encouraged that he was on the Lord's side.

The Lord commanded Joshua to have the Israelites march around Jericho seven days in a row. For the first six days, they were to march around the city once. Then, on the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times. It was an unusual military strategy, but the Israelites did it. They trusted the Lord to give them the city just like He had brought them through the Jordan.

Finally, the seventh day came. After they had marched around the city seven times, the priests blew their trumpets and the Israelites shouted in triumph. Then the walls of Jericho collapsed, leaving the city wide open to attack. The Israelites rushed in and conquered the city after much hard fighting. The people of Jericho were very wicked. At the Lord's command, Israel killed everyone in the city except for Rahab and her family. Then they gave thanks to the Lord, for He was the One who had given them the victory. Rahab was welcomed into Israel and married Salmon of Judah. She would become an ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Battle of Jericho was an amazing picture of both God's judgment and His mercy.

Scripture Reading

Joshua 5:10-6:5

Faith Lessons

God saves the chief of sinners — Rahab was a sinful woman from a sinful people with a sinful occupation. Yet the Lord saved her and brought her to faith in Him. He made her a heroine of the faith and an ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith expects great things from God and attempts great things for God — Rahab's faith motivated her to protect the spies and save their lives. Likewise, the Israelites acted in faith when they stepped into the Jordan, and marched around Jericho thirteen times in one week. True faith always produces good works.

Trust in God's power, not man's, to give the victory — The Lord dried up the Jordan River and knocked down the walls of Jericho. Just like the Israelites, we must trust in God's mighty power, not our own, in our own battles.

CHAPTER 51

The Magi Visit the King

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. (Matt. 2:9-11)

While the great emperor, Augustus Caesar, was ruling over the entire Roman world, a baby was born in Bethlehem. This was the greatest King in the universe, but almost nobody knew about His birth in a humble stable.

However, there were magi who came from very far away in the east. They travelled for many days, following a star which God had put in the skies. For many years, kings had come and gone. They promised to make a better world, but they always

failed. These human kings were always a great disappointment. The magi were known for appointing kings to rule throughout the world at that time. But now they knew that a greater King had arrived.

As these magi approached Jerusalem, they were looking for God's King. Somewhere they had heard about this King to be born. Perhaps it was through the prophet Daniel, who lived in Persia many years earlier. Although the magi were not Jews, they believed that God had sent a King to be born in the land of the Jews. They believed God's promise to send a Savior for sinners.

When the magi finally arrived in Jerusalem, they immediately went to meet the King of Judea, a man named Herod. These men inquired of this king, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him."

When King Herod heard that, he was very worried, as were many others in Jerusalem. For Herod considered himself to be the King of the Jews. Who was this new King? Herod called for the priests and scribes, asking, "Where will God's promised Savior-King be born?"

The Jewish scribes had read the Scriptures, and they immediately answered, "He must be born in Bethlehem of Judea." They quoted the prophet Micah: "For out of you shall come a Ruler who will rule my people Israel." The Governor-King of God's people would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David.



Herod told the magi to go to Bethlehem and find the child for him. He said he wanted to worship this baby king. But Herod didn't really want to worship the child. He had other plans. He was lying, for he was a very wicked man. He had already killed his own sons, and he didn't want this Child King to take his throne away from him.

As the magi traveled the eight miles down to Bethlehem, the star came to rest over the house where Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were living. These men from the east were full of great joy to see God's Son who was born to be their Savior. When they saw the child Jesus with Mary His mother, they fell down on their knees and worshiped Him.

Then the magi presented Jesus with very expensive gifts. They did this because they really believed that this was God's King. Their gifts were a great blessing from God for the care of the little family.

In His mercy, God told the magi in a dream to avoid the wicked king Herod and to return home a different way. As the magi left, God also sent an angel with an important message. He told Joseph, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." Joseph obeyed God, and he and Mary took Jesus and left that night for Egypt.

Sure enough, Herod had lied to the magi. When the magi did not return, Herod was furious. He didn't know where the

child was, so he gave orders to kill all the children in Bethlehem two years old and under. This had also been prophesied in the Old Testament. Jeremiah 31:15 tells of great lamentation and mourning in Judea because the women had lost their children.

It wasn't long afterwards that the wicked king Herod died. However, Judea was not a safe place to raise this Boy-King. So the angel of the Lord told Joseph to settle in Nazareth, about eighty miles to the north of Jerusalem. So Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus returned to Nazareth. This is where Jesus would live until He began His ministry at thirty years of age.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 2:1-23

Faith Lessons

We worship the Lord Jesus Christ — It would have been idolatry for the magi to worship anyone or anything besides the one true God. Idolatry breaks the first two commandments. It was not idolatry but true worship when the magi worshiped Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity.

We rejoice to hear of the birth of God's Messiah —The magi made a long, hard journey to see God's promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. They worshiped Him as their Savior-God and gave gifts of love to Him. Christians are so thankful for the Lord Jesus' sinless life and His death to pay for their sins. They love and obey Him, even when it's hard, because He is their Savior who helps them obey.

A battle is being fought between the Good and the Evil — In the garden of Eden, God promised that Jesus Christ, the Seed, would crush Satan's head. But He also said that Satan would bruise His heel. Satan does not want anyone to be saved from his wicked rule. King Herod, an evil servant of Satan, sadly killed innocent babies because he was trying to kill Jesus. But God would not allow anyone to kill His Son until the time had come when Jesus would die on the cross for His people's sins.