



Creation

And God saw that it was good.
—Genesis 1:21

In the beginning there was only God, nothing else. Then God said, “Let there be light!” and there was light. God made dry land and separated it from the water. God made fruit trees, the sun and the moon, fish to swim in the seas, and cattle to roam the lands. Then God made people in God’s own image. God looked upon the creation and saw that it was very good.

Read the whole story:
Genesis 1:1-2:3

Think about:

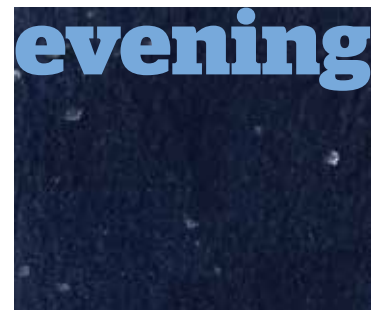
What difference does it make to know God created the world?

How do scientists help us learn about God’s creation?

How do poets help us learn about God’s creation?

Why do you think ancient people told this story?
What does it say to us today?

When you read the whole story, count how many times you hear these words:



Go and watch:

National Geographic:
<http://bit.ly/1VbOKiO>

13 sperm whales were found beached in Schleswig-Holstein in Germany. Inside four of the whales scientists found large amounts of plastic waste, a 43-foot fishing net, a plastic car engine cover, and part of a bucket.

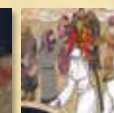
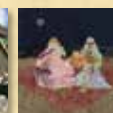
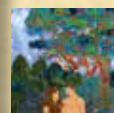
What is wrong in this picture?

How are God’s creatures connected?



Photo593/shutterstock

What do you think God thought of the creation in the beginning?
What do you think God thinks of the creation now? How so?



Get up and go:

This art is an *illumination* from the St. John's Bible. There are seven stripes to match the seven days of creation in Genesis 1.

- Day 1:** Where in this art do you see darkness? Light? The Hebrew on the bottom is *tohu wabohu*—formless and void. Why is that included? How are God and light connected?
- Day 2:** What do you see in the second stripe? Why might some of Day 1 spill over to Day 2?
- Day 3:** This is a satellite picture of the Ganges Delta. Find the Ganges Delta on a map. Does land stay still or move? How so?
- Day 4:** What might the circles represent? How are the sky and earth connected?
- Day 5:** What creatures do you see? In the story of Noah, a raven is a messenger from God. What do you think God's message is in Genesis 1?
- Day 6:** Examine this stripe. What might it be from? Do you see a snake? Which story does it foreshadow?
- Day 7:** In the St. John's Bible, God is represented by gold. Look carefully. Where is God?

Learn more about the St. John's Bible, visit:
www.saintjohnsbible.org/promotions/process/



Creation, Donald Jackson with contributions from Chris Tomlin, 2003. The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Be an: Astronaut



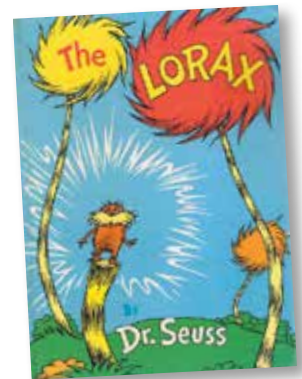
Wow, is that pretty.

—Astronaut Bill Anders,
on seeing the Earth rise above
the horizon of the moon.

On December 21, 1968, astronauts Bill Anders, Frank Borman, and Jim Lovell launched into space on Apollo 8 to orbit the moon. They were the first humans to see the earth from outer space. Anders took this photo called "Earthrise." On Christmas Eve 1968, the astronauts transmitted pictures to earth and took turns reading aloud from Genesis, chapter 1.

Listen to their broadcast: www.history.com/news/remembering-the-apollo-8-christmas-eve-broadcast

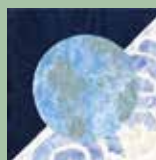
What would you have thought to hear Genesis being read and see pictures of the earth from outer space?



**“Unless someone
like you cares
a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to
get better. It's not.”**

—The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss

**Connect the Lorax's
words to Genesis 1.**



This story makes me wonder

**Where do you see
repeating themes?**





Adam and Eve

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

—Genesis 2:15

God made Adam and Eve and they lived in a garden called Eden. God told Adam that the fruit on the trees was good to eat, except the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. If they ate it, they would die. A serpent said to Eve, “You won’t die. If you eat fruit from that tree you will be like God.” So Adam and Eve ate. God said, “What have you done? You disobeyed me. Now your lives will be difficult.” Adam and Eve left Eden.

Read the whole story:
Gen. 2:4-25, 3

Think about:

What do the characters do and say in this story?

Eve blamed the serpent for tricking her. What do you imagine the serpent would say?

Adam and Eve stand for all people. God said Adam and Eve – ALL of us – need to care for the creation. What if people don’t take care of the world?

Separation from God

The story of Adam and Eve talks about sin. Sin is everything we do or don’t do that separates us from God. Everyone sins. Sometimes people sin individually, sometimes people sin together. **Sort these sins:**

Individual Sin
Sins we do alone

Collective Sin
Sins we do together

Individual and Collective Sin
Sins we do both alone and together

bullying
littering
hurting
cheating
taking more
taunting
racism
taking advantage

What other words belong here?

Make a list of actions that connect us to God.

Go and tink about:

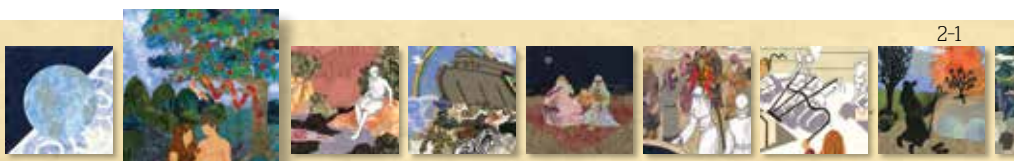
“We must all face the choice between what is right and what is easy.”

—Albus Dumbledore, in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, chapter 5, by J.K. Rowling

Are “easy” and “evil” the same? How so?

Connect this quote to:

- Adam and Eve’s story
- Your life



Bea: Gardener

Draw lines from these words to things in the garden: ● ● ● **Mother of all the living** ● ● ● **Voices and**

ideas that pull us from God ● ● ● **Things**

● Opportunities: “Yes! We can eat this fruit!”

Earthling

So that bring us closer to God

Get up and go:



Make Bird Treats

- ## Stewardship

noun • stewardship • |'stü-ʔrd-ship|

A "steward" is a caretaker. "Stewardship" is what stewards do. Christians know that everything we have comes from God. Our job is to take care of all God's gifts to us; so we wonder "What does God want us to do with the gifts?" The answers include protecting AND sharing God's gifts.

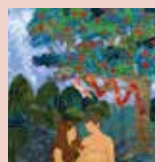
Go find some nature to visit.

Watch anything on the **Nature** channel, or find **The Blue Planet** at your library. What do you find amazing about God's creation? What do you find mysterious?

Do you live near a state or national park? Find a time to visit a park or take a walk in a place where you can find nature. How does being outside with God's creation make you feel?



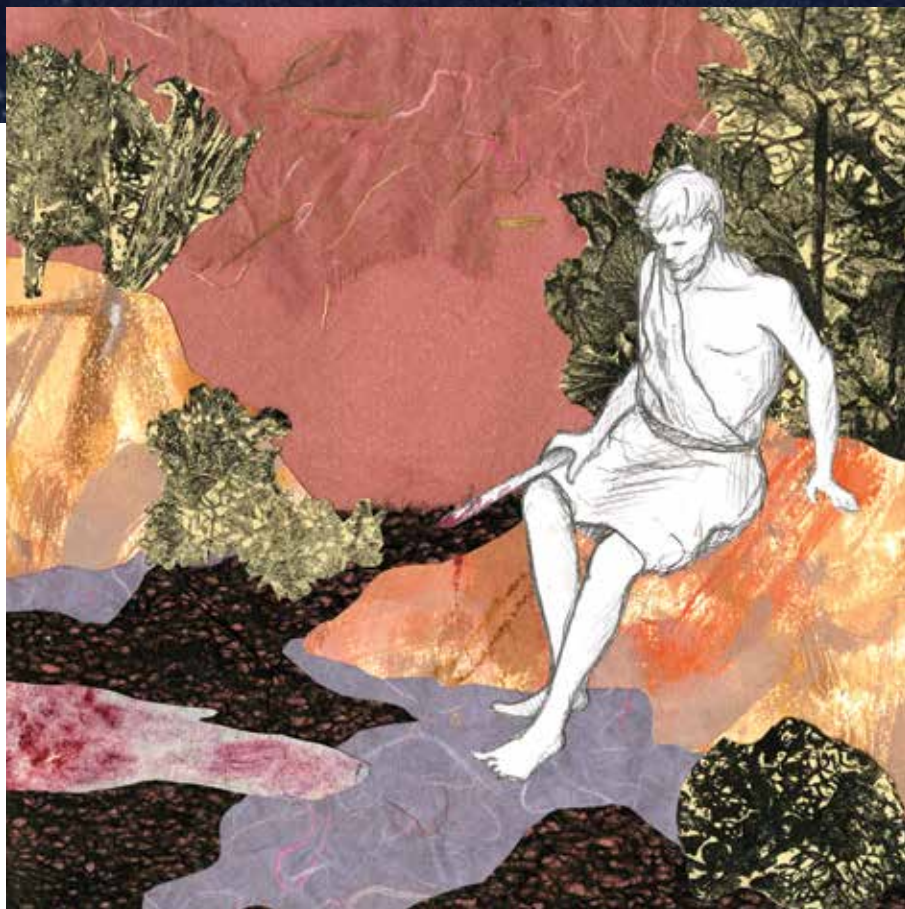
© Kathryn Brewer



This story makes me wonder about_____.

Where do you see a repeating theme?





Cain and Abel

Am I my brother's keeper?

—Genesis 4:9

Adam and Eve had children including two brothers, Cain and Abel. Abel was a shepherd. Cain was a farmer. Abel offered God a lamb. Cain offered God some of his crops. God accepted Abel's offering and turned away Cain's offering. Cain was jealous, the brothers quarreled, and Cain killed Abel. God said to Cain, "Where is your brother?" Cain lied and said he did not know.

Read the whole story:
Genesis 4:1-16

Think about:

We don't know why God turned away Cain's offering.
What things seem unfair to you? Why do you think people get jealous of each other?

Think of other stories you have read about jealousy or brothers and sisters not getting along.

connects me to God

What connects you to God? What pulls you away from God?

Circle God-like actions in green. Circle pulling away actions in red. What can you do to be more God-like? What can your church do?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Letting someone go first when it is your turn | Using social media to hurt or scare someone |
| Lying even when people don't find out | Donating food to a food pantry |
| Standing up to a bully for someone else | Picking up someone else's litter |
| Ignoring someone different from you, even if you aren't mean | Taking something from someone else, when she doesn't know it |
| Cheating in a game, even if you aren't caught | Sharing your lunch with someone who forgot his |
| Talking with a lonely neighbor | |
| Hurting someone's feelings | |
| Taking advantage of a younger child | |
| Talking with someone who is alone at school | |

What do these pictures tell you about how people live?

We are all created equal, but resources and opportunities are distributed unequally.

Read *Material World: A Global Family Portrait* by Peter Menzel.

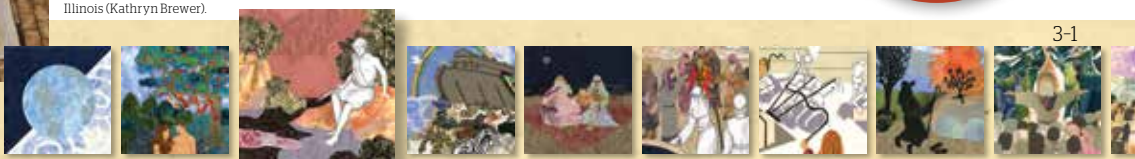
Watch news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/11/world-toilet-day-sanitation-pictures

Clockwise from top left: Squat toilet in Japan (Matt Perreault, Creative Commons); Pit toilet in Chipata, Zambia (Rahul Ingle, Sustainable Sanitation Alliance, Creative Commons); Composting toilet in Horsens-Slikeborg, Denmark (Villy Fink Isaksen); Squat toilet in the train station in Varenna, Italy (Haeferl, Creative Commons); Toilet with a bidet in renovated bathroom in Dublin, Ireland (Odyssey Bathrooms, Creative Commons); Flush toilet in Oak Park, Illinois (Kathryn Brewer).

Go read or watch:



pulls me away from God



Be a: Principal

Tyler and Jordan play together on a basketball team. In the last 5 seconds of the game Tyler and Jordan had each scored 14 points, and then Tyler shot a magnificent game-winning three-point shot.

The team and crowd cheered! Jordan was jealous of Tyler and all the attention. Jordan started saying hurtful, unkind things about Tyler to other kids. Tyler was hurt and angry. The two kids ended up in a loud fight in the lunchroom and had to go to the principal's office.



Art by David Drumm

What's the conflict?

How does Tyler feel?

How does Jordan feel?

Possible solutions?

You are the principal. Help Tyler and Jordan sort out their problem.

Conflict, and sometimes even jealousy, is a part of life for all people. Conflict can be good or bad depending on how we deal with it. Give examples of good things coming from conflict.

Get up and read:



Winner of a Coretta Scott King Honor and the Jane Addams Peace Award!

What we say and how we treat each other have long-term consequences.

Read **Each Kindness**
by Jacqueline Woodson.

In this story, Ms. Albert brings a big bowl of water to class. She drops a small stone into the water and waves ripple out, away from the stone. "This is what kindness does," Ms. Albert says. "Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple, into the world."

"Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple, into the world."

Give examples of kindnesses that ripple into the world.

Give examples of unkindnesses that ripple into the world.

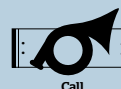
The consequences of Cain's actions were long lasting. What kind of long-lasting actions do you want to do?

How are inequality and injustice long-lasting actions?



This story confuses me because

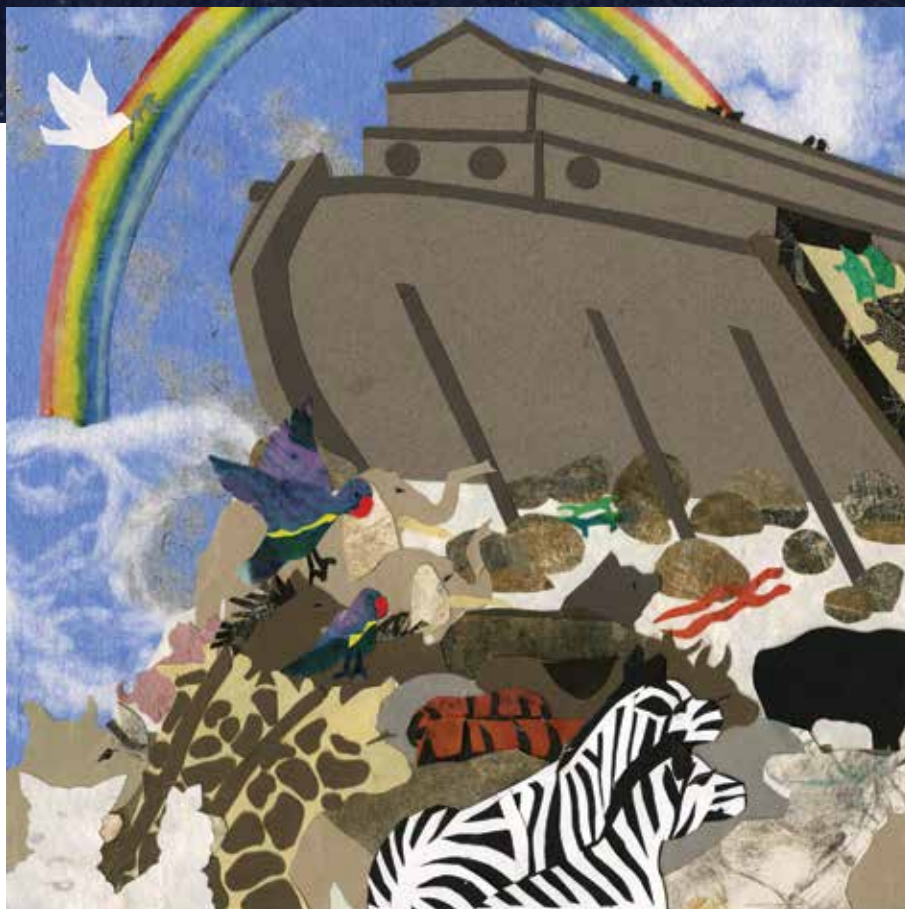
Where do you see the opposite of repeating themes?



Call



Love one another



Noah and the Ark

I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

—Genesis 9:13

Long after God created the world, God was disappointed in people and their choices, and wanted to start again. God knew Noah was faithful, so God told him to build an ark and put his family and two of every creature on board. It rained for 40 days and nights. Finally the ark landed on a high mountain, and the sun dried the rain. God

made a rainbow as a sign of God's promise to never again flood the earth.

Read the whole story:
Genesis 6-9

Think about:

What part of this story would you like to paint?

Explain what you think God is doing in this story.

Give evidence that Noah was brave.

Why is the rainbow so important in this story?
Why is the dove important?



The story of Noah tells us how God tried to wash the world, to make everything right. The Bible is filled with echoes. Pay attention—God keeps trying to make everything right. God keeps trying to restore the world.

Why do you think God does this?

Go and research:

Ancient Stories about the Flood

Many ancient civilizations, in places such as Mesopotamia, Ireland, India, and Korea, told stories of dreadful floods sent by angry, vengeful gods to destroy the world. Our ancestors in faith, the Israelites, also told a story about an ancient flood, but their story was different. Rather than a flood that destroyed everything, the Israelites told a story with a glimmer of hope. While the waters covered the world, Noah and his family and two of every kind of animal were safe in the ark.

Compare the God of the Israelites to the angry, vengeful gods.

**Read Isaiah 54:9-10. Will anything bring God to stop loving people?
How so?**

Do some research. What can you find out about Zeus and a great flood?



40

Investigate how often the number 40 is used in the Bible. Each time you hear 40, ask yourself:

What is happening? What is going to happen? How is God's plan being accomplished?



Be a: Mathematician

Locate these stories in the Bible. Find the 40. Is it 40 years or 40 days? What is God doing in each story?

The flood: Genesis 6-9

Moses on Mount Sinai: Exodus 20:1-17

The Israelites wandering in the wilderness: Deuteronomy 34

Jesus' temptation: Luke 4:1-13

Ascension: Acts 1:6-14



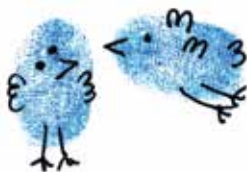
Get up and create:

All God's Critters

Bill Stains wrote this song.
What do you think is his message?

Find a recording of the song.

Make thumb print animals. Using a rubber stamp pad and a black pen, make some of the animals in the song.



*"All God's critters got a place in the choir.
Some sing low, some sing higher.
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire,
some just clap their hands or paws
or anything they got now."*

—Bill Stains

Covenant

noun • cov·e·nant • 'kə-və-nənt

An important promise between two people. When agreeing to a covenant, most of the time both people say what they will do to keep their promise. Genesis 9:9-11 tells of a covenant between God and people, but the text only tells us what God will do, not what people will do.

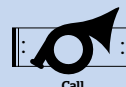
What should people promise to God?

Scientists predict that as our atmosphere warms, there will be more floods, hurricanes, and severe weather. How are people impacted by the warming trend?

**What if people contribute to flooding?
How does this connect to our covenant with God through Noah?**

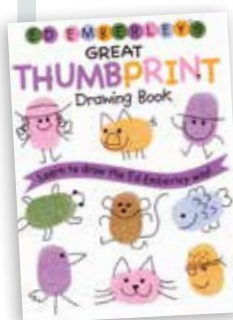
**This story has my favorite animal:
a pair of _____.**

**Where do you see
repeating themes?**



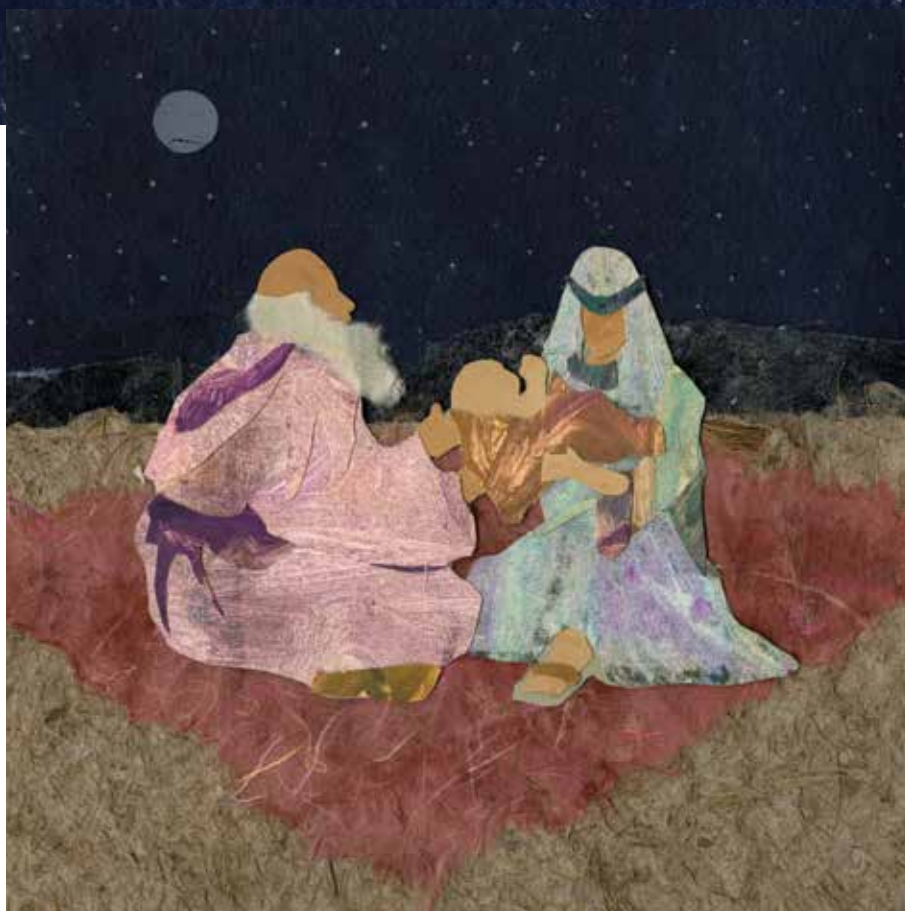
Call

Redemption



See Ed Emberley's *Great Thumbprint Drawing Book* for ideas!





Stars in the Sky

Look toward the heaven and count the stars...so shall your descendants be.

—Genesis 15:5

God said to Abram, "Leave your home and country and go to a place I will show you." God gave Abram three promises: you will be the ancestor of a great nation; you will have a land of your own; and you will be a blessing to others. Abram waited a long time. Finally when Abram and his wife Sarai were very old, God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah.

Then God's

messengers said Sarah would have a baby. Sarah laughed. She was too old to have a baby! But soon, Isaac was born.

Read the whole story:

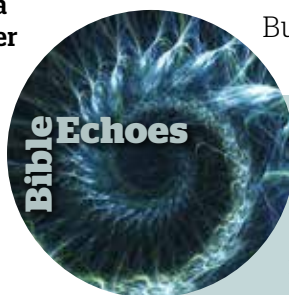
Genesis 12; 15:1-6; Genesis 21

Think about:

God gave Abram three promises. What were they?

Sarah laughed when God promised her a baby. Look at the timeline. Find other crazy promises.

How are babies and seeds promises of the future?



In this story God tries again to make things right; God tries to restore the creation. Through Sarah and Abraham a whole bunch of people would live in God's way. Then others would see it and join them and the world would be restored. **Did it work? How so?**

God promises:

God gave Abraham and Sarah three promises; that they would:

Have a land of their own.



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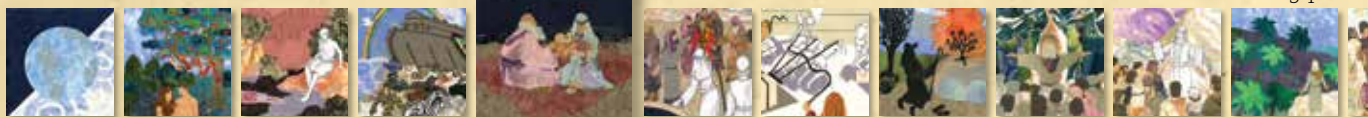


© iStock/Pamela Burley



© iStock/George Rudy

Go and be a blessing:



Be an: Astronomer

God promised that Sarah and Abraham would have as many descendants as stars in the sky.

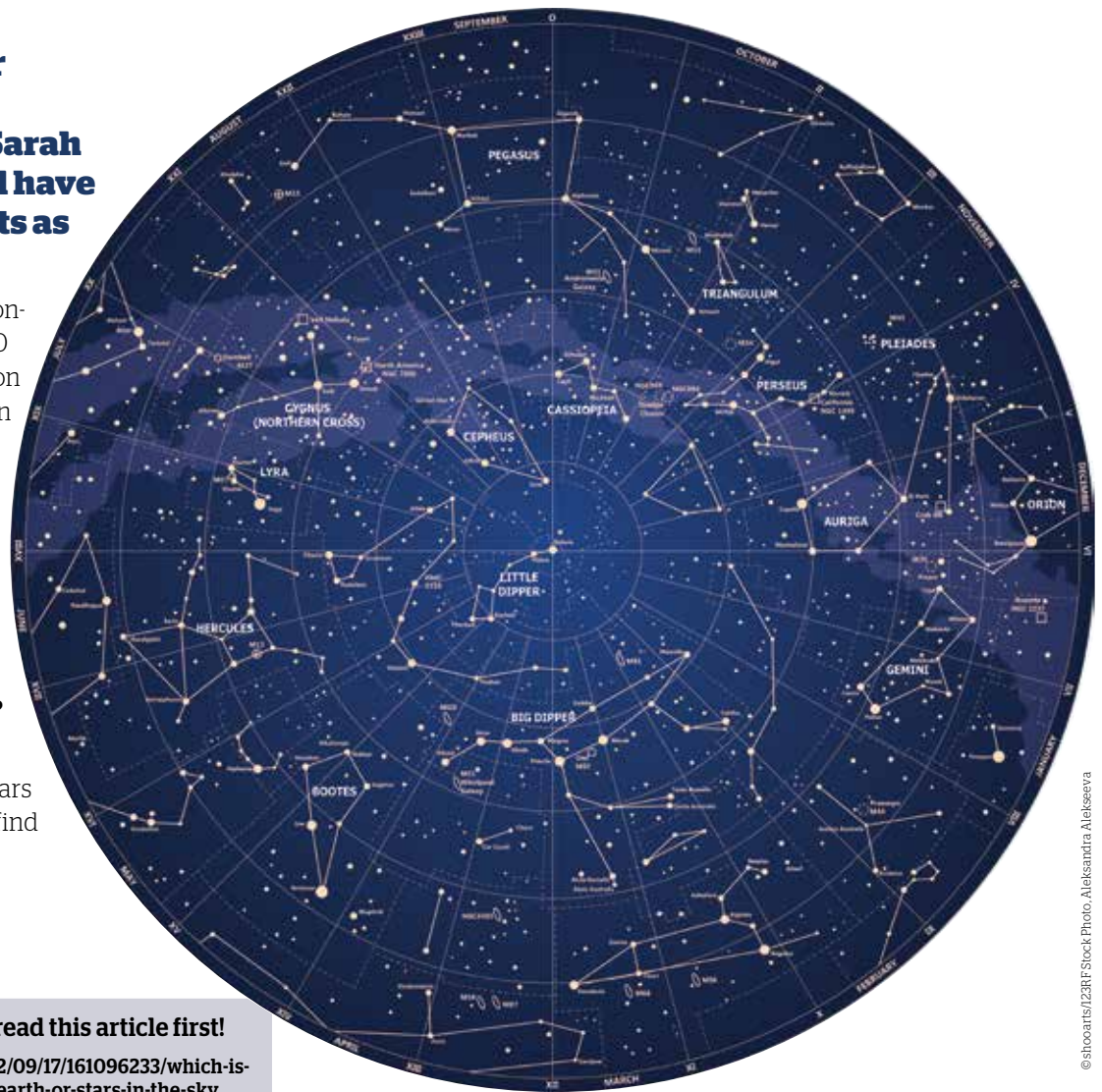
Just how many is that? Astronomers say our sun is one of 100 billion stars in our galaxy, but on a clear night from earth, we can see only about 6,000 stars.

Ancient people saw pictures made in the sky by the brightest stars and named these constellations after their stories.

On the star map, can you find:
Peter's church (Cepheus)?
The Northern Cross

Next time you look up at the stars on a dark night, see if you can find some of these groups of stars.

Looking toward north:
The big dipper
Cassiopeia



If you really want to count the stars, read this article first!

<http://www.npr.org/sections/kruulwich/2012/09/17/161096233/which-is-greater-the-number-of-sand-grains-on-earth-or-stars-in-the-sky>

Get up and create:

When God called Sarah and Abraham their names were Sarai and Abram. God changed their names to show that their lives had changed. They had an important future!

At baptism we are named and become part of God's family. We are stars in Sarah and Abraham's family!

Celebrate your name!

Draw your name in crayon, and then fill in the gaps with watercolor. The wax in the crayon makes a nice border to your watercoloring.



This story makes me consider

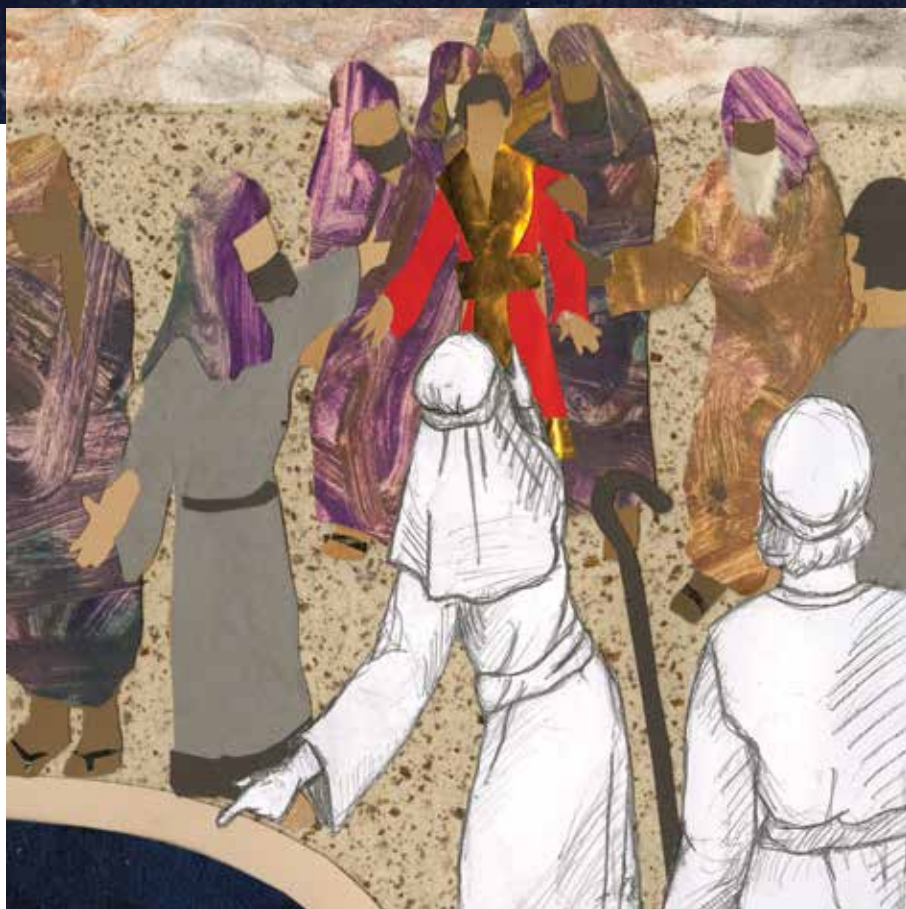
Where do you see repeating themes?



Call



Redemption



Joseph and his Brothers

Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good. –Genesis 50:20

Jacob had 12 sons. The second youngest was named Joseph. Jacob loved Joseph and gave him a fancy coat. Joseph told his brothers that he dreamed they were bowing down to him. The brothers were jealous and angry and threw him into a pit. Traders came by and the brothers sold Joseph to them. Joseph was taken to Egypt.

Read the whole story:
Genesis 37-50

Think about:

When are you jealous of others?

Does it matter if someone has something you don't have?

Joseph forgave his brothers.
What makes it hard to forgive?

Find another story on the timeline about jealousy.

Getting Along with Others

Joseph forgave his brothers, even though they had done something terribly wrong to him. It's hard to forgive! But forgiving others, and accepting people as God's children, even when we don't agree with them, or when they are different from us, is part of being a follower of Jesus. **What can happen when people stand up together and listen to each other?**



Popsicle stick family

Cut 6 craft sticks into 12 sticks of various lengths.

Line up your sticks with the bottom cut edges even. Spread out the sticks just slightly, about 1/16" or as far apart as the thickness of one stick. Tape all twelve sticks together at the top and bottom. Turn the sticks over and make sure the bottoms are even and that you can fold them like an accordion so they will stand.

Draw Joseph and his brothers and learn all their names. Or, draw you and your family, you and your friends, or a group of people that should get along better.

Materials

6 craft sticks (5/8" wide by 8" tall)
Masking or packing tape
Permanent markers or sharpies

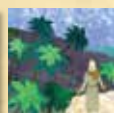
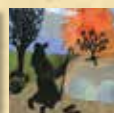
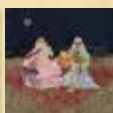
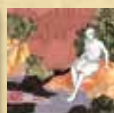
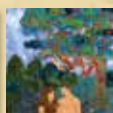
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnPCIWznEY4&list=RDjnPCIWznEY4#t=32>

Think Bible stories are boring? Think again! Watch this movie and be prepared to laugh, and even tap your toe.



Creative Commons, Tulane University



Joseph's ancestors: The Patriarchs



© St. Takla.org

Be a: **Genealogist**

Every family is different,
but all families have generations.

Abraham and Sarah

Great-grandparents

Isaac and Rebekah

Grandparents

Jacob and Rachel

Parents

Joseph

You

"Relations are important. Kinda like a map of where a person is and where they been, don't cha think?"

—What A Woman Must Do,
by Faith Sullivan, page 202.

How do our ancestors in faith
tell us where we are and
where we've been?

Make a map of Joseph's
relations. And guess
what? These are OUR
relations too!

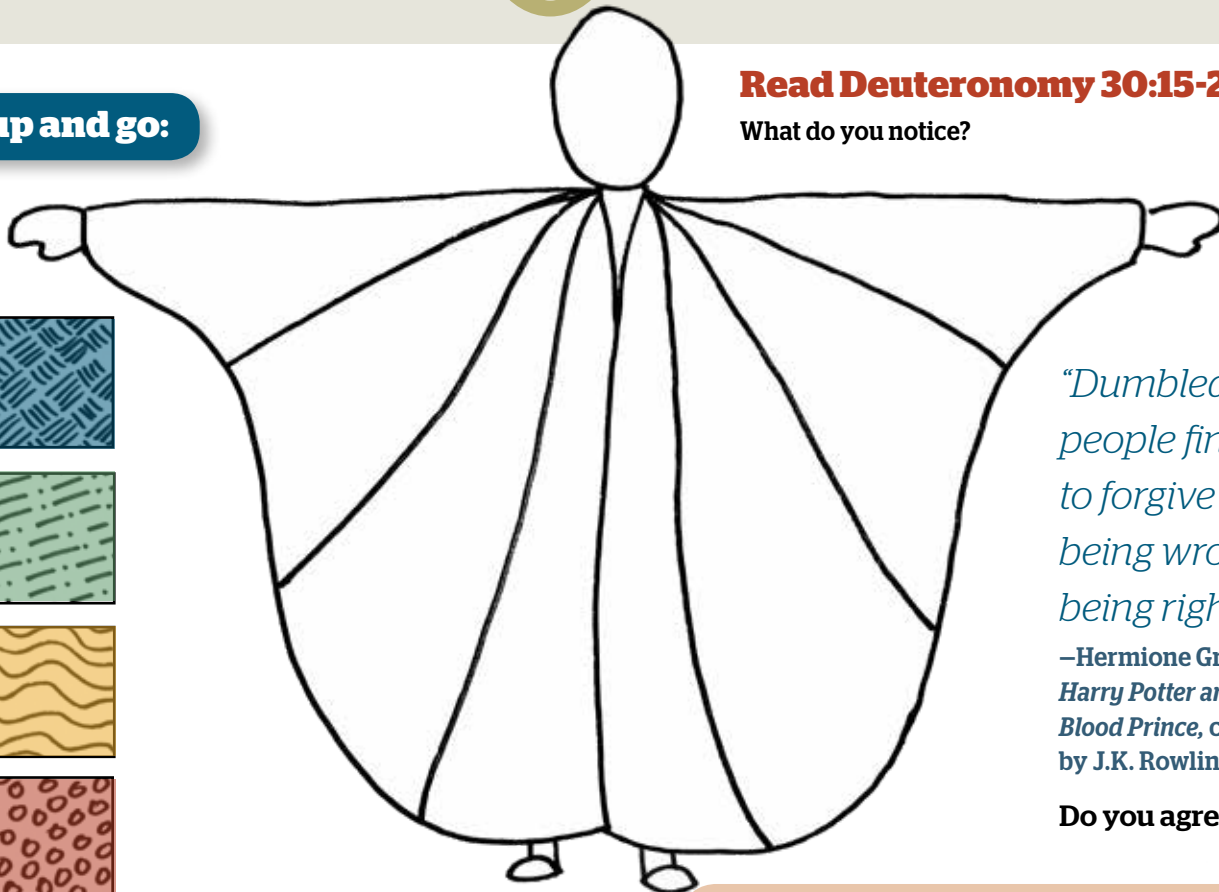
Who is in your family history?

Talk to your parents
and grandparents to
fill in parts of your
family tree.

Get up and go:

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

What do you notice?

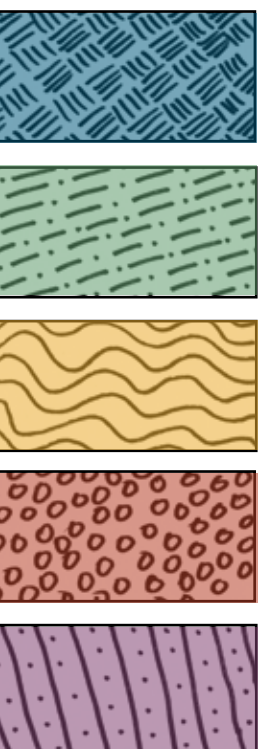


*"Dumbledore says
people find it easier
to forgive others for
being wrong than
being right."*

—Hermione Granger, in
*Harry Potter and the Half-
Blood Prince*, chapter 5,
by J.K. Rowling

Do you agree? Why?

Color in Joseph's coat. Use patterns
like the ones shown to make his coat
look like fabric.

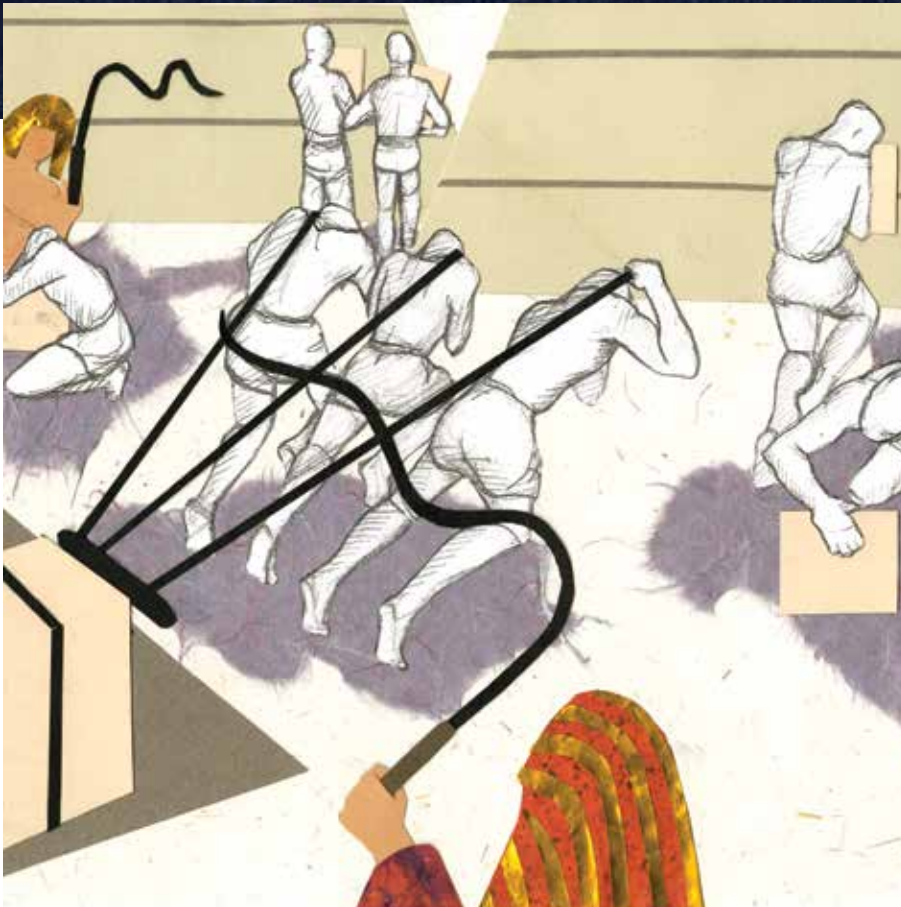


This story shows me _____.

6-2

**Where do you see
the opposite of
these themes?**





Slavery in Egypt

The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick.

—Exodus 1:13-14

After years of hardship, all Jacob's sons moved to Egypt, and Joseph forgave his brothers. Jacob's family, the Hebrews, grew very large. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was afraid of the Hebrews. He thought they would become more powerful than he was. Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrews, forcing them to work hard making bricks. They cried out to God to help them.

Read the whole story:
Exodus 1

Think about:

Why do you think some people hurt others?

At first the Egyptians welcomed the Hebrews. As the Hebrews became more powerful, the Egyptians became afraid. Why might they have been afraid?

Do people have to agree to get along? How so?

Slaves to technology?

Imagine when great things happen you see them only through your phone. What might you miss? What would be your master?

What if you were so worried about making a mistake that you never tried anything new? What might you miss?

What if you thought you always had to wear new shoes? How can new and better be a slave master?

What is a slave master?

In this story, the slave masters were Egyptians. But slave masters don't have to be people. Sometimes people become slaves of fear, or technology, or money, or worry.

How can technology be a slave master?

What else can be a slave master?

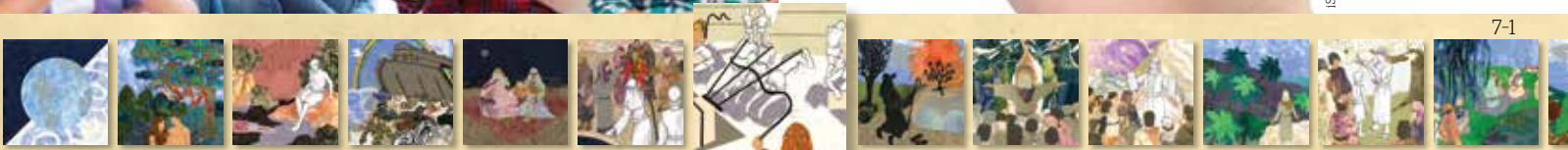


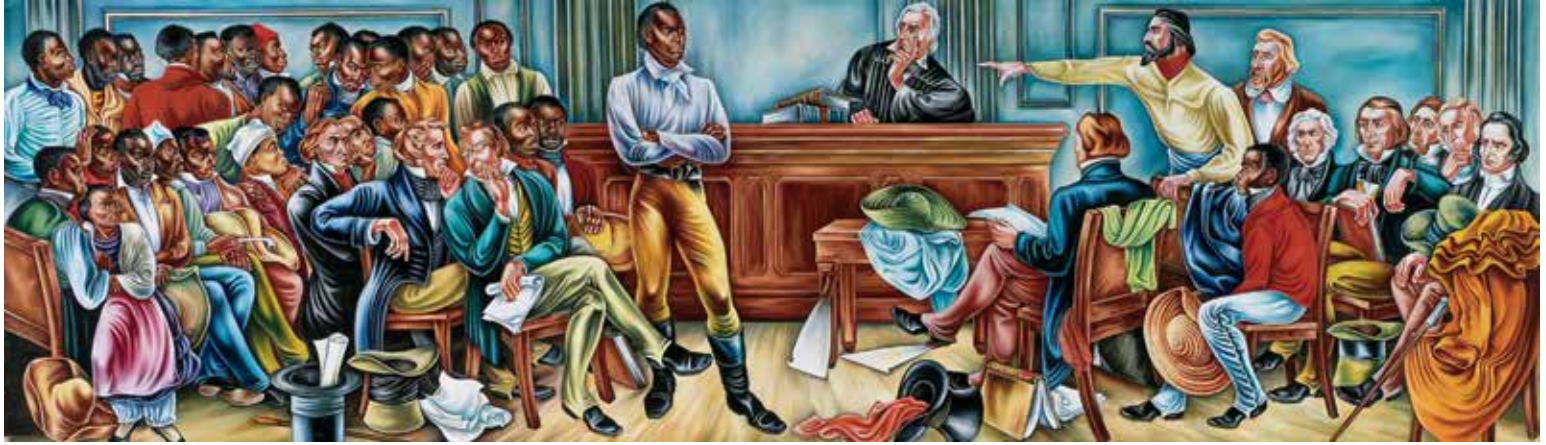
istock/Black2sheep, alt.

Stop and think:



©123rfidolgrichov



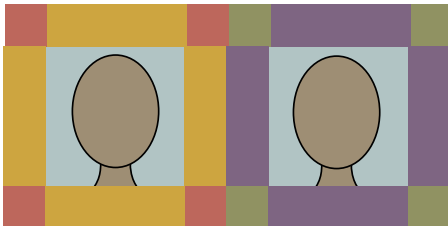


The Amistad Slaves on Trial at New Haven

This painting by Hale Woodruff is part of a set of three murals at Talladega College in Alabama commemorating the Amistad story.

In June 1839, *La Amistad* set sail from Havana, carrying 53 Africans who had been kidnapped from West Africa and sold as slaves to work on Cuban plantations. The Africans revolted and demanded that the ship return to Africa. The ship zigzagged for months and finally landed in Long Island, New York. In New York City, a group of Christian abolitionists formed a defense committee and eventually the case was heard by the Supreme Court who ruled the Africans were free.

- Imagine possible reasons why the Christians worked to defend the rights of the Africans.
- What might have happened if the Africans didn't receive help?
- Some Christians argued against the Africans' freedom. What happens when Christians don't agree?
- Former President John Quincy Adams was part of the Christian abolitionist group. What does this tell you about his leadership?
- **La Amistad** means "The Friendship." What do you make of this?

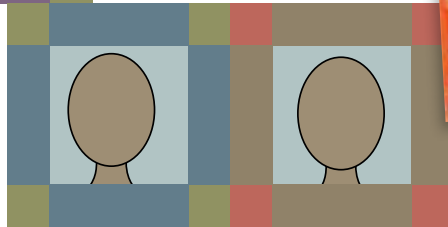


Get up and go:

Draw faces for these people.

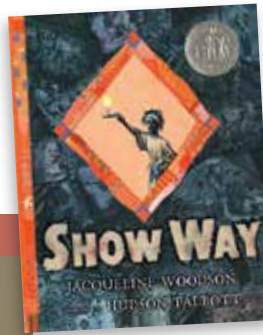
Great-Grandma:
Sold away from her family

Grandma:
Sold away from her family, her husband died during the Civil War

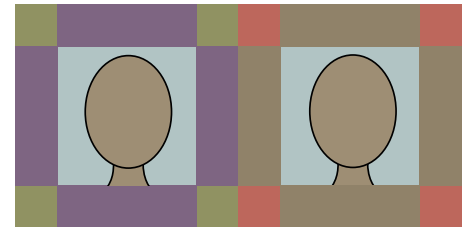


Mother:
A freed slave

Soonie: A free share-cropper



Jacqueline Woodson's book, **Show Way**, tells the story of one family's journey from slavery to freedom to civil rights workers to shaping the future.



Jacqueline:
A published author

Jacqueline's baby:
The future!

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

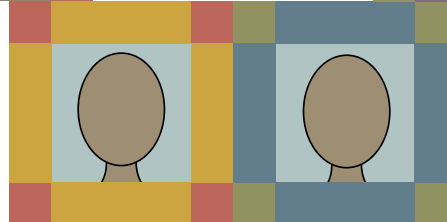
What does justice look like?

Connect this quote to the book.

Connect this quote to today's story of God's people.

Georgina:
Learns to read

Caroline: Grew up during the Civil Rights movement



What do you notice about this family's history?

What do you think their future will be?

How are histories and futures tied together?

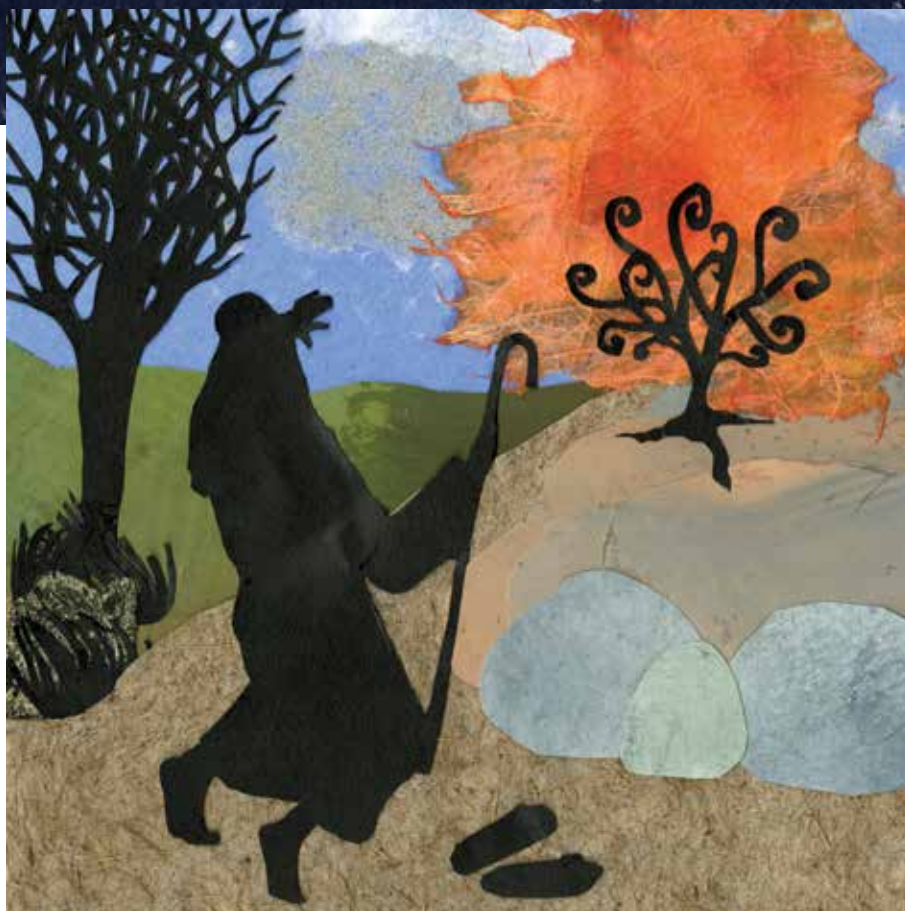


This story frightens me because

Where do you see a repeating theme?



God's way



Think about:

Look at the burning bush. Find heart shapes. Do you think Moses knew God loved him?

Moses took off his shoes because he was on holy ground. How do you show respect for God?

At first Moses didn't think he could do God's work. When have you been scared to do something new? When have you thought you could not do God's work?

Why was Moses a surprising choice?

Do you hear God calling?

"Here I Am, Lord" by Dan Schutte

"I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"

Refrain:

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

How did God lead Moses?
How does God lead you?

The Call of Moses

Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.

—Exodus 3:5

God heard the cries of the Hebrews suffering in Egypt. God wanted to save them. One day Moses saw a bush in flames but it was not burning up. Moses heard God call him, "Moses! Go to Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go!" Moses didn't think he spoke well enough to do God's work. God promised to be with Moses. Finally, with his brother Aaron, Moses went to Pharaoh.

Read the whole story:
Exodus 3:1-15

Make a burning bush.

1. On watercolor paper, use a pencil to draw a ground line and tree trunk. Add curly branches.
2. Trace pencil lines with sharpie marker, and color in trunk and limbs.
3. Paint the background with splotches of watercolor paint, intentionally connecting the colors.



Bea: Linguist

Our ancestors in faith thought God's name was too important to speak. They wrote four letters to represent God's name. This is called the "tetragrammaton." The tetragrammaton does not have vowels so no one could pronounce it.

We write the tetragrammaton YHWH.

When Moses asked about God's name, God responded. "I am who I am."

Do some research: What are some other names for God in the Bible?

YHWH:

יהוה

Try writing the tetragrammaton.

Shalom:

שלום

**Practice writing "shalom."
What does "shalom" mean?**

Is Hebrew read from left to right or right to left?

What else can you find out about the Hebrew language?

Get up and go:

Excuses, Excuses

God called lots of people whose stories are in the Bible. But not everyone God called was very excited to do what God asked. In fact, they had a lot of excuses. But once all the excuses were over, the people answered God's call.



Gideon: Other families are more important than mine. Send someone else!



Moses: I can't speak very well! Send someone else!



Jonah: I don't like the people of Nineveh! Send someone else!



Jeremiah: I'm too young! Send someone else!

Art by David Drum

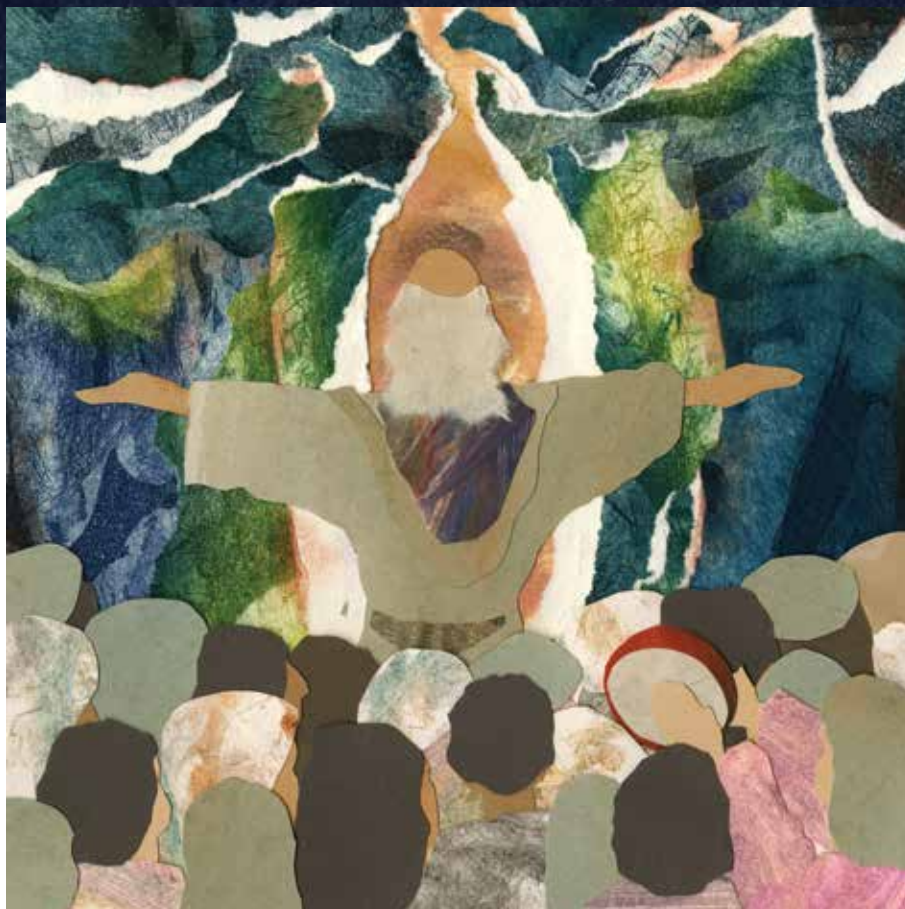
God calls you to do God's work. What will you say?



This story tells me

Where do you see repeating themes?





The Exodus

And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

—Exodus 15:21

Moses said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord: Let my people go so they may worship me." Pharaoh said, "No!" God sent nine plagues to Egypt. Pharaoh still said, "No!" God sent a tenth plague and children died across the land. Pharaoh agreed. Moses and the Hebrews left, but Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army after them. Moses part-

ed the Red Sea so the Hebrews could pass safely through the sea. And Miriam danced for joy!

Read the whole story:
Exodus 14, 15

Think about:

- Where is this story happening? How can you tell?
- Today's story tells us God wants people to be free. How can people who are afraid be free?
- Why do you think ancient people told this story? What are they saying about God? People?

Yet again this story shows God trying to make things right. God brings the people out of Egypt and gives them a future. Now they could live as God wants!

**Were the people faithful?
What evidence do you have?**



Go and find:

The **Underground Railroad** is a metaphor. Some of the "stations," safe places for runaway slaves to hide, are now historic sites.

Do some research.

Find the closest Underground Railroad site near you.

Where do you think runaway slaves would have been safe?

Do we need safe places for people today? How so?

Dance and make noises!

Miriam is dancing with a tamborine in today's image. You can make a stick shaker.

1. Find a stick and paint it.
2. Wrap the "handle" with colorful yarn. Secure with glue.
3. Tie heavy fishing wire on one side of the V part of the stick. Thread with beads and buttons, even bells, and secure the end on the second side of the V.

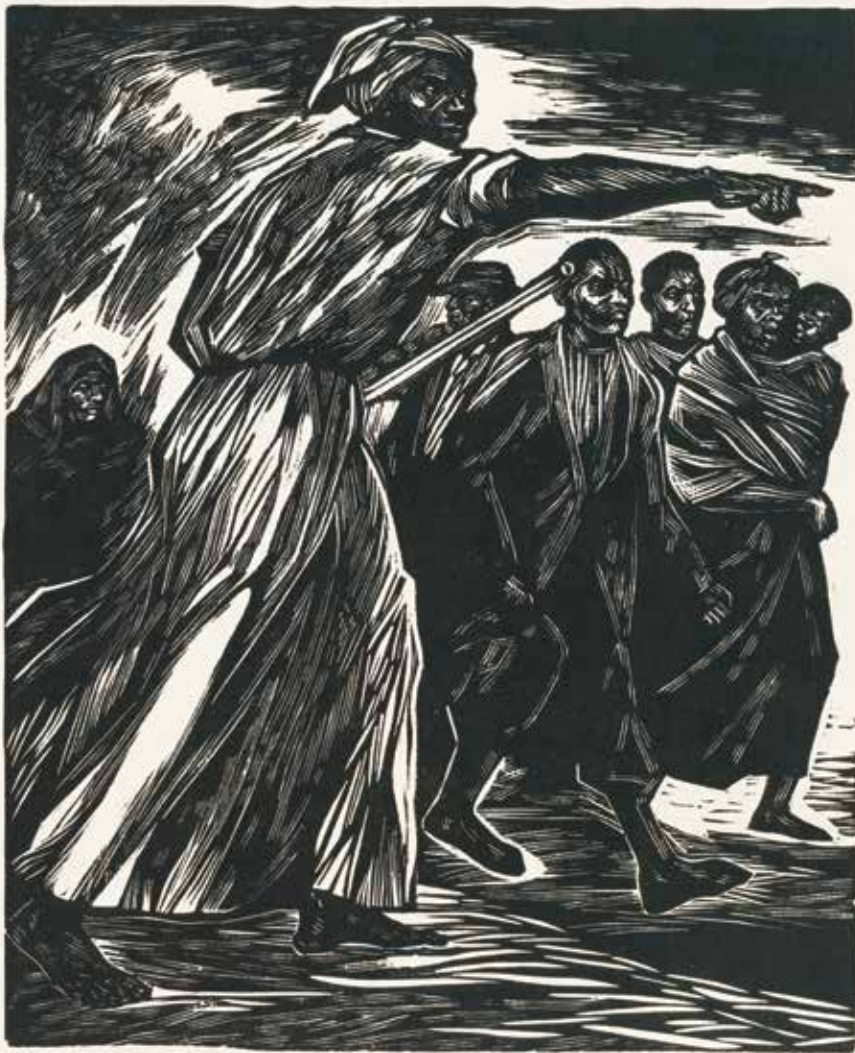
Dance like you are free!

Read:

Exodus 2:1-10. What else did Miriam do in her life?

Exodus 12:14-17. When does your congregation eat bread together?





Bea: Historian

Harriet Tubman was a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Harriet made 19 trips to the South to bring more than 300 people to freedom.

Why do you think Harriet's nickname was "Moses"?

The artist of this print is Elizabeth Catlett. She was the granddaughter of slaves. In the early 1930s Elizabeth was told she could not go to Carnegie Institute of Technology because she was black.

How might that experience have influenced her art?

Look at the image again.

What time of day is it? How can you tell?

What do you think Harriet is pointing at?

Harriet is taller than all the other people. Why?

Get up and go: Make a Venn diagram

Brave
Grew up with power
Grew up with no power
America in 1850s CE
Egypt in 1446 BCE
Wanted freedom
Lead slaves through the Red Sea
Lead slaves on the Underground Railroad
Wanted to get to the Promised Land

Moses' Story

Harriet's Story

**Harriet broke the law when she helped slaves escape.
Are people ever justified in breaking the law?
How so?**

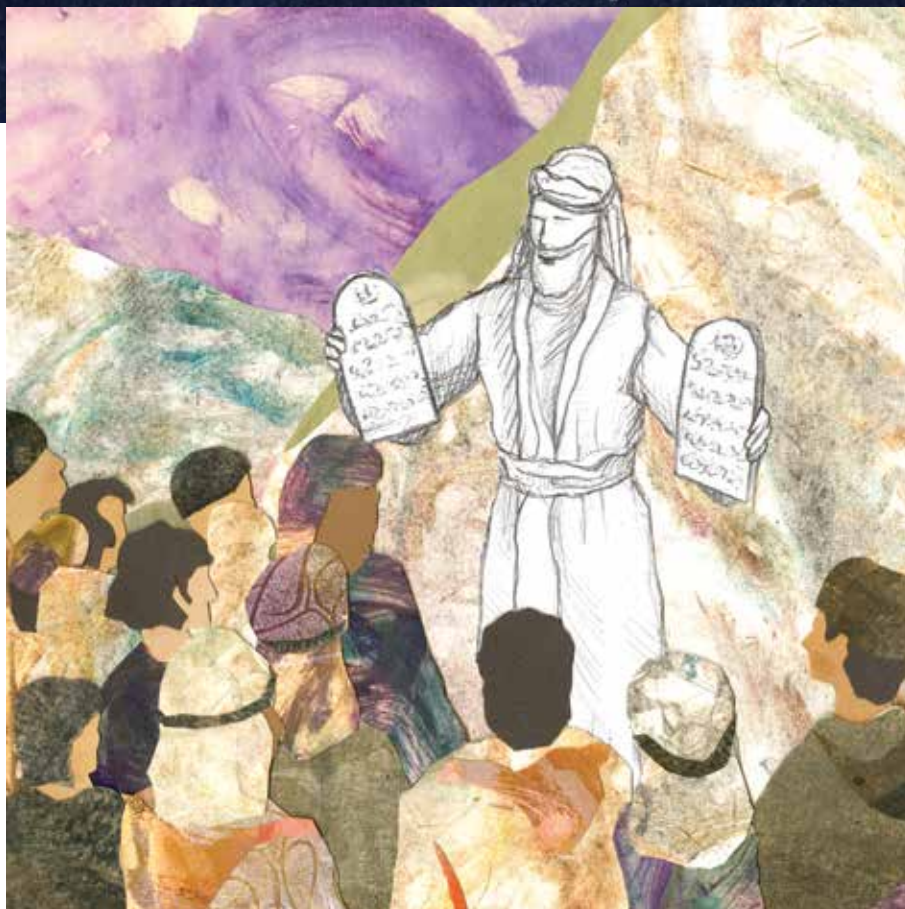


This story makes me want to

_____.

Where do you see repeating themes?





The Ten Commandments

*I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the
land of Egypt...you shall have
no other gods before me.*

—Exodus 20:2-3

Once God's people passed through the Red Sea, they called themselves "Israel." Israel wandered in the wilderness around Mount Sinai, on their way to the land God promised them. On the morning of the third day, there was lightening and thunder and a trumpet blast. God called Moses to the top

of Mount Sinai and gave him Ten Commandments – ten rules about how Israel was supposed to treat God and one another.

Think about:

How do rules organize your family?

How do laws organize communities?

What would life be like if nations did not have laws?

Read the whole story:
Exodus 20:1-17

**For Moses and Israel, the Commandments were not a burden.
They were happy to keep the Ten Commandments to be faithful to God.**

Rap: Give each syllable one beat; hold half a beat longer at the ---.

- | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Love God first of all,---
in ev'rything you do,---
and by the way you live each day
help others know him too. | 6 | All human life is precious,---
all creatures small and great,---
so work for peace and stand against
all prejudice and hate. |
| 2 | Trust in God alone,---
no earthly thing embrace.---
For money, power, work and play
should never take God's place. | 7 | Be faithful in your marriage---
with promises for life,---
to love and serve with loyalty
your husband or your wife. |
| 3 | Give God's name respect,---
it's not a word to swear.---
And sing it out in joyful praise
in through and deed and prayer. | 8 | Never cheat your neighbor---
and never act with greed,---
but freely give so ev'ryone
can have the things they need. |
| 4 | Set aside some time---
in ev'ry seven days,---
to learn about God's holy Word,
to worship God and praise. | 9 | Be honest in your dealings,---
and don't help rumors spread,---
and never by your silence,
let others be misled. |
| 5 | Support and love your parents,---
and all your family,---
and give respect to all of those
who have authority. | 10 | Put jealousy aside---
and let the truth be known,---
that ev'ry body's gifts belong
to God and God alone. |

Check out 1 - 4. They are about our relationship with God. God wants us to:

Check out 5 - 10. They are about our relationship with each other. God wants us to:

Which commandments do you keep?

What if everyone in the world followed these commands?

Why is it important to tell the truth about others?

Sometimes people act as if things and other commitments are more important than God. Give examples of people valuing technology, sports games, money, and being popular over God.

Stop and think:

From Are We There Yet? by Tom S. Long and Allen Pote.



Making Laws

Laws are rules everyone must follow to protect people and property. Laws reflect people's values.

Congress (the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate) is responsible for making laws. Follow the path it takes for bill to become a law.

Every law starts with an idea. Ideas come from anyone!

A bill is introduced explaining the idea.

The bill goes to a committee, a group of people who talk about and research the bill. The committee votes to accept or reject the bill.

Congress debates and votes on the bill. It has to pass both the House and Senate before it can go to the president.

The bill goes to the President. The President can approve, reject, or do nothing to the bill.

If the President approves the bill it becomes law.

Be a: Senator

Pretend you are a senator. Think of an idea that would protect the environment. Write a bill. Your bill will be called S-32. S=Senate, 32=the bill's number.

Bill Number: S-32

Title: _____

Sponsors' Names: _____

Goals of the Bill: _____

The environment will benefit by: _____

These people and organizations would have to follow the law: _____

How much would this law cost? _____

Get up and go:

Learn the 10 commandments.

Make and play a memory game:

Cut out these game cards.

Glue to heavy cardstock.

Cut out 10 more cards and label them 1 - 10.

Turn upside down all 20 cards.

Take turns matching the number cards to the word cards.

I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me.

Honor God above all other people and things.

You shall not make yourself an idol. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.

Don't make anything more important than God.

You shall not make wrong use of the name of the Lord your God.

God's name is special. Protect it! Don't use it with unkind words or names.

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Spend Sundays on God.

Honor your father and mother.

Show love and respect to your parents and people who take care of you.

You shall not murder.

Protect others. Never murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

Adults, be faithful to your husband or wife.

You shall not steal.

Don't take things that are not yours.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Tell the truth. Always.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

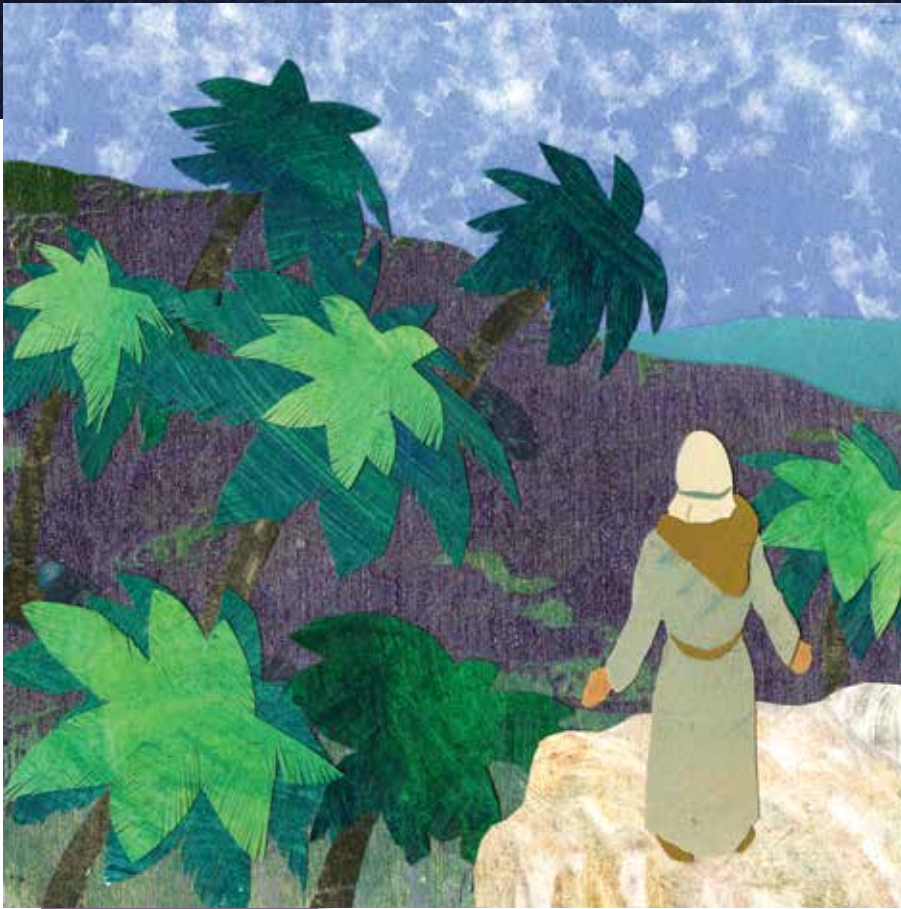
Be happy with what you have.



This story makes me think _____.

Where do you see repeating themes?





The Promised Land

Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.

—Deuteronomy 34:10

Moses and the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. It was hard and tiring. When the people were hungry, God gave them manna and quails to eat. When they were thirsty, God told Moses to hit his staff on a rock and water spurted out! Finally, the people and Moses came to the land God

promised their ancestors, Sarah and Abraham. Moses stood on Mount Nebo to see the Promised Land and then he died.

Read the whole story:
Deuteronomy 34

Think about:

What do you think Moses sees? Thinks?

Moses died before entering the Promised Land.
Do you think his journey was worthwhile?
How so?

How is this story about the future?

How is God connected to new beginnings?

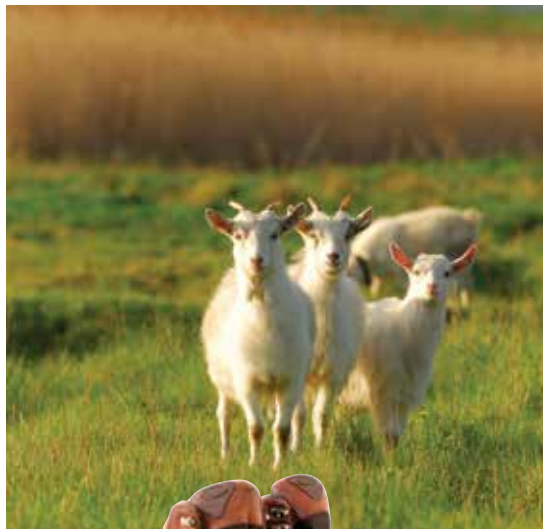
Go to and watch:

Martin Luther King's mountain top speech

<http://bit.ly/2kC2eau>



Connect Martin Luther King's speech to Moses on Mount Nebo.



Goats ©iStock/Andriy Soloviyov, boots ©iStock/Robyn Mackenzie

The Israelites were nomads. They never stayed in one place very long. They followed their animals, always looking for grazing land and water. A nomad's wealth was measured by their flocks—the larger the flock, the wealthier the nomad.

Typically Israelites had goats.

Goats were very useful. They provided milk, meat, hides, hair for tents, and horns used as trumpets and as containers—think of horns as ancient water bottles!

Where would you like to wander?

Be a: Horticulturist

From carrot seed
to carrot in
75 days



© iStock/Vara A. Inset: iStock/Diyana Dimitrova

From apple blossom
to apple in
100 days



© iStock/Gabor Izso. Inset: iStock/Oleg Prikhodko

From tree seed
to tree in
30 years



© iStock/Denise Bush. Inset: Kenpel. Creative Commons

If you planted a tree when you were ten, the tree would not be big enough for a tree swing until you were 40 years old. Who would use the tree swing?

Sometimes people have to plant seeds they will never see fully grown. Sometimes people have to start projects that will not be finished until after they have died.

Think about The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. What project did he start? Is the end in sight? How so?

Think of three reasons **for** doing projects you will never finish.

Think of three reasons **for not** doing projects you will never finish.

Get up and explore:

Building a cathedral was a big job. Notre Dame in Paris, France, was started in 1163 and not finished until 1345. That's 182 years! As the building grew higher, different architects had different styles. Can you see changes in the layers on the front of the building?

No one who started building the cathedral lived to see it finished. Ms. Maathai died in 2011. Is the job of taking care of the environment finished? How so?

Tristan Niot, Wikimedia Commons



Wangari Maathai

Wangari Maathai was born in Kenya. When she was a child, Kenya was filled with trees and gardens. Over time the trees were cut down to burn for fuel and Kenya was left with very few trees. With no trees to protect the gardens for too much sun and heat, many gardens disappeared. Ms. Maathai spoke out about the environment. She started a movement to re-plant trees across Kenya. As of today, millions of trees have been planted. Ms. Maathai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her great work caring for the environment.

Demosh, Wikimedia Commons

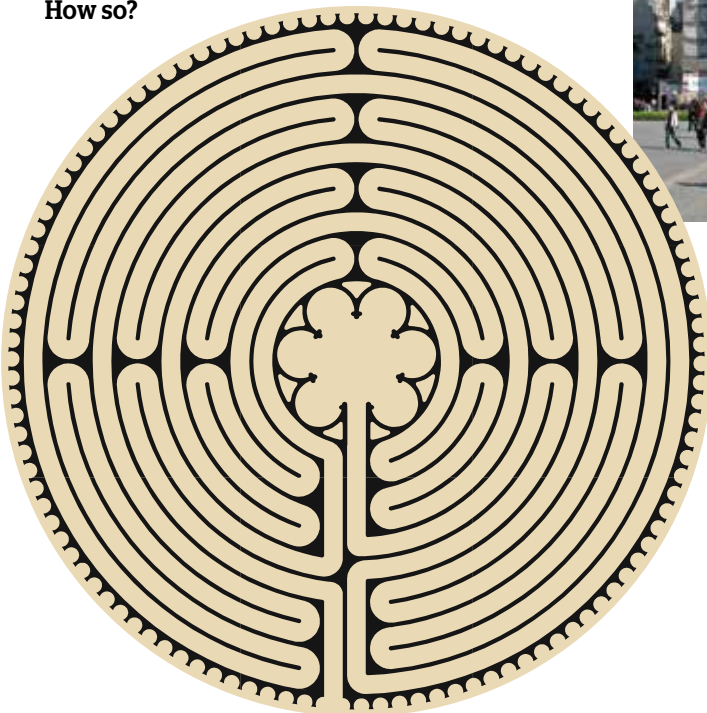


Why is it worthwhile to begin projects you will never finish?

How do planting and building show hope?

The Notre Dame cathedral in Chartres, France, has a labyrinth on the floor. Use your finger to walk in the footsteps of countless others that have followed the path of the labyrinth.

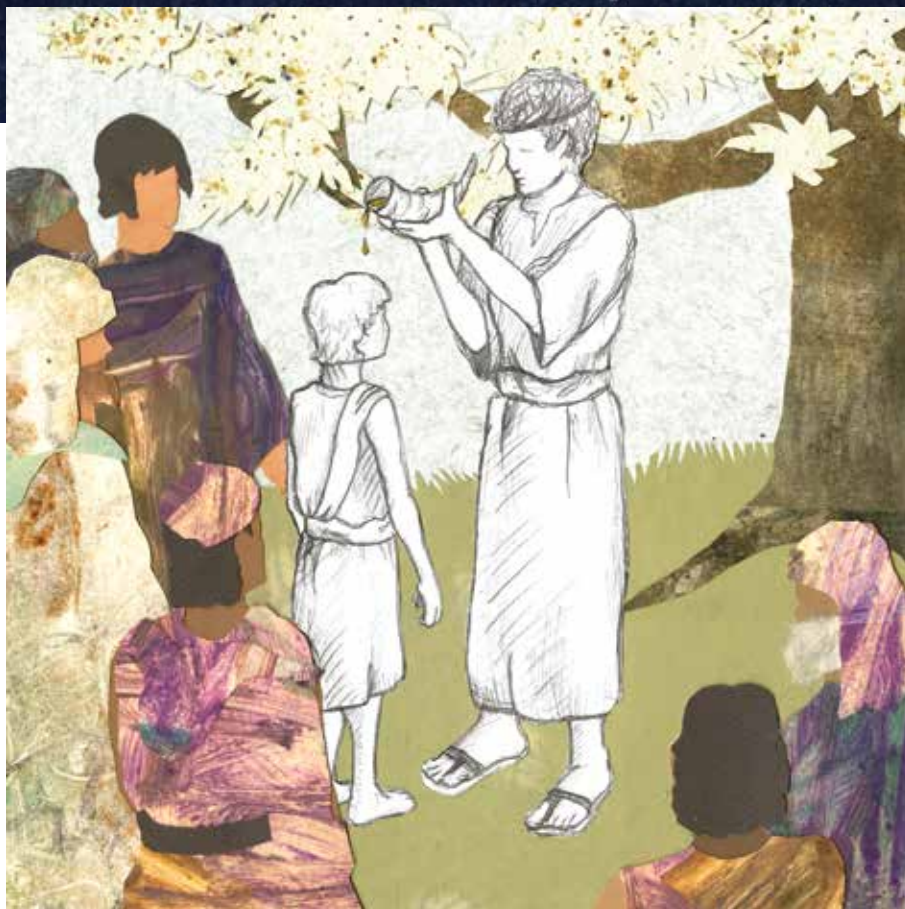
How is walking a labyrinth like taking a journey? Can you get lost?



This story makes me feel _____.

Where do you see a repeating theme?





The Anointing of David

The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."

— I Samuel 16:12

Many years after the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the people wanted a king who could lead them. God sent the prophet Samuel to visit Jesse, a man who had seven sons. God chose David, the youngest son, to be Israel's king. David was a shepherd boy. Samuel dripped oil on David's head from a ram's horn to show he was God's choice. David was a great

leader, but not a perfect leader. When David made mistakes, he asked God's forgiveness.

Read the whole story:
I Samuel 16:1-13

Think about:

What makes David a surprising choice?

What do good leaders do when they make mistakes?

David, like all of us, made mistakes. What can you do if you make a mistake?

Why is forgiveness important? Why is God's forgiveness important?

Go read or watch:

Sadako Sasaki

<http://bit.ly/2kD8r2K>

This is the Children's Memorial in Hiroshima, Japan. It was built to remember Sadako Sasaki who died of leukemia because of the atomic bomb. Every year children from around the world send millions of paper cranes as a symbol of their hope for peace. Written in Japanese at the base of the statue is:

This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world.



Lisa Norwood, Creative Commons

Surprising Choices

God makes surprising choices because God sees things people often miss. Many people saw David as a young shepherd boy. God saw David as a great, faithful leader.

What makes a good leader?

What makes it hard to recognize a good leader?

Look at the timeline.
Find other examples of surprising leaders.



Design: Ehardt Stoetner Lake Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. Photo © Kathryn Brewer.



Bea: Swimmer

Yusra Mardini, 18, is a world-class swimmer. Yusra grew up in Damascus, Syria during the Syrian war. When her house was destroyed in the war, Yusra and her sister, Sarah, decided to escape from Syria. They traveled to Turkey and then boarded a boat with 18 people headed for Greece. The boat was designed for 8 people and soon the motor broke. Most of the other passengers could not swim. Yusra and Sarah dove into the water and pulled the boat while they swam for three hours. Finally they reached Lesbos, Greece. The two swimming teen sisters saved the lives of all people on board! Later Yusra became part of the Refugee Olympic Team.

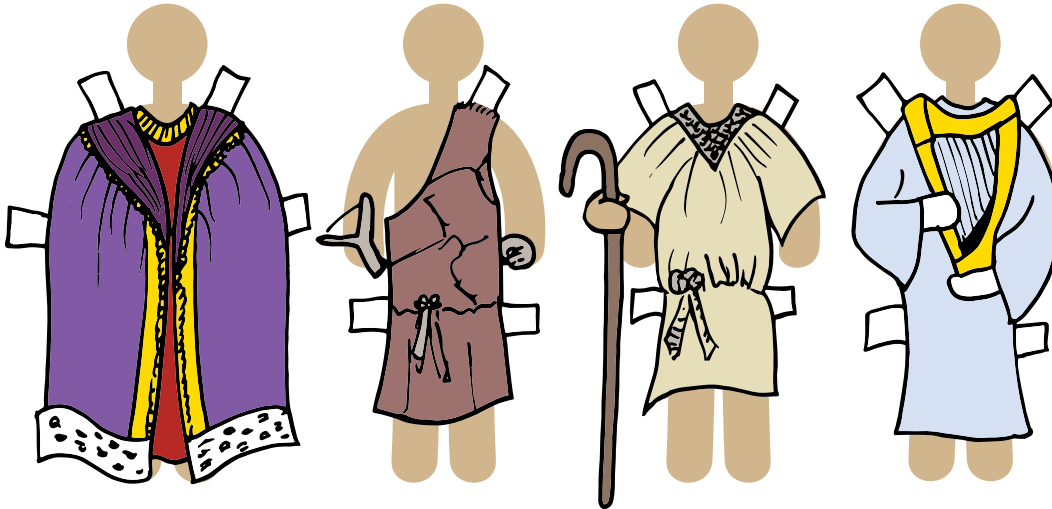
Imagine you were trying to escape danger, how would you decide if you should go on a boat carrying too many people?

Do some research about these important child leaders: Ruby Bridges, Anne Frank, Louis Braille. What did they do?



Get up and go:

David is a great hero for Jews and Christians. David is remembered for being:



David was a great poet. Check out these psalms.

What do you notice?

Psalms 8: This psalm praises _____

Psalms 13: This psalm asks _____

Psalms 51: This psalm admits _____

...a powerful king

David made mistakes and was unfaithful to God. David asked for forgiveness. Why should leaders admit mistakes?

...a young soldier with only a sling shot

David trusted God was with him and he beat Goliath with a rock and sling shot. Why should leaders be brave?

...a shepherd

David was a shepherd boy. He knew how to tend sheep. Why should leaders know how to care for others?

...a musician playing his lyre

David was a great musician. Why should leaders share their talents?

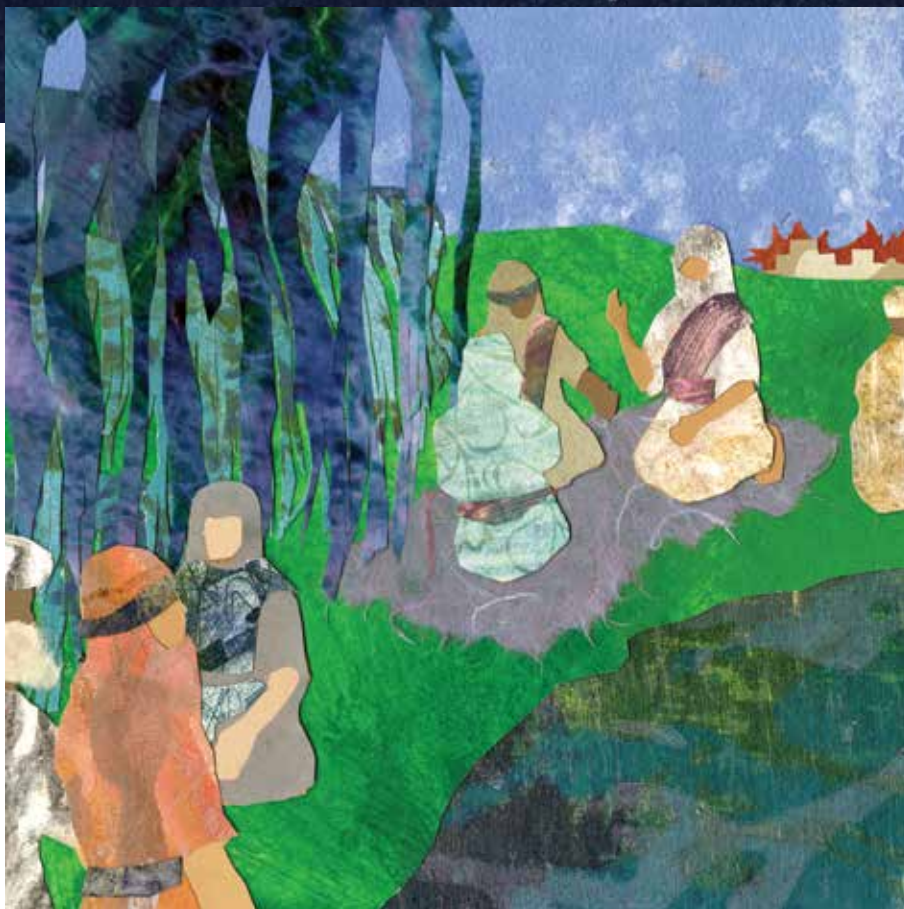


This story makes me think kids

_____.

Where do you see repeating themes?





Exile in Babylon

By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion.

—Psalm 137:1

God chose prophets, people who could speak God's words so people could hear them. The prophets said, "Welcome strangers! Feed the hungry! Do justice!" Some people listened and were faithful, but many did not. The prophets warned that everything would fall apart if the people were not faithful. Soldiers came and made the Israelites leave their country and go to Babylon. The Israelites

were sad not to be in their own country. They thought God had forgotten them.

The Old Testament was first written in Hebrew. "TSADEQ" (pronounced sah-deek) is used in the Old Testament 6,663 times! TSADEQ means "justice." Since it is used 6,663 times, it must be important!

Read the whole story:
*Jeremiah 52:28-34;
Psalm 137*

Think about:

Find people sitting under the willow trees. Do you see Jerusalem in the distance? What would it be like to leave your homeland?

Prophets speak God's words so people can hear them. What does it mean to "do justice"?

How does your church welcome strangers? How does your church feed the hungry?

A psalm is like a poem and a song squished together. What is the author of Psalm 137 saying?

Justice

noun • justice • \ˈjə-stəs
describes what things are like when they are fair for everyone. When a situation is just, things are not necessarily equal or the same. Justice is making things as right as they can be for everyone involved. When things are just, no one would need to say "That's not fair!"

Go to and eat:

Just cut the pizza!

Let's think about a **just** way to cut a pizza.

Imagine eight people want pizza, but half of them are only a little hungry. The other four are super hungry. How could you divide the pizza?



Now...let's decide that there are 8 people but 2 of them don't like pizza at all. Divide the pizza. Share your pizzas.

How can you decide the best, most just, most fair way to divide the pizzas?

©iStock/Issaurinko



For centuries Jews and Christians have sung psalms in worship.
Psalms can express joy, anger, sadness or confusion, feelings people know all about.

Describe the feelings in each psalm. Imagine a situation to fit each psalm.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul. He leads me in
right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest
valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the
presence of my enemies; you anoint
my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell
in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Psalm 150

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!

Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him
according to his surpassing greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!

Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!

Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 134

Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
who stand by night in the house of the Lord!

Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the Lord.

May the Lord, maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion.

Make your own version of a psalm.

Name it Psalm 151.

Psalm 151

Praise the Lord!

Praise God in _____

Praise God for _____

Praise God because of _____

Praise God with _____

Praise God with _____

Praise God with _____

Let everything that breathes
praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

What do you sing when you are sad?
What do you sing when you are joyful?

Get up and go:

Exile in Babylon was complicated. Some Israelites were upset. Others decided living in Babylon was comfortable. Some faithful people remembered God's promises and knew God was with them even as they struggled. During this time, Israel did a lot of writing. Most of the Hebrew Scriptures, what we call the Old Testament, were written, organized, and edited during exile.

You try. Organize these images by numbering them in order. Tell each story. Find some repeating themes.



This story makes me ask

_____.

**Where do you see
a repeating theme?**





Isaiah's Peaceable Kingdom

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

—Isaiah 11:6

Isaiah was one of Israel's great prophets who spoke God's words. Isaiah comforted Israel and said God had not forgotten them. God would send a new leader, from King David's family, called the "Messiah." Isaiah said everything would be different when the Messiah

comes: lions and lambs will live together and not hurt each other. New branches will grow from old dead tree stumps, and children will be leaders.

Read the whole story:
Isaiah 6:1-8; 11:1-10

Think about:

Isaiah paints a picture with words. What is strange about his picture?

Where do you see new life in this picture?

What is unusual about the leader Isaiah talks about?

Go to and watch:



The Dirty Cop and the Innocent Man

<http://huff.to/IraNeAB>

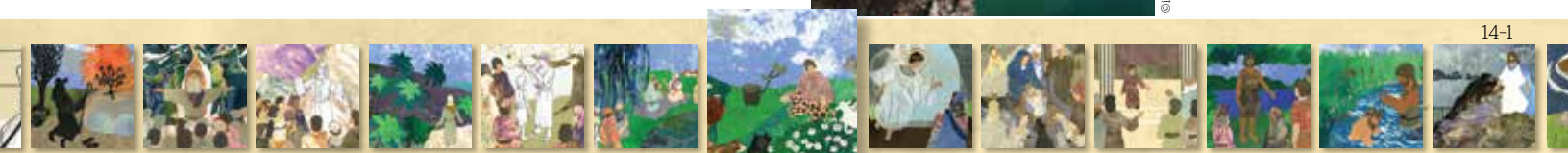
Andrew Collins was a police officer. He falsely accused Jameel McGee of a crime he didn't commit. Jameel was sent to jail. Later Andrew was also sent to jail for being dishonest. Jameel was very angry with Andrew. While they were in jail, Jameel and Andrew both learned about God. Andrew's faith led him to say, "I'm sorry" to Jameel. Jameel did the hard work of forgiving Andrew. Now as surprising as it is, the two men are friends.

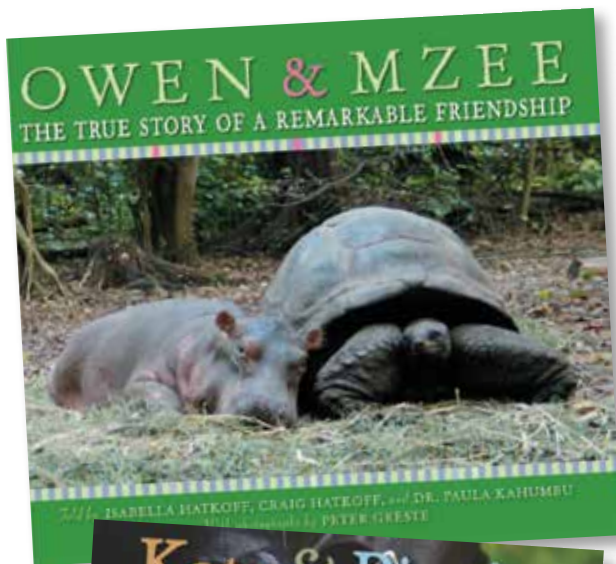


Jesus is from the stump of Jesse. This means Jesus is from Jesse's family, and King David's family.

Make a family tree that shows Boaz and Ruth, Obed, Jesse, and David.

Jesus is part of David's family, and Jesse's family, and Boaz and Ruth's family!





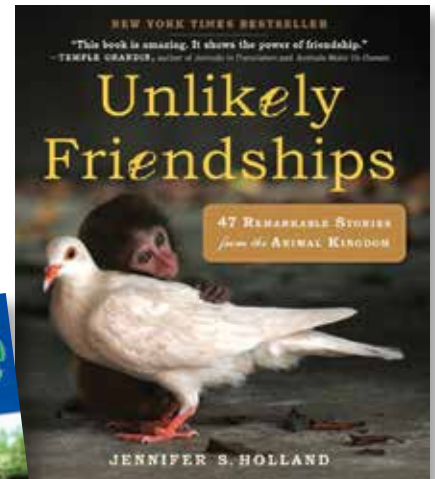
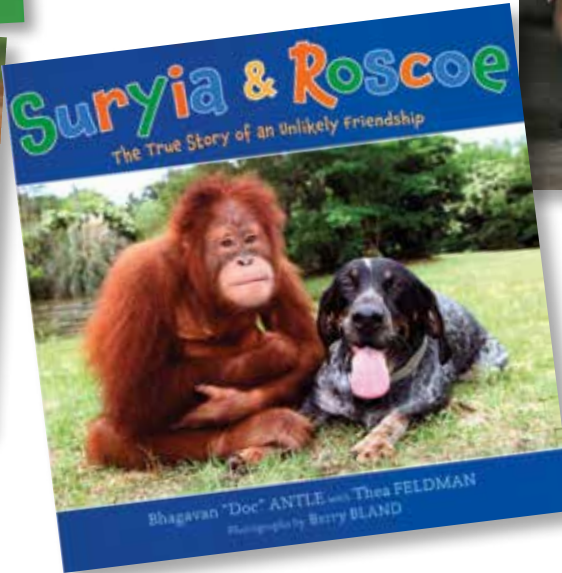
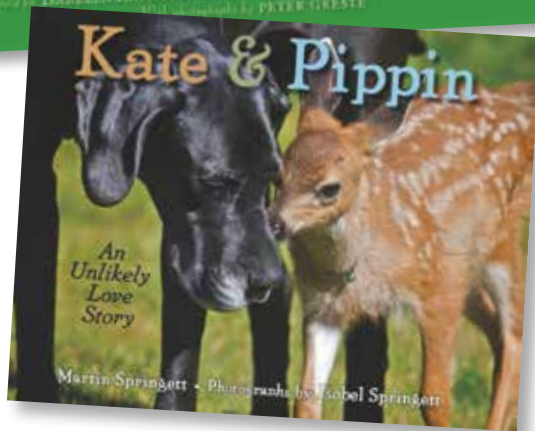
Be a: **Zoologist**

Look at these unlikely friends. What makes them unlike? What makes them friends?

Do you think people can have unlikely friends? How so?

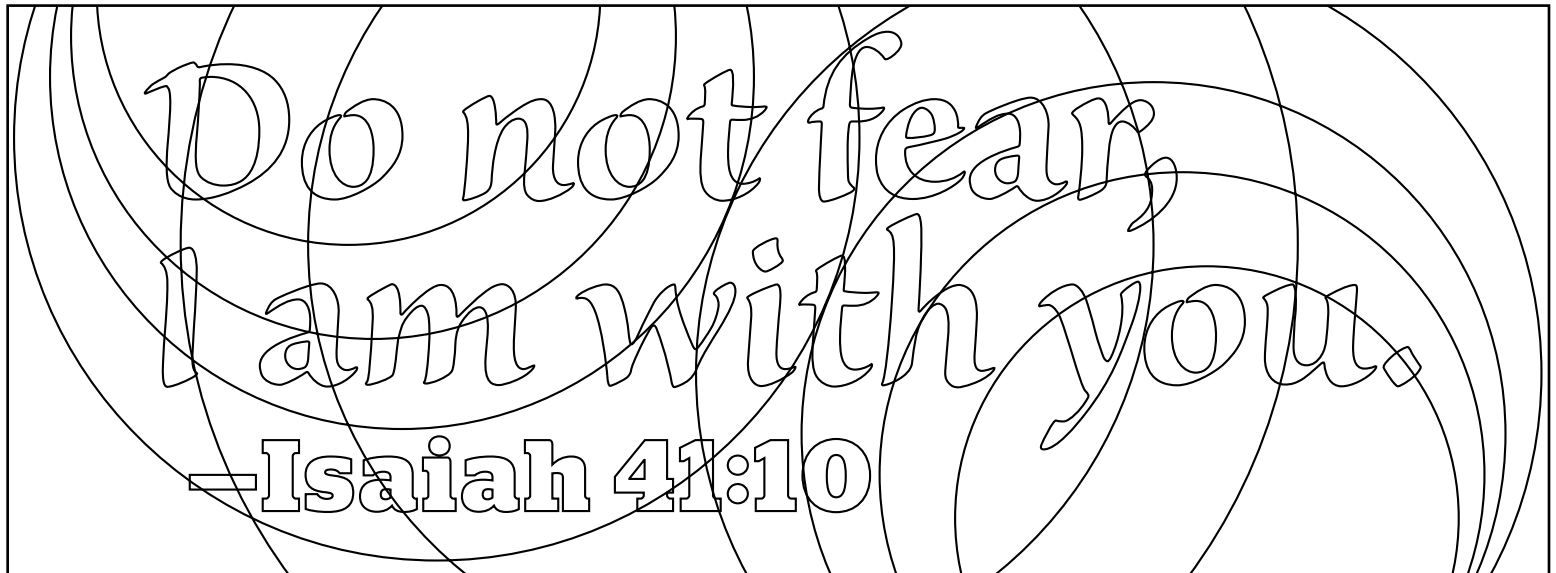
Do some online research. Find other unlikely friends. Find books about unlikely friends.

How do unlikely friends connect to today's Isaiah text?



Get up and go:

Isaiah is remembered for saying beautiful words. Isaiah reminded everyone that we don't need to be afraid, for God is always with us. Color Isaiah's words.



This story makes me curious about _____.

Where do you see repeating themes?





The Annunciation

He has filled the hungry with good things. –Luke 1:53

Israel waited a long time for the Messiah, a new leader. Finally, God sent the Angel Gabriel to give Mary a message. Mary was very young. Gabriel said, "God chose you! You will have a baby. His name will be Jesus. He will be God's son." Mary was very surprised! She was going to be a mother! Her baby would be the Messiah! She was so happy she sang a song we call **The Magnificat**.

Read the whole story:
Luke 1:26-56

Think about:

- Why was Mary a surprising choice to be the mother of God's son?
- Pretend you are rich and powerful.
What do you hear in Mary's song?
- What do God's people hunger for?
What do you hunger for?
- What does your church do to help hungry people?

Go back and forth. Voice 1 reads the Bible text.
Voice 2 explains what's going on.

Voice 1

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Voice 2

Mary has something important to say!

I'm so happy!
I'm poor but God chose me!

From now on everyone will know how fortunate I am. God cares about those who follow God's way.

People who think they have everything figured out: **Watch out!** Your life will change.

Empty out the powerful people who think they are in charge. Raise up powerless people.

Give food to the hungry. Those who already have enough don't need more.

God's old promises are good now and forever.

—Luke 1:46-55

Go to and watch:

Mary's Song of Non-Violence

<http://bit.ly/2e2djhS>

What does Mary's song say about:

- war
- immigration
- poverty
- disease
- hunger
- homelessness
- racism





Be an: Art critic

This image of the Annunciation is painted in watercolor by Nigerian artist Paul Woelfel.

Find Nigeria on a map.

What do you see in this painting?

Who are the characters in this painting?
How can you tell?

What do you think is in the envelope?
What is its message?

How do you think Mary feels? How can you tell?

When Moses met God in the burning bush, he took off his sandals because he was on holy ground. Why do you think the painting shows that Gabriel took off his sandals?

Look at the ground. Where do you see death?
Where do you see life?



Get up and go:

Many people in the developing world live on less than \$2 per day.

Imagine: You have worked all week as a hired hand in your neighbor's field. You have earned \$10.00. Now you have to figure out how you will spend your money. Below are things you need to feed and keep your family healthy.

Do you have enough money?

Bus fare to the market	25 cents
Bus fare home from the market	25 cents
Seeds for your garden	\$1.75
Milk	\$1.00
Tools	\$2.50
Medicine	\$1.50
Tuition	\$1.25



The Bible is filled with echoes!
Read I Samuel 2:1-10.

How is Mary's song an echo of Hannah's song? How is it different?

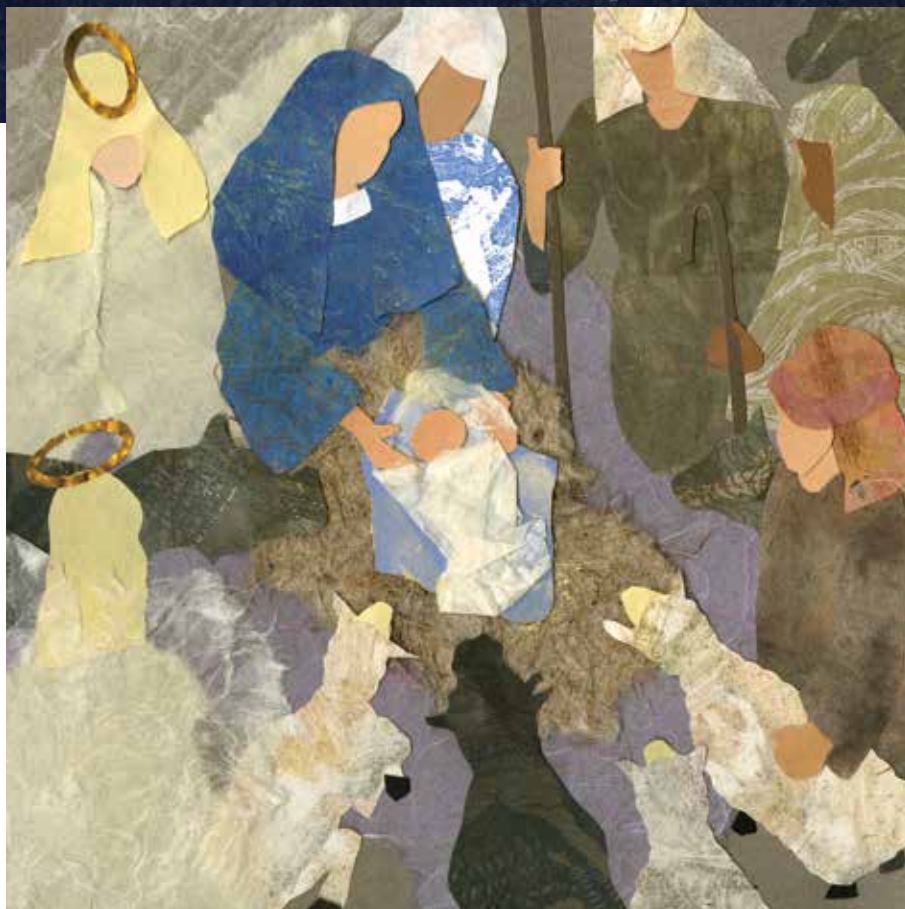
- It costs \$1.25 to send one child to school each month. Do you have enough money to send your daughter to school? What about your son?
- You need \$1.50 to buy medicine for one child. Now a second child is sick. What will you do? What if your third child is sick?
- What is most important to you—rice, seeds, tools, milk, medicine, or bus fare? How so?
- You are offered two goats, one male and one female. How could the goats help your family? How will you pay for food for the goats?



This story makes me wonder about _____.

Where do you see repeating themes?





Birth of Jesus

Do not be afraid...I am bringing you good news of great joy...to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

—Luke 2:10-11

Emperor Augustus announced that all the people in his kingdom needed to be counted, so Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, the town of Joseph's family. While they were in Bethlehem, Mary's baby was ready to be born. Bethlehem was crowded, but Joseph found a stable. In that stable, where animals

Think about:

Our ancestors waited a long time for the new leader God promised. How was Jesus a surprising choice? What do you think people expected?

Often powerful people hear news first. The shepherds were not powerful, but they heard about Jesus first. Why might this be?

One name for Jesus is Emmanuel. It means "God with us." How is God with us in Jesus?

usually lived, Mary's baby was born. Mary and Joseph named their baby Jesus. The angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest. Peace to God's people on earth."

Read the whole story:
Luke 2:1-20

Ubi Caritas

It is likely that this ancient hymn dates back to early days of the Christian Church. Even today it is often sung in Latin.

The Latin words are:

Ubi caritas et amor,

Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

The English translation is:

Live in charity and steadfast love,

live in charity; God will dwell in you.

To find the music, search for Ubi Caritas: Taize Community, 1978:
http://www.hymnary.org/tune/ubi_caritas_berthier

Read I Corinthians 13:1-8. What do you notice?

How are Martin the Shoemaker, I Corinthians, and Ubi Caritas connected?

Martin's story is often told at Christmastime. Why might that be?

Martin the Shoemaker

by Leo Tolstoy

<https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/childrenonthemove/uprooted/>

There are many versions of the Martin the Shoemaker story. It was written in 1885 by Russian author Leo Tolstoy and called "Where God Is, Love Is." In this story, the Lord speaks to Martin saying he will visit him. Martin waits all day but doesn't see the Lord. He does, though, get other visitors who need help. The Lord said he did visit—when Martin helped those in need, God was there.

Authors write to say something. What do you think Tolstoy is saying?



Be an: Art Historian

Matthew's story of Jesus' life tells us that after Jesus was born, he had to flee to Egypt with his parents to escape Herod.

Jesus was a refugee. He had to leave his homeland because he was not safe, seeking welcome in a new land. What if Egypt had not welcomed Jesus?

Compare these four images. What is the same about the images? What is different?

Like Jesus, many children in the world aren't safe. According to UNICEF, 50 million children around the globe are refugees. Many of these children have no parents. Do some research. What can be done?



Sadao Watanabe, "Flight to Egypt," 1979.



Gislebertus, Capital on cathedral at Autun, France, 120 CE



"Flight to Egypt" Uganda, Francis Sekitoleko, 1980



Gerard David, "Rest on the Flight to Egypt," 1510

Take another look:

There are actually two different stories of Jesus' birth in the Bible. Matthew tells one story and Luke tells a different story. Read these two stories. Draw two different nativity scenes, one for Luke's story and one for Matthew's story.

How are they the same? How are they different?

Luke 2:1-20

Matthew 1:18-2:23

Think about which story tells about:

shepherds	sheep	Herod
magi	stable	Bethlehem
angels	star	Nazareth
census	Gabriel	donkey



This story makes me wish I

Where do you see repeating themes?





Jesus in the Temple

Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?

—Luke 2:49

Jesus grew up. Every year Mary and Joseph and their family went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. After the festival was over when Jesus was 12 years old, his parents started for home, but Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. When Mary and Joseph discovered Jesus was missing, they were worried.

They searched for him and found him in the temple, teaching the teachers. Jesus said, "Why didn't you know I must be in my Father's house?"

Read the whole story:
Luke 2:41-52

Think about:

Think of another time when Jesus went to Jerusalem for Passover.

Why do you think the teachers listened to Jesus, a 12-year-old boy? How do you decide who you listen to?

What have you learned in church?

Where was Jesus?

Find these important places in Jesus' life.

Jesus was:

Baptized in _____

Born in _____

Visited the temple in _____

Grew up in _____

Do you see other places that you know from other Bible stories?

Do you recognize cities from the current news?



God calls surprising people to be leaders. Find another story about a child-leader on the timeline.



My Father's House

Gather up scrap wood, wood glue, lots of imagination and make a church sculpture. Once it is dry, paint it!





950 BCE--Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem.

587 BCE--Solomon's temple was destroyed when Israel was conquered and taken into exile in Babylon.

550 BCE--King Cyrus of Babylon allowed the Israelites to return home. Cyrus gave the people money to rebuild the temple.

516 BCE--The Second Temple is built.

6 CE--Jesus taught the teachers in the Second Temple

30 CE--Jesus went to the Second Temple the week he was crucified

70 CE--The Second Temple is destroyed.

Today--The Western Wall that was around the Second Temple still stands.



Be a: Historian

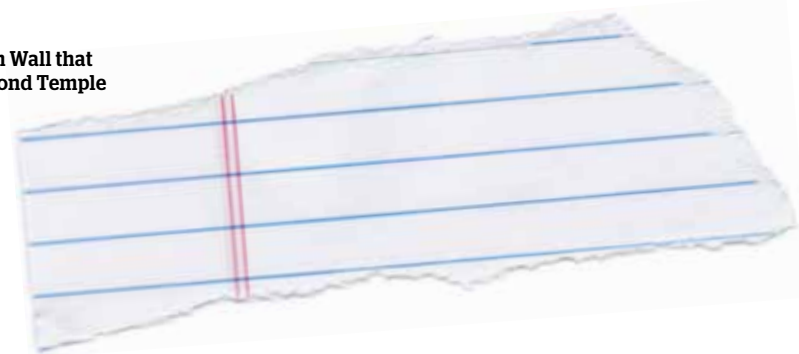
The Temple in Jerusalem

No one knows exactly when these things happened. These dates are educated guesses.

Today the Western Wall is important to Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Often visitors write a prayer on a small piece of paper and stuff it into a crack in the wall. Every few days a caretaker collects the prayers and buries them in a 2,000 year old cemetery on the Mount of Olives.

What does it say to you that Christians, Jews, and Muslims pray in the same place?

Write a prayer you would like to put into one of the cracks in the Western Wall:



Get up and go:

Telling stories about babies and young people is the Bible's way of saying: "Take notice! This person is going to grow up and do important things."

Match these young people to their accomplishments.

Jesus, born in a stable, taught the teachers

Moses, floated in a basket

Isaac, born to old parents

David, conquered the giant Goliath

Joseph, given a fancy coat

Mary, a young unmarried teenager

The **mother** of God's son

The **leader** who protected Egypt through the famine

The **proof** that God's promises to Sarah and Abraham will be kept

The long-awaited **messiah**

The **leader** of Israel who led the people to freedom

The great, faithful, repentant **king** of Israel



This story makes me think adults should _____.

Where do you see repeating themes?





John the Baptist

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

—Matthew 3:2

John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. John knew that Jesus had very important things to say and teach people about God and God's kingdom. God gave John an important job: tell the people that Jesus was coming and tell them to be ready. John said, "Repent! Change your ways! Stop doing what is wrong! Live as God wants you to live!"

Read the whole story:
Matthew 3

Think about:

"Repent" means to change our ways. Why did John tell people to repent?

John did not have peanut butter and jelly for lunch; he ate locusts. Imagine you were having an after-lunch walk with John. What would you ask him?

Why do you think people listened to John?



John knew that in order to be ready for Jesus to come, people needed to prepare. To help people figure out how to get ready for Jesus, John reminded them of Isaiah's words from Isaiah 40:3-5.

A voice cries out:

*"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

*Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.*

*Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

Compare this text to Matthew 3. What do you notice?
How does Matthew echo Isaiah?

Go and watch:

Godspell, "Prepare Ye"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSIs1MHdFQY>

Or search for "Godspell, Prepare Ye" on YouTube



What did the people leave behind?

Why is water important?

Why do you think the people are so joyful at the end?
How does this compare to the beginning?

What do you think the people went off to do at the end of the song?

© Kathryn Brewer



Be a: Writer

Remember the one about the Three Little Pigs?

The Big Bad wolf huffs and puffs and blows their houses down.

Imagine this: Let's assume the Big Bad wolf just wanted to be friends with the Three Little Pigs, but he was better at being mean than being a friend. He didn't know how to be a friend.

Re-write the fairy tale.

Show the Big Bad Wolf repenting—changing his ways—so he can be friends with the Three Little Pigs.



Get up and go:

Brian Sirchio is a pastor and a song writer.
Pastor Sirchio likes to help kids learn by singing.

What is he telling you about John the Baptist in this song?

Bugs for Lunch

*Jesus said John the Baptist was great
The greatest man who ever lived
And if old John was with us today
he'd tell us something like this:*

*If you're on the wrong road
Go the other way!
If you've got two coats give one away!
When Jesus comes
Prepare the way!
And don't forget your bugs!*

*He ate bugs for lunch! Yuck! Yuck! Yuck!
John the Baptist ate bugs for lunch!*

What did Jesus think of John?

What did John tell people?

What would you serve for lunch if John were to visit you?

Prophet

noun • proph-et • \ 'prā-fət/
People called by God to speak God's words so people can understand. Often prophets have important things to say to powerful people, and it takes courage to do what God asks John the Baptist was a prophet, just like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Micah.



This story makes me aware of

Where do you see repeating themes?

