

THE BIGGEST STORY

CURRICULUM SAMPLER





Dear Friend,

Crossway is committed to publishing resources that bear witness to God's truth, beauty, and holiness and that help men, women, and *children* grow in their understanding of God's Word. We've spent the last five years developing a brand-new multimedia suite of children's resources designed to creatively retell God's story in Scripture. We partnered with award-winning artists, pastors, curriculum developers, Sunday school teachers, animators, and software developers in an effort to create the most comprehensive and integrated curriculum for Sunday school and homeschool use.

What you have in hand is a sample of *The Biggest Story Curriculum*. Although many churches use some form of children's curriculum, much of it is prohibitively expensive, overly complicated, and reinforces the moralistic, disjointed, and decontextualized approach to reading the Bible that has contributed to the biblical illiteracy and anemic theology so widespread today. Our hope and prayer is that this resource will help Christ's church to teach her children to know and love God's story so that they might better know and love God.

Thank you for all you do for Christ and his church.

The Crossway Team

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Use This Curriculum	3
Story 1: And So It Begins	9
Story 46: The Miraculous Catnap	17
Story 64: A Sick Woman and a Sad Dad	25
Story 71: The Kids Can Come Too	33
Coloring and Activity Pages	40
Sample Lesson Plans	49





How to Use This Curriculum

The Biggest Story Curriculum includes 104 lessons designed to help children understand God’s plan to redeem the world through his Son, Jesus, by leading them through the overarching story of the Bible over the course of roughly two years. Created from the ground up by a team of pastors, children’s ministry workers, and content creators, the curriculum features guided lessons that can be used in Sunday school, children’s church, or homeschooling contexts.

A major strength of *The Biggest Story Curriculum* is its modular design, allowing teachers to pick and choose which components to use based on the age of the students, specific educational goals, or available time.

The chart below shows suggested components for 30-, 45-, and 60-minute class times. For a complete set of sample lesson plans for Sunday school, children’s church, and homeschooling contexts, see Sample Lesson Plans on page 49.

		Available Time for Lesson		
Lesson Components		30 minutes	45 minutes	60 minutes
Teach	The Big Picture (5 minutes)		✓	✓
	Tell the Story (5–10 minutes)	✓	✓	✓
	Teach the Story (10 minutes)		✓	✓
	Gospel Connection (5 minutes)	✓	✓	✓
Engage	Discuss the Story (10 minutes)			✓
	Activities (10–15 minutes)	✓	✓	✓
	Crafts (10–15 minutes)			✓

Lesson Components

The lesson components are grouped into three major lesson phases: *Read*, *Teach*, and *Engage*. The *Read* phase includes a brief set of prelesson prompts including the most important step—reading and meditating on the Bible passage itself. The *Teach* phase includes all of the tools needed to help kids understand the story and how it fits into the grand narrative of the Bible. The *Engage* phase includes multiple components to help kids thoughtfully, creatively, and physically engage with the story in memorable ways. Below is a description of each component within these three phases.

1 Read

BEFORE THE LESSON

This section highlights the Bible passage that teachers should read and meditate on before teaching the lesson. It also includes a simple checklist designed to guide teachers as they review the lesson and prepare to teach.

2 Teach

THE BIG PICTURE

5 minutes

This section helps the teacher understand and summarize how the lesson connects with previous lessons and the overarching story of the Bible. Teachers are encouraged to review this section ahead of time, summarizing it in their own words at the beginning of the class.

TELL THE STORY

5–10 minutes

After reviewing how the lesson fits into the preceding lessons and the overarching story of the Bible, teachers progress to telling the current week's story. This can be done in one of three ways: 1) reading the relevant Bible passage out loud to

the class; 2) reading the relevant story from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*; or 3) watching the relevant animated video for that particular story (found at TheBiggestStory.com).

TEACH THE STORY

10 minutes

This section provides some suggested teaching points to emphasize as teachers seek to reiterate the key themes from the story. While this section is written as a script, it can also be used as a launching pad for teachers to unpack the story for their class in ways that will serve their specific students.

Don't Miss the Big Truth. In the margin next to this section, teachers will find the Big Truth—a short sentence summarizing the main point of the lesson. Consider emphasizing the Big Truth throughout the lesson by saying it together as a class, incorporating it into an activity, or writing it on a craft.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

5 minutes

Similar to the Teach the Story section, this section can be used as a script or as a guide to help teachers show their kids how the lesson connects to the Bible's big story of redemption through Christ. Teachers are encouraged to close the teaching portion of the lesson by emphasizing how the story points to Jesus—the Snake Crusher—and his plan to save people from their sin.



3

Engage

DISCUSS THE STORY

10 minutes

Designed for use in smaller groups, the discussion questions listed in this section are a great way to help kids go deeper in their understanding of the story and why it matters. The questions listed here are intended to foster interactive group conversation between teachers and students.

Don't Miss the Memory Verse. In the margin next to this section, teachers will find a Memory Verse for the lesson. These verses reinforce the main point of the lesson and are short enough for kids to memorize in a week. Consider handing out a *Biggest Story Memory Verse Card* to each child as a fun tool to take home as they seek to memorize the verse. Learn more about the *Memory Verse Cards* at TheBiggestStory.com.

ACTIVITIES

10–15 minutes

Each lesson includes a number of suggested activities that are designed to pair well with the story. These activities are broken up into two age ranges (K–2nd and 3rd–5th) and include simple instructions along with a list of necessary supplies. Teachers can also download and print a coloring page and an activity page for each lesson for each student to work on in class or take home.

CRAFTS

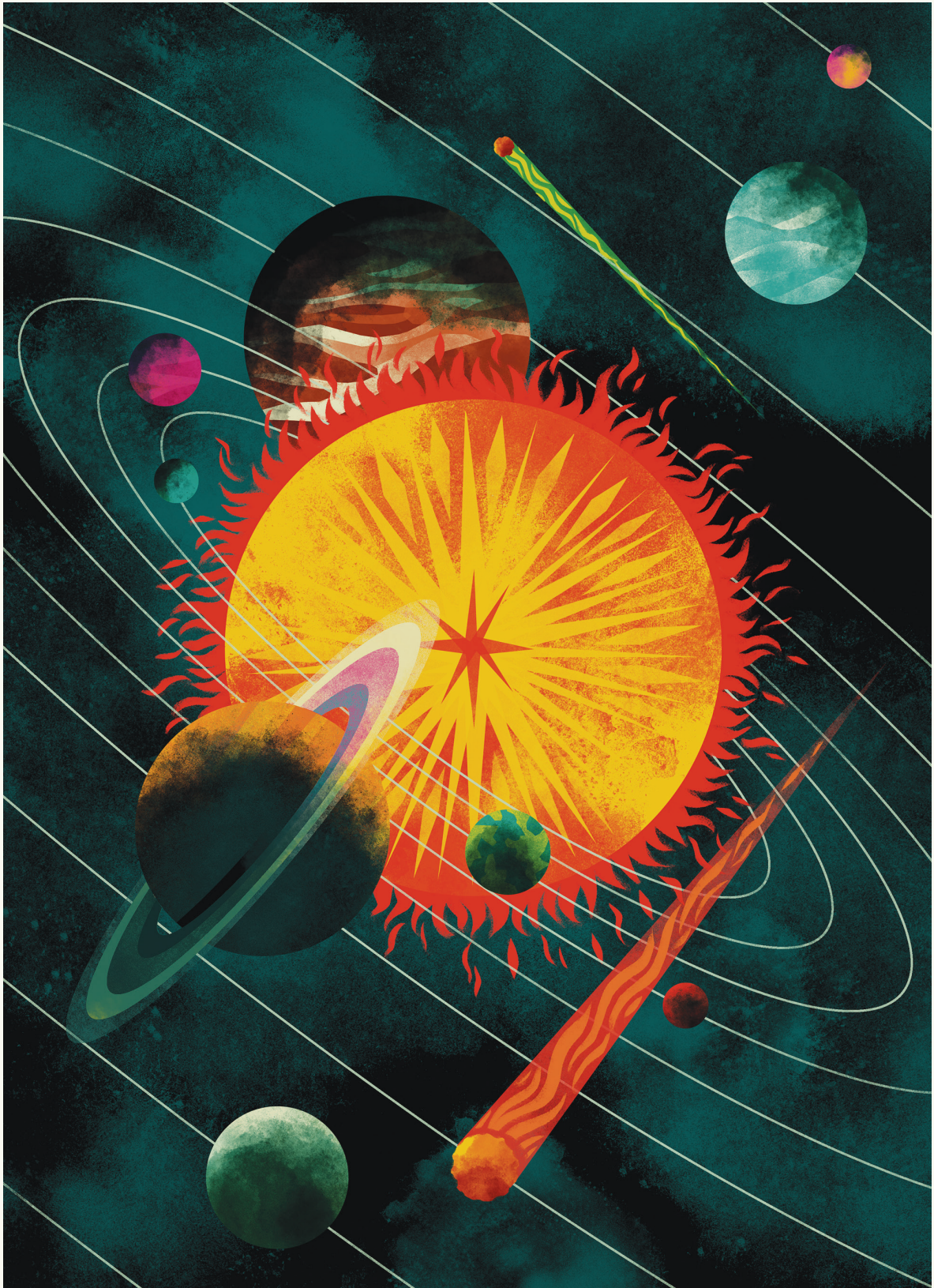
10–15 minutes

Each lesson includes a number of suggested crafts that connect to the story in some way. These crafts are broken up into two age ranges (K–2nd and 3rd–5th) and include recommended preparation before the class begins, a list of necessary supplies, and simple instructions for doing the craft in class.

SAMPLE LESSONS

The following four lessons from Genesis, Daniel, and Mark are provided to give you a sample of *The Biggest Story Curriculum*. Animated videos and digital downloads can be found at TheBiggestStory.com.





STORY 1

And So It Begins

GENESIS 1–2

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Genesis 1–2.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open each child's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice. Locate any needed supplies.*

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

The Bible is a big book made of sixty-six smaller books. Genesis is the first book, one of the oldest books, and it is important for understanding everything that follows. Like most of the Old Testament, it was originally written in Hebrew. *[Hold up a picture of the Hebrew alphabet.]* Can you imagine trying to read the Bible in Hebrew? We should be so thankful people have translated the Bible into English. We can thank God that we have the Bible in our own native tongue. The Old Testament has four different parts. The first part is called the Pentateuch. Does that sound like a strange word? *Penta* means “five,” and *teuch* means “book.” So, the Pentateuch is just the first five books of the Old Testament. God used Moses to write them, and Moses is the main human character. However, God is the main character in all five books.

1
Read

2
Teach

Genesis begins with God: “In the beginning, God” (Gen. 1:1a). That’s the first line of the Bible! Before “God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1b), God was. He always was. But what did he do before he created everyone and everything? Was he lonely? No. Bored? Of course not. Scared? Certainly not. Why? God is one God in three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity have always been marked by love, and it is out of this love that he created every person, place, and thing.

TELL THE STORY

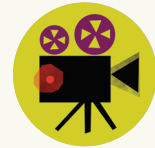
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
A very good
God makes
a very good
world, with
humans as his
very good image
bearers.

Out of nothing God creates everything. Amazing! He created everything in the heavens and on the earth in six days. He didn’t need six days or even six seconds to create everything. He could have done it with one word or in one second. So why did he do it that way? He did it to give us an example of how to live our lives: Six days of work. One day of rest. Now, God doesn’t get tired, so he doesn’t need rest. But we need rest because our bodies get tired, and we also need to spend a day worshiping our Creator God. Oh how God cares for us and knows what we need most!

Now, let’s get back to the six days and go through them one by one. On day one, God created light and he separated the light from the darkness. The light he called day and the darkness night. On day two, he separated the sky from the seas, the clouds above from the oceans below. On day three, he created the land with plants yielding seed and trees bearing fruit. Can you see the apple trees



Story

1

Genesis

1-2

and orange trees, smell the roses, and feel the cactuses? Ouch! (Maybe don't touch the cactuses.) On days four, five, and six, he filled what he made with more amazing creations: the sun, moon, and stars for the sky; fish for the sea and birds for the sky; and animals and insects on the earth. The North Star was created. The White Tiger. The Bald Eagle. The Black Widow. The Hammerhead Shark. (Watch out for his sharp teeth too!)

God is good. His creation is good.

On the sixth day God's good creation got even better. God (Father, Son, and Spirit) said, "Let us make man in our image." God created people: Adam and Eve. A man and a woman. A husband and a wife. And he put these beautiful people in a beautiful place called the garden of Eden. Paradise. Their job, as people made in God's image, was to show what God was like (sort of like a mirror shows you what you look like) and to grow a family that would go everywhere and also show what God was like ("be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth," Gen. 1:28). What a perfect beginning to the beginning.

God is very good. And so, people are very good. Just like a mirror, we show how very good God is. So tremendously terrific!

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

The story of creation is just the first story of the Biggest Story. In Genesis we will learn that, because of sin, people aren't very good mirrors. We don't reflect God very well. But "the Word" (John 1:1) came as "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). He perfectly showed what God is like, and he made a way for our broken mirrors to be repaired so that we could again do the job God created us to do.

But the Word isn't just our Savior. He, with the Father and the Spirit, created everything. This is why, when John begins his Gospel, he uses words like the ones in Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Paul also says of the Son of God that "all things were created, in heaven and on earth, . . . through him and for him" (Col. 1:16). The sun, moon, and stars? Yes! The sea and sky? Yes! The land and plants? Yes! The fish, birds, animals, and humans? Yes! Everything!

3

Engage

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

Memory Verse
In the beginning,
God created the
heavens and
the earth.

GENESIS 1:1

1. **QUESTION:** What's something cool you've created recently? What did you use to create it? What did God use to create the world?

TAKEAWAY: God created the world out of nothing simply by his powerful word.

2. **QUESTION:** Can you imagine what the world would be like if God had made it in black and white without color? What would it be like if God made all our food taste like dry crackers? What does creation tell us about God? Was God happy with what he created? How do we know that from the Bible?

TAKEAWAY: God is an amazing Creator, and he made all things beautiful and good.

3. **QUESTION:** What did God do on the seventh day after he created the world? What day does your family set aside for rest and worship? What are some ways that day should be different than the others? What are some steps you can take to make sure you are setting aside time to rest and worship Jesus?

TAKEAWAY: God gives us a day for worship and rest, and we shouldn't neglect it.

4. **QUESTION:** God made us in his image. Our job as image bearers is to show how good God is. What are some ways we can do this?

TAKEAWAY: Our job as image bearers is to bring God glory by showing to the world around us how good God is.

5. **QUESTION:** How do we know that Jesus, along with the Father and Spirit, created the world? In the New Testament, who does Paul say the whole world was created through and for?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus, along with the Father and Spirit, is the Creator of the world.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: “God Said”

Supply List: none

Have the children stand up. The leader gives an instruction like, “God said, ‘Let there be light, so jump up and down,’” or “God said, ‘Let there be birds, so fly like a bird.’” Alternate by sometimes giving a command without starting with “God said.” Say something like, “Let there be water! So, pretend to swim.” If any child does this action, they have to sit down because you didn’t say, “God said.”

Option 2: Dough Creations

Supply List: modeling dough

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Give each child a lump of modeling dough to make something that God created. Then take away the modeling dough and ask them to make something. Make the point that only God can make something from nothing.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Create-a-Human

Supply List: whiteboard, dry-erase marker

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Teacher writes a series of dashes on a whiteboard. The dashes correspond with how many letters are in a word or phrase. For example, for the word *platypus* the teacher writes eight dashes on the board, and each round the kids guess a letter. If a child guesses a wrong letter, the teacher draws a human body part (head, body, two arms, two legs). The students lose if they create the entire human by guessing wrong letters, or win by guessing the right letters and solving the puzzle. You can decide how many wrong guesses equals a fully created human (suggestion: six).



Story

1

Genesis

1–2

Option 2: Charades

Supply List: stopwatch/timer

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Teacher selects a child to act out something that God created (student can choose). The child will have thirty seconds to act it out. The rest of the class tries to guess what it is before the time is up. Whoever guesses correctly has the option either to be the next person to act or to choose another student to go next.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Make a Mirror

Supply List: construction paper, strips of brown construction paper, aluminum foil, glue sticks, permanent marker

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out rectangular pieces of aluminum foil and strips of brown construction paper, cut so they fit around the aluminum foil (one set per child).

Give each child one sheet of construction paper. Place brown strips, aluminum foil, glue sticks, and permanent marker on tables. Have children glue down a sheet of aluminum foil in the middle of their piece of construction paper and add a frame around it by gluing down the strips of brown paper. Have teacher or child write “God saw” above it and “and it was very good” below it. Remind children that God made us to reflect him as his image bearers.

Option 2: Creation Wheel

Supply List: white paper (two pieces per child), crayons/markers, brass fasteners

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out two eight-inch-diameter circles per child. Divide the first circle into four equal sections, and label them Sky, Land, Water, and Your Choice! In the second circle, cut out a section slightly less than one-fourth the size of the circle and write “God saw that it was good” on the remaining portion. (Keep the center of the circle uncut so the brass fastener can secure the two circles together at the center).



Story

1

Genesis

1-2

Provide children with the circle divided into four sections. Have children draw something that belongs in each of the four sections. Provide children with the second circle with a section cut out of it. Fasten the second circle on top of the first with a brass fastener.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Creation Mural

Supply List: large sheet of paper (like butcher paper or poster board), watercolor paints/markers/colored pencils

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Children work together using watercolor paints, markers, or colored pencils to make a mural of some of the things God created.

Option 2: Tissue Paper “It Is Good”

Supply List: “It Is Good” white paper, small squares of colored tissue paper, paper plates, liquid glue, pen/pencil

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of white paper with “It Is Good” written in big bubble letters on it. Create a sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate, a pen or pencil, and an “It Is Good” paper. On each table, distribute tissue paper squares and a paper plate with a large amount of liquid glue in the center. Children will wrap a single square of tissue paper around the end of a pencil/pen, dip it in glue and stick it on the bubble letter. They continue until the bubble letters are completely filled in.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.

