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PREFACE

The Story for Kids is unlike any book you've ever read. Think about your favorite book. What does it have in it? Adventures? Excitement? Drama? How about heroes? The book you're holding now has all those things, and more. Because unlike other books you've read, this story is completely true. It's a Bible that reads like a novel.

If you've read the Bible before, you know how long it is. It has chapter and verse numbers to help you find Bible verses. Maybe you've looked up Bible verses during Sunday school.

In *The Story for Kids*, these numbers are gone, and instead selections of Bible text were put in order according to when each story happened in history. Using the New International Reader's Version, this book has actual Bible text, along with specially written transitions to help link parts of the Bible together so it's easier to understand what each story means and how they go together. The transitions are always in italic font to show they are not part of the Bible text.

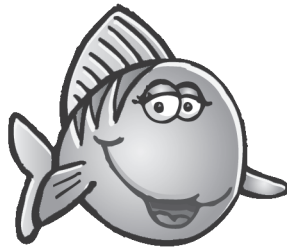
In the back, you'll find Discussion Questions. Try talking about your answers with your family, friends, or Sunday school class. You might be surprised what they say!

We hope *The Story for Kids* helps you understand the Bible better and how the Bible relates to your life.



1

THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT



DAY 1

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

The earth didn't have any shape. And it was empty. Darkness was over the surface of the ocean. At that time, the ocean covered the earth. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day." He called the darkness "night."

DAY 2

God said, "Let there be a huge space between the waters. Let it separate water from water." And that's exactly what happened.

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God made the huge space between the waters. He separated the water that was under the space from the water that was above it. God called the huge space “sky.”

DAY 3

God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place. Let dry ground appear.” And that’s exactly what happened. God called the dry ground “land.” He called the waters that were gathered together “oceans.” And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let the land produce plants. Let them bear their own seeds. And let there be trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds in it. Let each kind of plant or tree have its own kind of seeds.” And that’s exactly what happened.

DAY 4

God said, “Let there be lights in the huge space of the sky. Let them separate the day from the night. Let them serve as signs to mark off the seasons and the days and the years. Let them serve as lights in the huge space of the sky to give light on the earth.” And that’s exactly what happened.

God made two great lights. He made the larger light to rule over the day. He made the smaller light to rule over the night. He also made the stars.

God put the lights in the huge space of the sky to give light on the earth. . . . He put them there to separate light from darkness. God saw that it was good.

DAY 5

God said, “Let the waters be filled with living things. Let birds fly above the earth across the huge space of the sky.” So God created the great creatures of the ocean. He created every

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living and moving thing that fills the waters. He created all kinds of them. He created every kind of bird that flies. And God saw that it was good.

God blessed them. He said, "Have little ones and increase your numbers. Fill the water in the oceans. Let there be more and more birds on the earth."

DAY 6

God said, "Let the land produce all kinds of living creatures. Let there be livestock, and creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals. Let there be all kinds of them." And that's exactly what happened.

God made all kinds of wild animals. He made all kinds of livestock. He made all kinds of creatures that move along the ground. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Let them rule over the livestock and over the whole earth. Let them rule over all of the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own likeness. He created him in the likeness of God. He created them as male and female.

God blessed them. He said to them, "Have children and increase your numbers. Fill the earth and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Rule over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, "I am giving you every plant on the face of the whole earth that bears its own seeds. I am giving you every tree that has fruit with seeds in it. All of them will be given to you for food.

"I am giving every green plant to all of the land animals and the birds of the air for food. I am also giving the plants to all of the creatures that move on the ground. I am giving them

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to every living thing that breathes.” And that’s exactly what happened.

God saw everything he had made. And it was very good.

DAY 7

God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. He rested on it. After he had created everything, he rested from all of the work he had done.

After God created all these very good things, he had one more thing he wanted to do. The people he’d made needed a place to live! God decided to plant the perfect garden. In this garden, everybody got along (even the sheep and the lions!), and there was enough food for everyone. There was also no pain, death or sadness.

The LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden. He put him there to work its ground and to take care of it.

The LORD God gave the man a command. He said, “You can eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden. But you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die.”

God just wanted to protect Adam and Eve so that they could live in the garden with him forever. And Adam and Eve wanted to do what God said, because they loved him and liked talking with him every night. And, of course, they didn’t want to die. So staying away from one tree shouldn’t have been that hard, right? They had tons of trees filled with ripe, juicy fruit to pick from. But one creature had a plan. He hated God, and wanted to make Adam and Eve sin so that God’s perfect creation would be

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ruined. So he decided to make Adam and Eve think God had lied to them about the tree of knowledge.

The serpent was more clever than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. The serpent said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden?’”

The woman said to the serpent, “We can eat the fruit of the trees that are in the garden. But God did say, ‘You must not eat



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the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. Do not even touch it. If you do, you will die.’”

“You can be sure that you won’t die,” the serpent said to the woman. “God knows that when you eat the fruit of that tree, you will know things you have never known before. You will be able to tell the difference between good and evil. You will be like God.”

The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat. It was also pleasing to look at. And it would make a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he ate it.

Then the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking in the garden. It was the coolest time of the day. They hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

But the LORD God called out to the man. “Where are you?” he asked.

“I heard you in the garden,” the man answered. “I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid.”

The LORD God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten the fruit of the tree I commanded you not to eat?”

The man said, “It was the woman you put here with me. She gave me some fruit from the tree. And I ate it.”

Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me. That’s why I ate the fruit.”

So the LORD God spoke to the serpent. He said, “Because you have done this, I am putting a curse on you. You are cursed more than all of the livestock and all of the wild animals. You

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will crawl on the ground. You will eat dust all of the days of your life. I will put hatred between you and the woman. Your children and her children will be enemies . . .”

The LORD God said to Adam, “You listened to your wife. You ate the fruit of the tree that I commanded you about. I said, ‘You must not eat its fruit.’ So I am putting a curse on the ground because of what you did. All the days of your life you will have to work hard to get food from the ground. You will eat the plants of the field, even though the ground produces thorns and thistles. You will have to work hard and sweat a lot to produce the food you eat. You were made out of the ground. And you will return to it. You are dust. So you will return to it.”

Adam named his wife Eve. She would become the mother of every living person.

The LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife to wear.

So the LORD God drove the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground he had been made out of.

God put angels with flaming swords at the entrance of the garden for protection. After the fall of Adam and Eve, things on earth just kept getting worse. Sin was all people could think of. They hurt each other and took things from each other.

The LORD saw how bad the sins of man had become on the earth. All of the thoughts in his heart were always directed only toward what was evil. The LORD was very sad that he had made man on the earth. His heart was filled with pain.

But the LORD was pleased with Noah.

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Noah was a godly man. He was without blame among the people of his time. He walked with God. Noah had three sons. Their names were Shem, Ham and Japheth.

The earth was very sinful in God's eyes. It was full of mean and harmful acts.

So God said to Noah . . . "[M]ake yourself an ark out of cypress wood. Make rooms in it. Cover it with tar inside and out. Here is how I want you to build it. The ark has to be 450 feet long. It has to be 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it. Leave the sides of the ark open a foot and a half from the top. Put a door in one side of the ark. Make lower, middle and upper decks.

"I am going to bring a flood on the earth. It will destroy all life under the sky. It will destroy every living creature that breathes. Everything on earth will die.

"But I will make my covenant with you. You will enter the ark. Your sons and your wife and your sons' wives will enter it with you.

"Bring two of every living thing into the ark. Bring male and female of them into it. They will be kept alive with you.

"Take every kind of food that you will need. Store it away. It will be food for you and for them."

Noah did everything exactly as God commanded him.

Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark with your whole family. I know that you are a godly man among the people of today."

Once Noah's family and all the animals were safe inside the ark, God closed the door.

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For 40 days the flood kept coming on the earth. As the waters rose higher, they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose higher and higher on the earth. And the ark floated on the water.

The waters rose on the earth until all of the high mountains under the entire sky were covered. The waters continued to rise until they covered the mountains by more than 20 feet.

Every living thing that moved on the earth died. The birds, the livestock and the wild animals died. All of the creatures that fill the earth also died. And so did every human being. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in it died.

Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark were left.

The waters flooded the earth for 150 days.

But God showed concern for Noah. He also showed concern for all of the wild animals and livestock that were with Noah in the ark.

So God sent a wind over the earth. And the waters began to go down. The springs at the bottom of the oceans had been closed. The windows of the skies had been closed. And the rain had stopped falling from the sky.

The water continued to go down from the earth. At the end of the 150 days the water had gone down. On the 17th day of the seventh month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to go down until the tenth month. On the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains could be seen.

Imagine having huge elephants, noisy birds, snarling tigers and hundreds of other animals on a constantly

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rocking and swaying boat for days and days and days. (Not to mention having to clean the decks—or deal with the smell.) As soon as the mountain tops were visible, Noah and his family were probably more than ready to leave the ark. Noah sent out a dove to see if it was safe to come out. When the dove came back with a leaf, he waited a little longer. He released the dove one more time. He waited again. Since it didn't come back, Noah knew the earth was finally dry. He opened up the ark.

God said to Noah, “Come out of the ark. Bring your wife and your sons and their wives with you.

“Bring out every kind of living thing that is with you. Bring the birds, the animals, and all of the creatures that move along the ground. Then they can multiply on the earth. They can have little ones and increase their numbers.”

So Noah came out of the ark. His sons and his wife and his sons' wives were with him. All of the animals came out of the ark.

Then Noah built an altar to honor the LORD.

Then God gave his blessing to Noah and his sons. He said to them, “Have children and increase your numbers. Fill the earth.

“All of the land animals will be afraid of you. All of the birds of the air will fear you. Every creature that moves along the ground will fear you. Every fish in the oceans will also be afraid of you. Every living thing is put under your control.

“I am now making my covenant with you and with all of your children who will be born after you.

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“The waters of a flood will never destroy all life again. A flood will never destroy the earth again.”

God continued, “My covenant is between me and you and every living thing with you. It is a covenant for all time to come.

“Here is the sign of the covenant I am making. I have put my rainbow in the clouds. It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

“When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it. I will remember that my covenant will last forever. It is a covenant between me and every kind of living thing on earth.”

When the flood ended, the only people in the world were Noah and his family—but it wasn’t that way for long. Soon Noah’s sons had children, and their children had children ... and so after a while there were thousands and thousands of people again. These people eventually moved all around the world as they started to create countries and cities.