

Promised Messiah

(Various Promises and Pictures)

Pre-Session Warm Up

You have all worked on puzzles, right? Some puzzles only have a few pieces and are easy and fast to put together. But some jigsaw puzzles can have over 1,000 pieces and can take a long time to finish.

When you first dump the pieces out of the box, it looks confusing. First you have to turn all the pieces over. Then a good way to get started is to find all the pieces that have straight edges because they will form the picture frame that the puzzle will fit into. Then, you start to match up colors and try to connect them. You have to keep looking at the picture on the box to know if you are doing it right.

The Bible can seem like a jigsaw puzzle, with lots of disconnected pieces. The Bible is not just one book. It is actually 66 books that were written hundreds of years ago by over 40 different men over the course of 1,500 years. Yet, they all fit together to make one picture. It's the picture of Jesus! The entire Bible reveals Jesus and God's plan to make a way for us to live with Him in heaven forever.

The Holy Spirit shows us how to put the pieces together so that we discover the full picture of Jesus and understand how wonderful our God is.

Today I am going to describe some of the major puzzle pieces in God's Story that tell us of His amazing plan to rescue mankind.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for this amazing book we call the Bible. It is so exciting to read it and discover more and more about You and your wonderful plan to save us. I pray that each of us would learn to treasure your Word, to delight in it so much that we can't help ourselves from meditating on it day and night. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Lesson

Promises and pictures

All through the Old Testament, God gave promises and pictures of a Savior who would one day provide for our salvation. God wants us to be saved so much that He gives illustrations all through the Bible about it.

Creation

Beginning with the first verse in the first book of the Bible, we get to look at the first piece of the puzzle of God's Story. Here we learn that in the beginning, God created a perfect world and He was very satisfied with everything.

Genesis 1:31

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

When Adam and Eve sinned, our holy God was saddened. His perfect creation was ruined. Immediately after that first sin, God made a promise that he would send a Savior. He told Adam and Eve that they would someday have an offspring that would crush Satan. God was referring to Jesus, our Messiah, our Savior.

Then before God sent Adam and Eve from the garden, He made garments of skin to cover them. Now, in order to make garments of skin, a lamb had to be sacrificed. This is a picture of Jesus who thousands of years later would have to be sacrificed on the cross to take the punishment for our sin.

Noah

Another piece of the puzzle in God's story is found in Genesis 6

where we learn that the world had become so evil that God's heart was broken. He looked around and could only find one righteous man, Noah. He was the only one who was walking with God.

God told Noah that He was going to wipe out the all the people on the face of the earth with a flood and start over. So, he told Noah to build an Ark. This enormous boat would save Noah and his family plus two of every kind of animal. God would repopulate the earth with those that got into the Ark.

The flood came and, along with it, the destruction of every living thing that was outside the Ark.

So here we see that the Ark is a picture of Jesus. By entering the Ark, Noah made sure that he and his family were saved from the coming destruction. When we enter into a relationship with Jesus, we will be saved from the coming judgement of God.

God is going to come again to judge the world of sin and only those who are in Jesus will be saved.

Abraham

At this point we know that God has promised to send the Messiah, the Savior of the world, who is going to be born of a woman. Now God needs a family for the Messiah to be born into.

The next puzzle piece we find is God choosing Abraham. God leaned out of heaven and told Abraham that if he would follow Him in a life of obedient faith, He would bless him.

God promised Abraham that in him and his descendants all the world would be blessed.

Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and

you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

From the time of this promise to Abram, people expected a Savior to come who would govern a kingdom of God on earth among the children of Israel. God was, of course, referring to Jesus, the Messiah, who would come to save everyone who believes in Him.

This all seemed impossible because Abraham and Sarah were very old and had never had any children. But God is faithful to His promises, and after many years, Abraham's son, Isaac, was born! Then Isaac had a son named Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Israel had 12 sons and each of them had a family who we know as the 12 tribes of Israel. Today the children of Israel are a great nation of people.

Moses

The next big piece of the puzzle of God's Story is found in the life of Moses.

The descendants of Abraham, the children of Israel, had grown to about 75 people. They went down to Egypt because there was a famine in the Promised Land. At first life was good for them, but over the years, the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh, made them his slaves. Life was hard for them and they cried out to God to send them someone that could rescue them from the hardship and cruelty of the Pharaoh. After 400 years of slavery in Egypt, God raised up Moses to lead the children of Israel out from the bondage of Pharaoh back to the Promised Land.

Moses is a type of Christ. Just as Moses rescued the people out from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and led them back to the Promised Land, Jesus sets us free from the punishment of sin and leads us to heaven, our "Promised Land", where we will live with Him forever. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*" (John 14:6) We need to follow Him.

David

Let's look at one more puzzle piece. Many hundreds of years after Moses led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, God passed the promise of a Messiah on to David.

2 Samuel 7:12-13

For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. ¹³He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.

Here God was telling David, who was a descendant of Abraham, one of the children of Israel, that the Savior would come from his offspring.

You see, the entire Old Testament points to Jesus our Savior. As you read and study the Bible you will be able to put all the puzzle pieces together and see the picture of Jesus. If we miss that, we've missed the entire point of the Bible. So, when you read the Bible, think of it like a treasure hunt; look for all the promises and pictures that show you something about Jesus.

Fulfillment of prophecy

Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy.

The Bible is generally divided into three types: history, poetry, and prophecy. **History** tells the stories of people and places and events that happened in the past. **Poetry** includes books like Psalms which is a worship song book. **Prophecy** includes information about things that are going to happen in the future.

1/3 of the Bible was prophecy when it was written. Most of those prophecies have already come true just as it was written. That's one of the biggest reasons we know that we can trust that the Bible is God's inspired word. It is also the reason we can be absolutely sure that the predictions that have not already been fulfilled will come true.

Jesus fulfilled over 300 specific prophecies from the Bible. Here are just four:

- The prophet Isaiah told us the Messiah would be born of a virgin. (Isa 7:14)
- The prophet Micah told us the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2)
- The prophet Samuel told us the Messiah would be a descendant of David. (2 Sam 7:12)
- Isaiah also told us the Messiah would be crucified. (Isa 53:12)

Everyone in the world — including you and me — is born a sinner and needs to be saved. God knew we would need a Savior right from the beginning. That's why He made the promise to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, and David that He would send the Messiah.

And, God was faithful to His promise. He came to earth and was born as a baby in Bethlehem. He lived a sinless life and experienced a savage death by being nailed to a cross. Because Jesus gave His blood when He died on the cross, we can be forgiven and saved from the punishment for sin.

Before He went back up to heaven, Jesus told His disciples that He was going away to prepare a place for His followers.

Now we look forward to the time when He will come back to get us and take us to the place that He preparing for us. We can count on Him to be faithful to His promises.

Meanwhile we should prepare ourselves for His coming. What would be the best way to get ready for His return? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for your faithfulness! Thank You that you have given us everything we need to know about life and godliness in Your word. You haven't hidden Your plan from us. It's all written down for us to discover if only we would dig into Your word and look for all the promises and pictures You have given us. Give us hearts that delight in Your word and desire to meditate on it day and night. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Jesus Puzzle.

Have the children color the puzzle and cut it apart to take home to share with their family. Provide an envelope for the pieces.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. The Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle. What picture will you see as you fit the pieces together? (The entire Bible reveals Jesus and God's plan to make a way for us to live with Him in heaven forever.)
2. What has God given us throughout the whole bible that reveals Jesus to us? (Promises and pictures.)
3. What did God promise Adam and Eve after they sinned? (God made a promise that he would send a Savior.)
4. When God made the garments of skin for Adam and Eve, what is that a picture of? (A lamb gave its life to cover their sin; just like Jesus gave His life to cover our sin.)
5. Why did God choose Abraham? (He wanted the Messiah to be born through his family line.)
6. God promised Abraham 3 things. Can you name one? (God made a promise that He would make Abraham's family into a great nation, that they would occupy the Promised Land, and that the promised Messiah would come through their family line as a blessing for the whole world.)
7. How is Moses a type of Jesus? (Moses led the people out from the bondage of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land; Jesus sets us free from the bondage of sin and leads us to our Promised Land, heaven.)
8. What famous king did God promise to send the Messiah through? (David)
9. Jesus fulfilled over 300 specific prophecies about the coming Messiah. Can you name two? (Born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem, descendant of David, crucified.)
10. Why did God send us a Savior? (God hates sin and said all sin must be punished. We are all sinners and deserve death. But He came and took our place on the cross.)
11. Jesus is coming back some day to judge the world of sin. How should we prepare for His coming? (Believe in Jesus!)