

WEEK 2 LESSON GUIDE

MORE TO THE STORY

BIG IDEA

Sin isn't the end of our story.

BIBLE

Genesis 3:1–10, 21–24; Romans 5:1–5; Psalm 107:2

ABOUT THIS WEEK

We can look around the world and see so much that feels messed up, broken, and in need of repair. This week, we'll hear about the time Adam and Eve broke one of God's rules and introduced sin into the world.

Even though they disobeyed, God cared for them, reminding us that **sin isn't the end of our story**.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Creature Concoction

- Welcome to the second week of our series, *More to the Story*! Last week, we discussed our desire for a better world. Just as thirst indicates the presence of water and hunger signals the existence of food, our longing for a better world suggests that a better world is possible. Speaking of hunger, I could really use a snack. Let's see what we can cook up.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you need various food items, a blender, and two blindfolds. Before your program, choose a few different animals and look up their diets. For example, a tiger's diet could consist of beef jerky, lettuce, and water. Purchase what you need to represent that animal's meal. To play, ask for two volunteers and place a blindfold on each one. Show the ingredients to the audience and blend the food into a smoothie. Do this for each of the animals represented. The contestants will end up drinking three different smoothies. End the game by providing both contestants a smoothie made of ingredients for a standard teenage meal, like a Big Mac, soda, and french fries. The person who correctly guesses the most animals wins.
- I don't know about you, but I don't want to drink liquified chips. French fries are fantastic, but not when blended with a burger and coke. Gross. Sometimes, the results can be less desirable when you take a good thing and put it in the wrong context.
- The same can be said about our lives. Sometimes, we take something good and put it in the wrong context, and we can end up hurting ourselves or others. For instance, while watching a show can be great, choosing it over completing your part of a group project isn't ideal.
- We all make wrong or damaging choices from time to time. How do we navigate the weight of regret or the guilt of hurting ourselves or those around us?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - **What food did you use to love but now hate?**

- How do you react when something happens in your life that disrupts what you had planned?
- ⊗ When something goes wrong, are you more likely to take responsibility or look for someone else to blame?

POLL | Bad Taxidermy

- Have you ever seen taxidermy? It can get bizarre when the person who stuffed the animal did a lousy job. But let's say you have to have one of these in your room. Which one would it be?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this poll, find some pictures of lousy taxidermy and make slides with a picture on the opposing sides. Poll your group about which one they prefer in their room by having them move to the side of the room corresponding to the side of the slide the picture is on. Choose photos you know will resonate with the culture of your group. Here are a few to get your imagination going.
 - [Long Fox](#) or [Happy mountain lion](#)
 - [Actual Ninja Turtle](#) or [Super Rat](#)
 - [Chair Fox](#) or [Chair Goat](#)
 - [Sad otter](#) or [Surprised Cat](#)
 - [Smug Lion](#) or [Yogi Bear](#)
 - [Crazed Dog](#) or [Shocked Jaguar](#)
 - [Nightmare sloth](#) or [Human-toothed polar bear](#)
- We all know what these animals are supposed to look like when they are alive. We even know what they are supposed to look like when they are stuffed and put on a wall. And we know they should not look like the pictures we showed you. We intuitively know these are not how these animals are intended to be.
- The story is over for those animals, but not for us. What can we do if we look at our lives and notice something isn't quite right? How could there possibly be more to the story?

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 3:1–10

- God's story began with everything being good. Last week, we talked about how God consistently stopped to celebrate how good creation is, and after God created humans, God said they were "very good."
- Wouldn't it be nice to pause the story here? Everything is great. It's golden. Let's close the book. But you probably know what's coming. Even if you're new to the Bible, you know things don't stay this way forever.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Genesis 3:1–10.
- Adam and Eve had everything they needed. Then the serpent came and planted a question in their minds that led them down a destructive path: "Did God really say...?"
 - Have you ever wondered, "Did God really say...?" If you have, then you can relate to the story. It is a pretty common question and experience.
 - The serpent made Adam and Eve question God's goodness and character. They wondered if God really wanted the best for them.
- When Adam and Eve started questioning if God wanted the best for them and what he really said, they decided to take matters into their own hands and start defining good and evil for themselves. Instead of trusting God, they decided they knew better than God and went against this request. They crossed the boundary that God had set in place to protect them. This is when sin enters the story.

QUESTION | "How would you define sin?"

- Have you ever heard the word "sin" before? If you ask ten people to define the word sin, you might get ten different definitions.

- **How would you define sin?**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the previous question and have the group turn to the people around them to give their answers. Allow a few students to share their responses. Highlight the parts of answers that reinforce the teaching below.
- We all have good needs. God made us with them. But when we get those needs met in ways that have temporary relief, but God knows are harmful or damaging to us, that is sin.
- The Bible shows us how loving God and others truly meets our needs. So, sin is the thoughts, words, actions, or things we don't do when we know we should in order to try to meet our right needs in the wrong ways.
- It's like missing the mark or going off course from what God desires for us. So, when you hear "sin," it points to behaviors or choices that Scripture shows are not best for us because they take the place of God's presence in our lives and create distance between us and God.
- But I want you to notice something important. Even though Adam and Eve sinned, God didn't hide from them. Out of shame, Adam and Eve distanced themselves from God, but God didn't do the same. God came looking for them to restore their relationship.

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 3:21–24

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Genesis 3:21–24.
- Adam and Eve felt shame for the first time, so they covered themselves by creating clothing from leaves, but do you see what God did? God cared for them, even after they hid, by making more suitable clothing to meet their needs.
- Adam and Eve were moved out of Eden to live without the provision of the garden—a result of their own choice. Remember, they wanted to define good and evil for themselves. Adam and Eve had turned their backs on God, the creator of life. But even as they went, they walked away clothed in good gifts from God.
- God did not want sin to be part of the story. God didn't want to be separated from Adam and Eve, but God also didn't want to control Adam and Eve like puppets. We are created to be in a loving relationship with God, but what happened at the tree in the Garden of Eden shows us that a loving relationship with God is a choice. God will not force a relationship with us.
- This story shows us that even when we choose to hide from God, it doesn't mean God becomes distant from us. God is with us, providing for us, and invites us to be in a close relationship again—a relationship that can bring healing, restoration, and new life.
- Sin wasn't meant to be part of God's good plan. Even though Adam and Eve sinned, and we grapple with sin today, God seeks to restore our relationship. Through Jesus, God became human, conquering the power of sin through his crucifixion and resurrection. While sin and brokenness happen in the world, they don't have the last say.
- Our mistakes, fractured relationships, or the challenges we face in life don't shape who we are. Instead, Jesus tells us who we are and has the power to renew and redeem everything, including each of us.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - ☆ **Why is it difficult to trust God knows best?**
 - Have you ever found yourself asking, "Did God really say?" about something? What were you wondering about? Do you feel like your question is resolved?
 - Why do you think the serpent tried to create doubt about God's character and goodness when trying to tempt Adam and Eve?

OBJECT LESSON | Hoverball

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this object lesson, you'll need a standard ball and a [hover ball](#) to illustrate how the hover ball returns even when diverted off course. Hold up the hover ball, then throw it. Be sure to test the hover ball beforehand to make sure you have the hang of it. As you are teaching, say...*
- Imagine if I throw a regular ball to the back of the room—it stays there, right? Without anyone returning it, it remains distant from me. However, this hover ball behaves differently. It comes back to me. Surprising, right?
- Sometimes, we might believe that our relationship with God becomes distant when we sin, like that regular ball. If we wander away, it feels like reconnecting with God is out of reach. Take Adam and Eve, for instance—they chose their own definition of good, causing a rift with God. Yet, God doesn't remain distant.
- In reality, God is more akin to this hoverball. Even when we make mistakes and push God away due to our shame, God actively seeks us out, aiming to forgive our sins, mend our brokenness, and bring us back into a close relationship.

SCRIPTURE | Romans 5:1–5

- While we know God makes things right, there are moments when feeling distant from God can be tough. Last week, we talked about how God brings beauty from chaos. Our mistakes or those of others can leave us feeling lost and hurt. But the good news? God is always active, shining light into even the darkest parts of our story.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Romans 5:1–5.*
- Challenges like sin, darkness, and pain can be heavy. But they're not the end of the story. We can find hope and peace through our relationship with God, whether it's illness, addiction, strained relationships, or power struggles. Even when things look bleak, we trust that Jesus is working to mend and restore.
- Scripture reminds us of a lasting peace with God. This isn't just a fleeting feeling—it's a deep, unwavering confidence because God stands with us. Even in tough times, our peace remains. We still see glimpses of God's love and kindness in this imperfect world.
- As the world is renewed, God is also shaping us—building our resilience, molding our character to be more like Jesus, and filling us with hope because **sin isn't the end of our story.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

STORY | When I Tried to Run From God

- There were moments in my life when shame from poor decisions tempted me to distance myself from God. However, **sin isn't the end of our story.**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a personal story about a time you felt a mistake had strained your relationship with God. Discuss your realization that God remained with you, the lessons learned, and how your perspective of God evolved. Alternatively, invite a volunteer to share their own experience.*
- Despite efforts to pull away, God's presence became evident. I realized God had never left and was always present. Here are some steps you can take this week to remind yourself that mistakes aren't the final chapter:
 - **TURN TO JESUS' EXAMPLE:** Think about Adam and Eve listening to the serpent rather than following God's guidance. Instead of defining what's right based on desires that come and go, look to Jesus' life as the true example of God's goodness.
 - **LISTEN FOR GOD'S INVITATION:** Remember when God called out to Adam and Eve, asking, "Where are you?" If your choices have created a distance between God and those around you, pay attention to the questions God might be asking you. If you feel prompted by a question from God, take a moment to write it down and honestly address it in your prayers.

- **ACCEPT GOD'S REDEMPITIVE HAND:** God seeks reconciliation with us and wants to remove our shame. When you feel burdened by guilt, turn back to God, accept forgiveness, and allow grace to take away your shame. As a symbolic gesture, any time you feel shame this week, write down any shame on paper, crumple it, and throw it away, visualizing your release from its grip.
- Let Jesus' life guide your understanding of what's right and the best path to take in life. When we follow his example, we're reminded we may not always get it "right" the first time, but there is always a way through tough decisions.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ✪ **When you recognize that you did something that hurt your relationship with God, are you more likely to dwell in your shame or guilt or make it seem like it's not that big of a deal? Why do you think that is?**
 - ✪ **What do you tend to believe God thinks of you when you sin? This week, what would it look like to trust God's love for you if it isn't conditional on your actions?**

REFLECTION | Why Does It Have To Be This Way?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this reflection, students need [the handout included in this week's series materials](#) and something to write with. Give your group time to reflect on how sin isn't the end of their story. Consider playing some reflective music as students respond. Consider playing some calming music as teenagers reflect.*
- These are some pretty big ideas, and it may take us some time to process how **sin isn't the end of our story**. So, let's try that now.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups.*
 - **Read Psalm 107:2. How do you think telling your story and experience of redemption on the other side of sin might help others in their circumstances?**
 - **Today, who is one person you can ask to help remind you that sin isn't the end of your story? What will you ask for their help with?**

PRAYER | Where Are You?

- Sin can disrupt our lives and the world around us, but it doesn't have to define our story. Like with Adam and Eve, God reaches out, asking, "Where are you?" Your response can be the first step back towards God. There's no need to continue hiding.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this prayer, gather tea lights, a table, and lighters, and ensure leaders supervise the safe lighting of candles. Encourage teenagers either to initiate or rekindle their relationship with God. After lighting a candle, prompt them to pray for a few moments.*
- If you're feeling lost and ready to return to or start your relationship with God, I encourage you to light a candle. As you do, remember that God desires closeness with you. God is not distant.
- Remember, God has the power to turn challenges into opportunities. Even in moments of darkness, the books of Genesis and Romans reassure us that **sin isn't the end of our story**.