



**Unit 5 Prontos--ESV
God, the Good Creator**



Curriculum for preschool and elementary age children,
training tools, music and other resources
are available for download or to order at:
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The PFI Companion Resources

While all the PFI resources are available for download at praisefactory.org, many of the resources are available for purchase as hard copies, too.

There are three companion resources for each of the sixteen PFI units:

PFI Core Curriculum Book (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Core Curriculum book contains the curriculum introduction, the lesson plans, stories and the activities for each Bible Truth in a unit. There are three stories and resources per Bible Truth: an Old Testament, New Testament and church history/missions story. All three reinforce the key Bible truth concept.

PFI Song Book (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Unit Song Book provides lead sheets and sign language for every song used in the unit. The audio music is available online for download.

➔ PFI Prontos (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Prontos book provides all of the unit's take home sheets. They are offered separately from the rest of the curriculum because they are usually photo-copied. These take-home sheets include the key concepts, lyrics to the songs, the session story, some review questions, a prayer and an activity sheet.

All of these materials may be photocopied for non-commercial church, classroom or school use by licensed users.

About the PFI Prontos

The PFI Prontos are the take-home devotionals for each session of PFI.

They include the Bible Truth, its related Bible verse, the lyrics and meaning blurb for the hymn and Bible verse song, three quiz questions, a prayer and two activity sheets for every story in the curriculum.

While the Prontos are designed as a reinforcement tool for parents to use with their children after session, the resources are so substantial as to be used as a curriculum by themselves. Additional activities can be downloaded online with each Bible truth.

Other Praise Factory Resources

PFI: Praise Factory Investigators is the third in a family of three, inter-related curriculums:

- Hide 'n' Seek Kids (focus group: ages 2-4; adaptable range: ages 2-pre-K 5's)
- Deep Down Detectives (focus group: ages 4--6's; adaptable range: ages 3-2nd grade)
- PFI: (focus group: grades K-5th grade; adaptable range: pre-K 5's-6th grade)

Each curriculum teaches the same biblical themes, but are presented in greater depth as the children grow and develop. Together, the curriculums work like an expanding spiral of truth that returns to reinforce the same truths with each curriculum, yet leading the children to deeper understanding with each step up.

Learn more about these curriculums as well as other resources and ideas for reaching children with the gospel at: www.praisefactory.org.



Unit 5 Prontos

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:
Can You Tell What God Made?
God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

God created everything in the beginning. There was nothing but Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then He spoke, and it all came to be. He created everything in the world around us and everything in the great universe of stars and planets we see in the sky. He created all the creatures of heaven, too. He created it all through Jesus and for Jesus.

When God made everything, He called it very good. It was delightful to Him. It was pure and perfect. It was all exactly made according to His perfectly wise plan. There was nothing wrong or bad in God's creations when He created them. Nothing got sick or died. Nothing disobeyed Him. Everything did what He created them to do, and they did it joyfully. They did everything without wearing out or even making mistakes.

Everything God created points back to Him, their Creator. They are little pictures of something about Him. Look around you. What do God's creations tell you about Him?

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

CASE STORY

Genesis 1, Job 38:7, Psalms 11:1-2; 33:6,9; Jeremiah 10:12; Colossians 4:1, Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11

Our story is called:

The Case of the Working Words

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who had the working words? What did the working words do?
2. What was so unusual about the work they did?

Our story today takes place so long ago that I can't even tell you when it took place. For you see, it takes place at the very beginning of the world. Well actually...BEFORE the beginning of the world. Before there were places, before there were creatures, before there was time!

Were there days and nights? Nope. Were there people? Nope. Were there animals? Nope. Were there rocks? Nope. There was nothing that you think of when you think of the world. There was nothing but Nothingness....and God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Now Nothingness might sound very empty and sad to us, but it wasn't for God. God is always completely, overflowingly happy within Himself. So even when there was Nothingness, God was not bored. He was not lonely. He didn't NEED anything to do. He didn't NEED anyone else to enjoy Him or glorify Him. No. God needed nothing at all.

But even though God didn't NEED to do anything, there was something God very much WANTED to do. He wanted to create a great and wonderful world. And even though God didn't NEED anyone else, He very much WANTED to make someone else who could enjoy Him and glorify Him. And who was this very special someone...well, actually someONES? Why it was people, that's who! People like you and me! Yes, that's right! Way back there, before the beginning, God planned to fill the Nothingness with a world that would be Something Wonderful. And He planned to share it-- and Himself!-- with us. And so God began to create the heavens and the earth.

Now when you or I make something, we have to start with stuff. Wood, clay, glue, paper, yarn or something! But not God! God didn't need supplies to make His wonderful world. He had something far more powerful and perfect to create with. Do you have any idea what it was? It was His wisdom and His words. That's right! God made everything by the power of His words alone! And it came out just

right, because He did it with His perfect wisdom.

So God spoke the word and first heaven came to be. How beautiful it was! God made it the special place of His presence. It would always be bright with the light of His glory...a light brighter even than the sun! And He made thousands and thousands of magnificent, powerful, beautiful creatures to live there: cherubim and seraphim—some of them with three, huge sets of wings! They would be God's heavenly servants. They would joyfully sing His praises...so they did as God turned to create the rest of the world.

Heaven was glorious, but the earth was still formless, empty and dark. But God's Spirit was there and all that was about to change! God said, "Let there be light." (Genesis 1:1, NIV 1984). And as soon as He spoke, beautiful rays of light blazed out, pushing aside the darkness. God called the light 'day' and the darkness he called 'night.' God saw that the light was good. Pure and perfect. Exactly made for His good purposes. There was evening and morning: the first day of creation—the Something Wonderful God was making.

The second day came, and even more amazing changes with it. Now the world burst with light, but the earth was not much to look at. It was nothing but a shapeless heap of water. God spoke to the waters and said, "Let there be a great, open space that separates the waters into water above and water below."

The waters obeyed. Some water went up into clouds. The rest stayed upon on the earth. And in between, there was the beautiful, crisp open blueness, God called "sky". How beautiful the light sparkled in the sky! How softly shadows fell that evening as night came to God's new world at the end of Day Two!

On Day Three, God did even more wonderful things to the earth. "Waters, gather together. Let the dry land appear," God said. And at once, the earth shook as mighty mountains pushed their peaks above the water. Rolling hills, flatlands and deep valleys appeared, too. God called the dry ground 'land,' and the gathered waters He called "seas." And God saw that it was good. Pure and perfect. Exactly made for His good purposes.

Then the LORD said, "Land, be filled with all kinds of plants with seeds." Immediately the lifeless, brown soil of the earth burst forth with color. There were blooming flowers, bright, leafy bushes, and juicy, fruity trees. Beneath them,

a carpet of lush, green grasses sprouted up. Once more, the LORD looked at what He created and saw that it was good. Pure and perfect. Exactly made for His good purposes. Once more there was evening, and there was morning—the third day of Something Wonderful.

The first three days of our world had come and gone. God had truly made places that were Something Wonderful. But now it was time to fill these beautiful places with lots and lots of creatures.

First God filled the place He had made with light and darkness. "Lights, shine in the sky! One for the day, and another for the night," the LORD commanded. "The sun will be the powerful light that will give light to the earth during the day. The moon and the stars will be the gentle light of night. They will rise and set, over and over, marking time in days, seasons and years," He said. And so everything happened, just as God planned. The LORD looked at what He created and saw that it was good. Pure and perfect. Exactly made for His good purposes. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day of Something Wonderful.

Then God filled the places He had made in the sky and the seas. And God said, "Waters, be filled with lots of living creatures." Colorful coral, tiny minnows, playful dolphins, mighty whales filled the waters at His command.

"Birds, fly above the earth, across the sky," the LORD said, and there the air was alive with fluttering wings. Parrots started squawking and twittering, hummingbirds flitted to and fro, and stately eagles sailed on the wings of the wind.

God blessed them and said, "Have lots of babies so that the seas are filled with sea creatures and the air is filled with birds," the LORD commanded them all. The creatures all delighted to obey. Soon the air would be filled with the chirp and flutter of baby birds. Soon the seas would bubble with wriggling, little fish. God saw that it was good. Pure and perfect. Exactly made for His good purposes. Fish and birds settled down as the sun set that day. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day of Something Wonderful.

When the sun rose on Day Six, the skies filled again with the flapping of wings; and the seas, with the leaps and splashes of fish. What a busy place God's world was becoming! Yet there was one place that was silent and still. Can you guess which one? It was the earth—the dry land.

But it wouldn't stay that way for long!

God's powerful words went to work again: "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock (cows, horses, sheep and such), creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." No longer was earth a quiet place! Countless wild animals, farm animals, reptiles, and bugs crept and climbed, leapt and dug. And God saw that it was good.

Oh, what a world God had created! How beautiful! How big! Who could even count how many creatures God had made! It was indeed Something Wonderful!

Now, at last, it was time to create the people God planned to share His creations with. "Let us make people in our image, in our own likeness," God said. So He made the first man and woman. And unlike any of the other creatures, God made them with a spirit inside their heart to know and love Him. They could talk to God and enjoy His closeness. They could look out upon all God's creations and praise Him for them. And everything they saw—from the glittering stars to the bouncy bugs, from the mighty mountains to the growling animals—was a reminder of the great God who made them all. They could see that the new world was truly Something Wonderful; and, that it was that way only because SOMEONE even more wonderful was behind it all: God, Himself!

"Have lots of children!" God told the man and the woman. "Fill up the earth with people! Explore it and make it all your home! Rule over all the creatures! Enjoy the fruit of the trees!" God was giving it all to them to enjoy, and they were happy to do just that!

God saw all that He had made, and it was not just good. It was very good! The Nothingness had been turned into an amazing world, bursting with beauty, color and life. Pure and perfect. Exactly made for His good purposes. Completely ready for God's story of faithfulness, love and mercy to begin. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day of Something Wonderful.

And so God created the heavens and earth in all its greatness.

Our Bible Truth is:
God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

Our Bible Verse is: Nehemiah 9:6

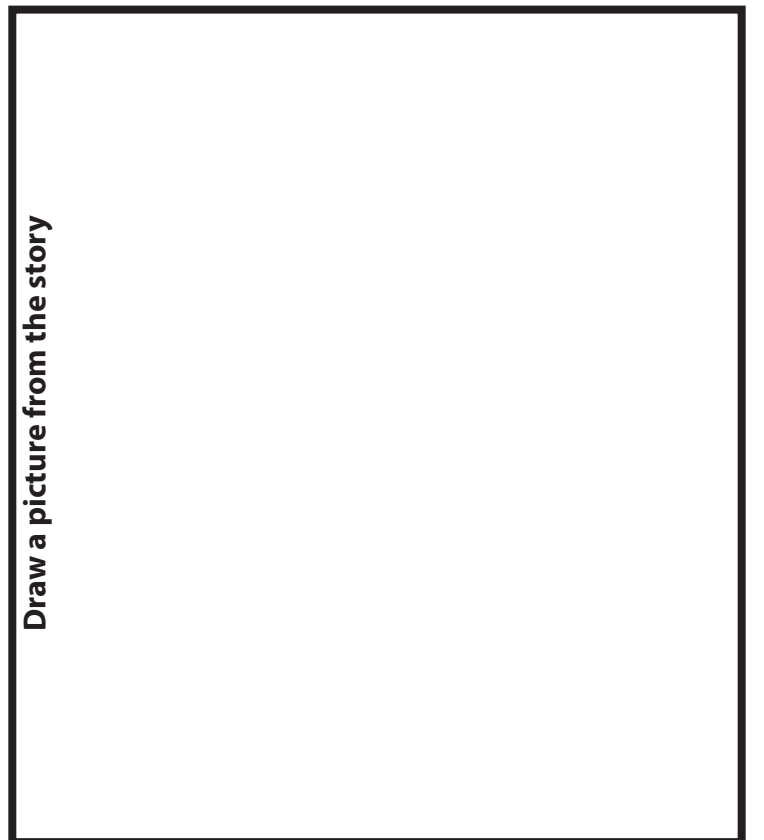
"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

It isn't amazing to think that as God made all of creation, He had you and me in mind? He changed Nothingness into Something Wonderful as an amazing display of His glory. And He placed people like you and me in the very middle of it to share with us these reflections of His glorious Self.

Today when you look up to the sky, or out upon grassy hills, or to pet a favorite fluffy animal, God wants us to remember they are His creations. Try to see the good things about Himself God wants to share with you as you enjoy them.

But the sad thing is that many times we enjoy the wonderful things God made, yet we don't think about Him. That's because we are sinners who have hearts that think so much about themselves and what they want, but not God and serving Him. Is there any hope for sinners? Yes, there is! For all who say sorry to God for their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, God offers forgiveness for their sins. He will fill them with His Holy Spirit and create in them a new heart to know and love Him—and that's the best kind of creating there is!

Let's praise our great Creator of all things. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts. Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us to love and delight in Him more through enjoying all His creations.



Draw a picture from the story

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God created everything on earth, but not everything in the universe. That was already there. Answer: False. God created everything in the beginning, even the universe.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who had the working words? What did the working words do? Answer: The LORD. They created everything in heaven and earth.</p> <p>b. What was so unusual about the work they did? Answer: God’s word was so powerful that He could create everything out of nothing...and every bit of it was very good!</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6 “You are the ____, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their ____, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and ____ that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.” Answers: LORD; host; all.</p>	<p>O, Worship the King <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 8</i></p> <p>Verse 3 Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite? It breathes in the air, it shines in the light, It streams from the hill, It descends to the plain, And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.</p> <p>Words: Robert Grant Music: Attr. Johan Michael Haydn</p> <p>This hymn reminds us that all of creation reflects God’s goodness to us. We see His goodness in the bountiful way He cares for us. When we look at the light streaming down from heaven to give us warmth and light; when we see the dew and the rain that feeds thirsty plants so we will have food to eat; in the beautiful hills God gives us to look at; in the flat plains that make good ground to grow crops. Seeing His goodness in His creation makes His people want to worship and praise Him.</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p align="center"><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the great, amazing Creator who created everything in this world with just Your word... and made it all very good!</p> <p>C We confess that we disobey You in our hearts, in our words, in our thoughts, in the things we do. We do not live the perfect way You created as to live. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T Thank You, God for making so many good things for us to enjoy and see what You is like. Thank You for making us.</p> <p>S God, help us see what You are like as we enjoy the wonderful things You created. Help us to be more thankful for Your good creations. Help us to joyfully obey You as our Creator. Work in our hearts, that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p>	<p>You Are the LORD, You Alone <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 9</i></p> <p>You are the LORD, You alone, You made the heaven with all their host, The earth and all that’s on it, The seas and all in them, And You preserve all of them, And the host of heaven worship You, And the host of heaven worship You, And the host of heaven worship You, You are the LORD, You alone. You are the LORD, You alone. Nehemiah Nine, six.</p> <p>Words: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>The Bible tells us that there is nothing that God did not make in the heavens or the earth in the beginning. He made all things and He gave life to it all. He is the one that keeps everything going. No wonder the angels--the host of heaven-- worship Him. Who is like the LORD! And this is why we should worship Him, our Creator, too.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

God created everything in the beginning. There was nothing but Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then He spoke, and it all came to be. He created everything in the world around us and everything in the great universe of stars and planets we see in the sky. He created all the creatures of heaven, too. He created it all through Jesus and for Jesus.

When God made everything, He called it very good. It was delightful to Him. It was pure and perfect. It was all exactly made according to His perfectly wise plan. There was nothing wrong or bad in God's creations when He created them. Nothing got sick or died. Nothing disobeyed Him. Everything did what He created them to do, and they did it joyfully. They did everything without wearing out or even making mistakes.

Everything God created points back to Him, their Creator. They are little pictures of something about Him. Look around you. What do God's creations tell you about Him?

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Swordless Samurai.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the Samurai? What was important about his sword?
2. What did he want even more than his sword? Did he find what he was looking for?

Our story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place about 140 years ago in Tokyo, Japan.

Excited and a little nervous, Neesima Shimeta rose up off the floor to face his great, Samurai master. This was one of the most important days in his life: his Gembuhu, the Samurai ceremony of manhood.

"Neesima," the Samurai master began, "for a thousand years, we Samurai have risked our lives to protect our Honorable Emperor and the sacred land of our forefathers from all enemies. Now it is time for you to take the vows of the Samurai and join us.

A Samurai must follow the Code of Bushido—the Way of the Warrior. He must promise to be just, sincere, honest, self-controlled and completely faithful. He must good and loving. Above all, a Samurai must keep constantly in mind, by day and by night, that he has to die. Do you promise to live this way?" the Master asked.

"Yes, Master, I do," Neesima promised.

"Then you are now no longer, a boy," the master announced. You are a man and a Samurai."

Taking a sharp razor, the master cut off Neesima's long, black forelocks. The rest of his hair the master pulled back into a ponytail. Metal arm and leg protectors and a breastplate were strapped in position. A helmet was placed on his head. Last of all, Neesima received his most precious gift—the daito katan, the 2-foot-long sword of the Samurai.

"Wear this sword at all times," the Master told him. "It is the badge of your high calling. It is your protection. Treat it honorably. The daito katan is sacred and we believe it has the life of the gods in it. To lose it or give it away is to give away your very self. Never do that," he warned.

Neesima bowed low as he took the sword and fastened it to his belt. His heart swelled with pride. Now he was a Samurai!

After the ceremony, Neesima went to the Shinto Temple to offer sacrifices and prayers to his ancestors, whom he

worshiped as gods. "You have been Samurai before me," he said to them. "Help me to honor by and dying as a faithful Samurai like you," he prayed.

Now Neesima went into training. He learned sword-play and horseback riding to train his body for battle. He read books by great men of Japan and China to train his mind and spirit to be calm and clear in battle. A Samurai had to prepare body, mind and spirit for battle.

But one day, Neesima found a very different book to read. It was book so hated that it was against the Japanese law to own or even read. It was God's Word, the Bible--written in Chinese.

Neesima snuck the Bible away where he could read it in secret. Excitedly he opened it up to the first page and started reading: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He made, and it was very good," Neesima read.

Neesima was shocked. "I've never heard anything like this before! A God who is more than just a powerful force or ancestors who lived long ago?" he thought. "I must read more!"

So Neesima read the rest of the story, learning how God created everything in the whole universe—even people. He put down the Bible and looked all around him as if seeing the world differently than ever before. New questions--then new answers--filled Neesima's mind. "Who made me, my parents? No, it was God," he could see that now. "God made my parents and let them make me. And who made this wooden table? A carpenter?" thought Neesima. "No, it was God! God created trees and the carpenter used them to make this table," Neesima realized.

The words Neesima read were about to completely change his life: "If God is the creator of this world, I must be thankful to Him," Neesima decided. "I must believe Him and I must find out His good purposes for my life so I can live to please Him," he decided. "But how?" Neesima wondered.

"Christians are not allowed in Japan and I am not allowed to out! Japanese people caught leaving the country are killed, but I must learn more about the Creator God!" Neesima thought. "I know! I will ask the Creator God for His help," he decided. So Neesima closed his eyes and prayed: "Oh, God. Look upon me and listen to me. Help me know what to do."

God soon answered his prayer. Neesima traveled the

Japanese seaport where an American captain, Captain Savory, helped him. He hide Neesima in the supplies closet of his ship and snuck him out of Japan to Shanghai, China. Neesima was free!

Shanghai was so different from anything Neesima had ever seen before. There were many new things to do and to buy. But, there was only two things that Neesima wanted: a Chinese Bible and a boat ticket to America, where he could learn more about the Creator God.

It didn't take Neesima long to find a Bible, but oh, how expensive it was! He had hardly any money--certainly too little to buy a Bible. There was only one way for Neesima to get that Bible: he would have to sell his precious Samurai sword!

"I made a promise to always serve the Emperor and Japan," Neesima remembered. "Without my sword I will break that promise. This sword is the sign of my noble family and calling. They told me it even had the life of our gods in it. Not a day has passed when it was at my side. Should I really break that promise? Should I dishonor my family?" Neesima wondered.

It was a big decision, but Neesima knew what he should do. He sold his sword and bought the Chinese Bible. Now he would have the Creator God's words to read over and over again. What could be more important than that? Next Neesima headed down to the docks of Shanghai in search of the other thing he wanted most of all: a boat to take him to America.

"Want learn Bible. Take me?" Neesima Shimeta asked captain after captain, using the little English he knew.

At last, Captain Taylor of the Wild Rover agreed to help him. "Serve as my cabin boy and I will take you to Boston (America)," he offered Neesima. Neesima quickly agreed. At last he was on his way to America!

The voyage from Shanghai to Boston took eight, long months. Neesima spent every free moment either reading his Chinese Bible or learning English from the other sailors. The more he read, the more Neesima saw what he didn't know. He needed a teacher, if he was to really understand about the Creator God, but how would he get one? Teachers were expensive and he had no money.

"I will ask the Creator God to help me again," Neesima decided. "He helped me before, He will help me now."

God answered Neesima's prayer as soon as he arrived in Boston. Captain Taylor took Neesima to see Mr. Hardy, the

owner of Wild Rover. Hardy was a Christian and as soon as he heard Neesima's story, he wanted to help.

"Neesima, I want to help you learn all you can about the Creator God and His message," Mr. Hardy told him. "I want to pay for your food, your housing, your clothes, your schooling and anything else you might need. I want you to be like a son to me while you live in America."

"Praise God! And thank you, sir!" Neesima exclaimed. How amazing was this Creator God! There was nothing He had not provided him. He had answered Neesima's prayers better than he could have hoped for!

At school, Neesima learned so much about the Creator God and His message. It was here that he understood the Creator God's offer of salvation through Jesus, to all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. He learned how the Creator God created a new heart in all who do, filling them with Holy Spirit, that they might know and love Him.

"What wonderful news this is," Neesima exclaimed. He eagerly turned away from his sins, trusted in Jesus as His Savior and was baptized.

Neesima loved his time in America, but soon he wanted to go home. Many changes had come to Japan. No longer was it against the law to be a Christian. A new government had been formed and the Samurai were the leaders of it. As a Samurai himself, perhaps Neesima would be allowed to tell many the good news of Jesus.

Neesima went to Mr. Hardy and said, "I must go back home. I want to tell my people about the Creator God. I want to start a Christian school for Samurai boys. They are the future leaders of Japan. What great things God might do in Japan, if there are more Samurai Christians like me. Will you help me?" Neesima asked.

Mr. Hardy was happy to help. He collected \$5000 for Neesima to use to start his school.

Back in Japan, Neesima had to fight hard to start his school. Many people still did not like Christianity, even though it was not against Japanese law anymore. But at last Neesima had his first class of thirty, Samurai young boys.

Oh, how God blessed Neesima's work. As these boys heard about the Creator God and the message of salvation through His Son, Jesus, each and every one of them believed and were saved! They all grew up to be pastors and important leaders in the Japanese government and

about Jesus, just as Neesima had hoped.

Our Bible Truth is:

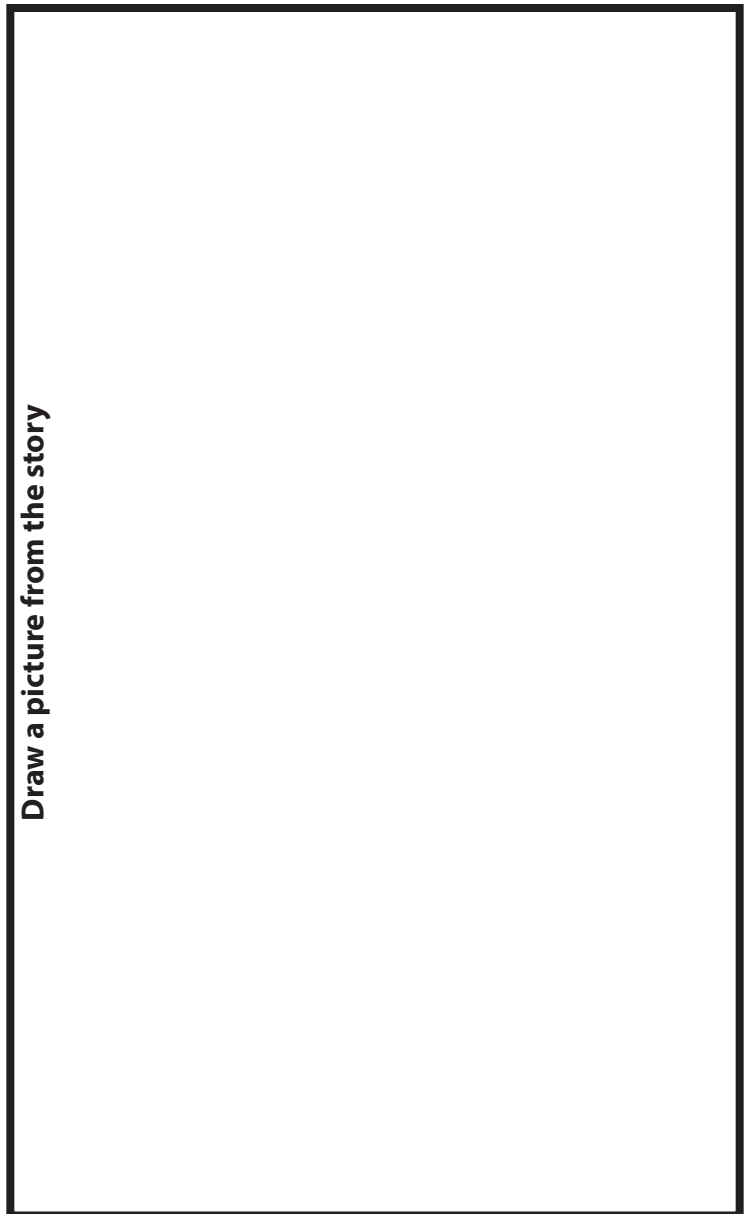
God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

Our Bible Verse is: Nehemiah 9:6

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

God didn't just create the multitudes of heaven to worship Him, but as Neesima learned, God created people--like you and me-- to worship Him, too. How can we do that? Like Neesima, we can turn away from living a life just for ourselves and turn to live for God. We can ask Jesus to be our Savior and forgive us of our sins. And when we do, God's Holy Spirit will live in our hearts, helping us not only worship God, but enjoy knowing Him and loving forever--and that is best of all!

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God called everything He made “pretty good.” It looked good, but it didn’t come out exactly according to His plan. Answer: False. God called everything “very good.” He created it all according to His perfectly wise plan.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who was the Samurai? What was important about his sword?

Answer: Neesima Shimeta. A Samurai is a special soldier. His sword is not just his weapon, but the symbol of who he was. They believed it had the life of the gods in it. A Samurai never got rid of his sword.

b. What did he want even more than his sword? Did he find what he was looking for?

Answer: To learn more about the Creator God who created everything in the beginning. Yes, he did! Not only learned more about the Creator God, but he trusted in Jesus as his Savior. He came to know God in his heart!

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6

“You are the LORD, you _____. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the _____ and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven _____ you.”

Answers: alone; earth; worships.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

O, Worship the King

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 8

Verse 3

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
it shines in the light,
It streams from the hill,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Words: Robert Grant Music: Attr. Johan Michael Haydn

This hymn reminds us that all of creation reflects God’s goodness to us. We see His goodness in the bountiful way He cares for us. When we look at the light streaming down from heaven to give us warmth and light; when we see the dew and the rain that feeds thirsty plants so we will have food to eat; in the beautiful hills God gives us to look at; in the flat plains that make good ground to grow crops. Seeing His goodness in His creation makes His people want to worship and praise Him.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the Creator God who made heaven and earth.

C God, we confess that we are sinners who need to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, just as Neesima did.

T God, we thank You for letting us hear about You, the Creator God, through Your Word, the Bible, just like You did Neesima.

S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Please help us to want to learn more about You, like Neesima did. Help us to want to know You so much that we would even be willing to give up the thing that was most important to us in order to know You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

You Are the LORD, You Alone

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 9

You are the LORD, You alone,
You made the heaven with all their host,
The earth and all that’s on it,
The seas and all in them,
And You preserve all of them,
And the host of heaven worship You,
And the host of heaven worship You,
And the host of heaven worship You,
You are the LORD, You alone.
You are the LORD, You alone.
Nehemiah Nine, six.

Words: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012

The Bible tells us that there is nothing that God did not make in the heavens or the earth in the beginning. He made all things and He gave life to it all. He is the one that keeps everything going. No wonder the angels--the host of heaven-- worship Him. Who is like the LORD! And this is why we should worship Him, our Creator, too.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

God created everything in the beginning. There was nothing but Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then He spoke, and it all came to be. He created everything in the world around us and everything in the great universe of stars and planets we see in the sky. He created all the creatures of heaven, too. He created it all through Jesus and for Jesus.

When God made everything, He called it very good. It was delightful to Him. It was pure and perfect. It was all exactly made according to His perfectly wise plan. There was nothing wrong or bad in God's creations when He created them. Nothing got sick or died. Nothing disobeyed Him. Everything did what He created them to do, and they did it joyfully. They did everything without wearing out or even making mistakes.

Everything God created points back to Him, their Creator. They are little pictures of something about Him. Look around you. What do God's creations tell you about Him?

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

CASE STORY

Matthew 24; Luke 21:25-33; Mark 13:24-28; 2 Peter 3; Revelation 20-22

Our story is:

The Case of the Second New.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. What was new? Who was making it new? When?
2. What was different about the second New from the first New?

Our story takes place in New Testament times, just after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. It starts out the Mount of Olives, just outside of Jerusalem.

What a wonderful forty days it had been for Peter, John and the other disciples! Jesus had risen from the dead and had appeared to them again and again. He comforted them, taught them, and answered their many questions. Now they understood so much more of God's plan of salvation for the world, but oh, there was still so much more they wanted to know! And on this particular day, as they walked with Jesus up the tree-covered Mount of Olives, the future was on their minds.

Before His death, Jesus had told them what it would be like before He would come back and bring the kingdom of God. "There will dark days of war, hunger and earthquakes. God's people will suffer and die at the hands of their enemies. The good news of salvation will be preached to every people in the world, and then the end will come," Jesus said.

"At that time, I will come on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. All will see Me. I will send My angels to gather up all My people to be with Me. The heaven and earth God created long ago will be no more, but My words will last forever," Jesus promised.

Now that Jesus had saved God's people and risen from the dead, the disciples wondered if it was time for those days to come.

They decided to ask Jesus: "Lord, are You going to restore the kingdom to Israel now? Now will You start ruling here as king?"

Jesus answered them—but not at all the way they expected. "It is not for you to know the times or dates that God the Father has planned," He told them. "What you need to know is this: God is going to send the Holy Spirit to you. He will give you power to be My witnesses here in Jerusalem, and all the way to the ends of the earth.

Tell the whole world the good news of salvation!"

If Jesus' words had not been what they expected, what Jesus did next was even more of a surprise. For right then, right before their eyes, Jesus was taken into heaven, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Peter, John and the others just stood there looking up into the heaven. They could hardly believe it! Jesus was gone!

"Suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them [--they were angels!] "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11, NIV 1984)

Peter, John and the others left the Mount of Olives and headed back to Jerusalem with minds full of what they had seen and heard. "When would they see Jesus again? When would He bring His kingdom? When would the old be gone and the new come?" they must have wondered. Oh, how they longed for that day! But until it did come, they knew what they were to do: tell all people, everywhere, the good news of salvation through Jesus. And so after receiving the Holy Spirit, that's just what the disciples did. Starting in Jerusalem, then traveling further and further away.

There was much to rejoice about in those days. Many people listened to the disciples' good news of salvation and believed. Many little churches of believers sprouted up, not just in Jerusalem and Israel, but in other countries, too, as the disciples and others took the good news of Jesus far and wide. How happy they were to see so many saved!

But I'm sad to say, life wasn't just rejoicing for those believers. It was hard, too. Jesus had warned them that they would suffer at the hands of their enemies, and they did! People began to make fun of them for believing in Jesus and for saying He was coming back. Sometimes they were not allowed to work or even to buy food because they were Christians. Some were beaten. Others were killed. It was easy to be discouraged as all these terrible things happened.

God used Peter to comfort them. "Don't be discouraged! Remember what God told us through his prophets! He told us enemies would make fun of us, saying, "Where is this 'coming' Jesus promised? Everything is going on the same as it has since the beginning of the world!" But there

is something those people are forgetting. Back in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth by His word. By that same word, God has promised to bring an end to this world and to those who keep on rebelling against Him," Peter reminded the believers.

"I know it seems like God is being slow in sending Jesus back to set up God's kingdom, but He's not. He's just being patient and merciful, that many more people might turn away from rebelling against Him and be saved," Peter explained.

"Don't worry, the day is coming! Jesus will come back and bring God's kingdom. The heavens and earth God created long ago will be destroyed, but He will create a new heaven and earth. It will be the wonderful place where we live with God forever. So don't give up!" Peter urged them. "Keep telling others about Jesus! Keep looking for His return!"

Peter's words were comforting, but John's were even more comforting! For one Sunday, God gave John a most amazing vision to encourage God's people with. It was a picture of the wonderful life God's people would have with God in His kingdom in the new heavens and earth. John wrote it all down for the suffering believers to read over and over: "...I saw God seated on a great white throne," John wrote. "Earth and sky went away. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth God created.

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It was as beautiful as a bride on her wedding day. It shone with the glory of God, like a shiny beautiful jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. An angel measured the city with the stick. It was huge, perfect square: 1400 miles as wide and high and long! Its walls were tall and 200' thick. They were made from others jewels of many colors. Its gates were each made from a giant pearl and its main street was made of pure gold.

God's very throne will be in the city, and His people will serve and worship Him, face to face. There will be no more sun or moon or night. No one will need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the glory of the Lord God will be their light.

And coming out from the throne of God and running right down the city's main street, stands the river of life, crystal clear and pure. On both sides of the river, stands the tree of life, bursting with the fruit of eternal life.

This is where God’s people will live with God forever,” John told wrote. “They will be his people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old way of things has passed away.”

Then from the throne, King Jesus made this promise to God’s hurting people on earth: “I am making everything new! He who [keeps on obeying Me to the end will receive] all of this. I will be his God and he will be My dearly, adopted child. Tell all these things to God’s people, John,” Jesus said. Remind them that the best is yet to come! Urge them to keep enduring and keep being patient. Behold, I am coming soon!”

These were but pictures of what life in the new heaven and earth of God’s Kingdom will be like, For no eye has seen, no mind has conceived of all that God has prepared for His people when they come to live in the new heavens and earth with Him forever. How wonderful that will be! Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Our Bible Truth is:

God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

Our Bible Verse is: Nehemiah 9:6

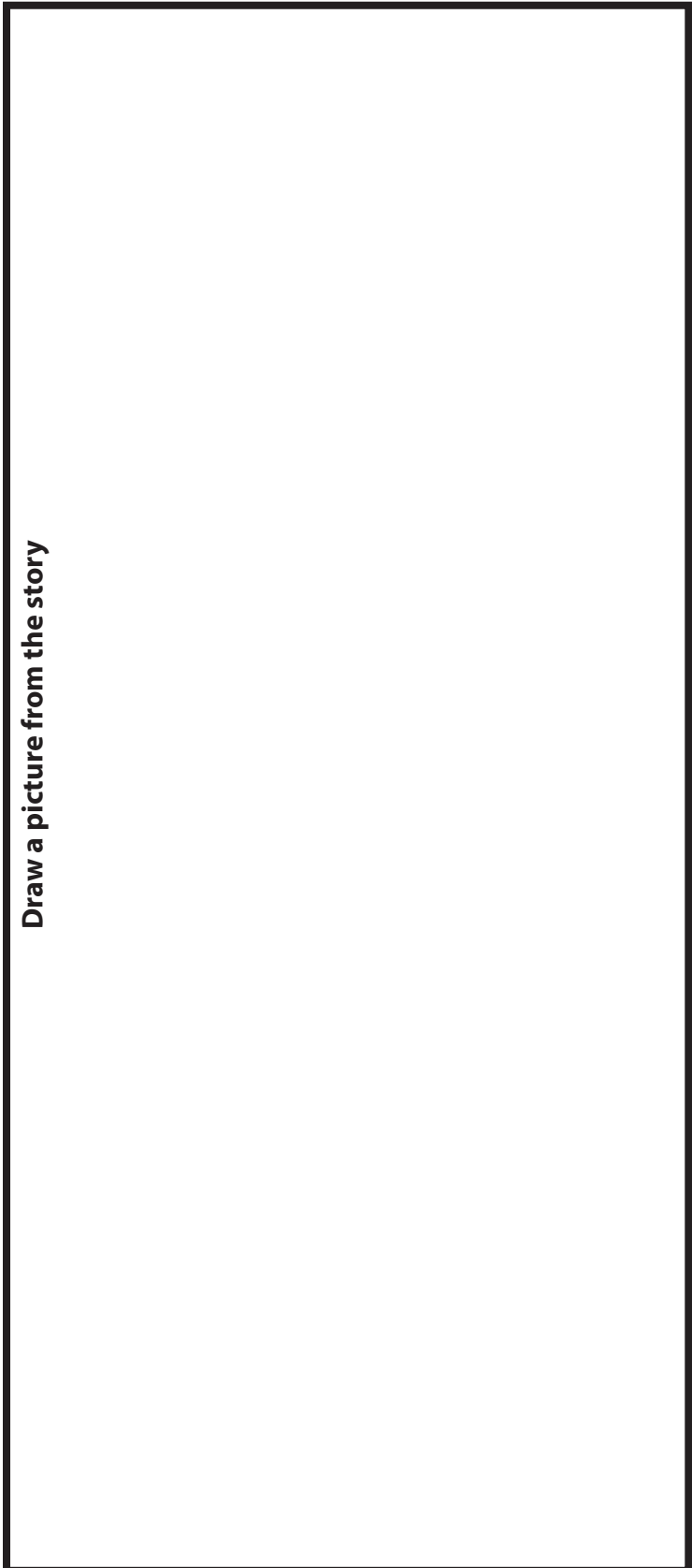
“You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.”

Two thousand years have passed since the days of Paul, John, and those other first believers in Jesus, and still we are waiting for Jesus to return and the new heaven and earth to be created. God’s plan to save people has included many, many more millions of people throughout all these thousands of years than Peter, John, or those other first believers would have ever imagined. God is so good and merciful!

There are people who make fun of Christians today, just like there were back then. People who do not believe that Jesus will ever come back. But, God’s people know that He will return, on just the right day, at just the right time, when God’s plans are complete. Then, the earth and heaven created so long ago by God, will pass away. It will be time for God to create a new heaven and new earth, and for the glorious, never-ending happiness of King Jesus

with God’s people to begin.

There are people who make fun of Christians today, just like there were back then. People who do not believe that Jesus will ever come back. But, God’s people know that He will return, on just the right day,



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

Everything God created point back to Him, their Creator. When we look at God’s creations we can learn something about Him.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. What was new? Who was making it new? When?

Answer: Heavens and earth were being made new. God was making it new at the end of time, when God’s plans for this world are completed.

b. What was different about the second New from the first New?

Answer: When God creates the heavens and earth the second time, it will be perfect and stay that way. It will be the home of God and His people forever. It will be filled with God’s glory and presence in a greater way than in this world.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6

“You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the ___ of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the ___ and all that is in them; and you ___ all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.”

Answers: heaven; seas; preserve.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

O, Worship the King

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 8

Verse 3

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
it shines in the light,
It streams from the hill,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Words: Robert Grant Music: Attr. Johan Michael Haydn

This hymn reminds us that all of creation reflects God’s goodness to us. We see His goodness in the bountiful way He cares for us. When we look at the light streaming down from heaven to give us warmth and light; when we see the dew and the rain that feeds thirsty plants so we will have food to eat; in the beautiful hills God gives us to look at; in the flat plains that make good ground to grow crops. Seeing His goodness in His creation makes His people want to worship and praise Him.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the God who has perfect timing and complete control over everything. He will come back and create the new heavens and earth at just the right time.

C God, we confess that many times we do not think about being ready for Jesus to come back. We act like we don’t care. Many times we don’t tell others about Jesus so they can be ready for His coming.

T God, we thank You that Jesus will come back and make a new heavens and earth for His people to live in with Him forever. There will be no sin or death in it; and, He will live with them forever. How wonderful that will be

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to be ready for His return.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

You Are the LORD, You Alone

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 9

You are the LORD, You alone,
You made the heaven with all their host,
The earth and all that’s on it,
The seas and all in them,
And You preserve all of them,
And the host of heaven worship You,
And the host of heaven worship You,
And the host of heaven worship You,
You are the LORD, You alone.
You are the LORD, You alone.
Nehemiah Nine, six.

Words: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012

The Bible tells us that there is nothing that God did not make in the heavens or the earth in the beginning. He made all things and He gave life to it all. He is the one that keeps everything going. No wonder the angels--the host of heaven-- worship Him. Who is like the LORD! And this is why we should worship Him, our Creator, too.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:
Can You Tell What God Made?
God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Created People Perfectly Good in the Beginning

People were God's last creation when He created the world. In some ways, God made people like the other earthly creatures. He gave them wonderful, perfect bodies. They were just right for all He wanted them to do and to be--just like He had done for the other creatures.

But in another way, God made people very different from everything else. You see, God created the other creatures after their own kind, but God chose to make people in His own image.

They were to be a one-of-a-kind reflection of who He is. So God gave to them alone a mind that could learn about the world and see how it showed what He was like--a bit like His great mind. And, He gave them alone a everlasting spirit that could know and love Him and each other--a bit like His Spirit. And because God created them good, they could know and love Him and each other without any sin or sadness. How wonderful that must have been!

God put these first people He made--Adam and Eve-- in charge of the earth. They and their children were to enjoy it, care for the creatures in it, explore it and fill it with people until they made all of it their home."

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:26-28, ESV

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

CASE STORY

Genesis 1-2; John 1:3

Our story is:

The Case of the Definitely Different Design.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was design differently?
2. What made them definitely different from everything else? What did this difference mean they could do?

Our story today takes place at the beginning of time, thousands of years ago, when the world was only six day old.

What was the world like at dawn on Day Six? The light of the moon and stars faded in the blazing brightness of the rising sun. Tall, mighty mountains rose high above the gently sloping hills and wide, grassy plains. Birds swooped across the brilliant, blue sky and nested in leafy treetops. Fish flip-flopped in the foamy ocean and wriggled in the clear, sparkling rivers. What was the world like on the dawn of the Day Six? Both air and water were full of life that morning.

And yet, something was still strangely still and quiet. It was as if the earth was waiting for something more. The forests silently waited for creatures to wander through its cool greenness. The plains waited for someone to nibble their juicy grasses. Small seeds lay sleeping under the fields, ready to sprout when there was someone to tend and harvest them. For you see, at dawn on Day Six, the LORD had yet to make any living creatures to live on the beautiful land that He had created.

All this was about to change. The LORD said, "Land, produce animals each according to their kinds! Produce farm animals and wild animals and creatures that move along the ground."

God spoke, and it came to be! There were pigs, cows, sheep, donkeys, horses, chickens and all sorts of other farm animals. There were zebras, koala bears, antelope, polar bears, squirrels and all sorts of other wild animals. There were bugs, worms, lizards, snails, and all sorts of other creatures that move along the ground. Now there were thousands of land creatures, all made by God, each according to their own kind. God saw all the creatures He had made and saw that it was good. How wonderful it was for the land to be filled with creatures, wriggling, digging, leaping and climbing all over the land of God's beautiful world!

The earth was abuzz with life, but the LORD was still not through with His Day Six creations. Now it was time for Him to create one last creature: the creature He had in mind as He created everything else in the world. A creature so special, that it would be unlike the rest. This one would not simply be made after its own kind, as God had made the others. This creature would be made in God's own image!

Created in God's own image? What in the world does that mean?! It means God would make this creature to be a bit like Himself. God was going to make this creature with a mind that could create things and think about things a bit like His great mind. This creature would be able to look at everything God created and know that God created it, like God could. This creature could rule over other creatures and care for them, a little bit like God rules and cares for everything. This creature would be able to know the difference between good and evil— and choose one over the other. And most amazing of all, this creature would have an everlasting spirit—a soul that would never die, a bit like God's great, eternal Spirit. With this spirit, this creature could know and love God. Wow! What a creature, this last one was to be!

Do you know who is this last creature? Was it the dog? The buffalo? Maybe the elephant? No, of course not! It was people! That's right! People were God's most special creation, made on Day Six.

So the LORD said: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7, NIV 1984)

God had made man special and now He would make a special place for him to begin life. The other creatures built their own nests or dug their own holes, but God, Himself, made a special home for man. He planted a garden in the east, in a place He called Eden; and there He put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were beautiful to look at and delicious for eating. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden and the lands around it.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:8-10, 15-17, NIV 1984)

What a lot had happened since the dawn of Day Six! God had created land animals, then He had created man. Now He made him a home with food, shelter and water. It seemed like everything the man would need. But it wasn't. God still had one more very, very special something to create for the man—or I guess I should say someONE. Can you guess who it was?

Let's hear: "The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found." (Genesis 2:18-20, NIV 1984)

As all these creatures paraded before him, Adam saw beautiful animals that would be lovely to look at; strong animals who could help him with his work; soft animals who would be nice to touch and snuggle with; and birds whose melodious voices would be soothing to listen to. But none of them was the right helper Adam needed. None of them had an everlasting spirit inside their bodies. They didn't have minds and hearts that could know, love and have fellowship with God and with others. They couldn't look around at all of creation and see how it reflected God's glory. They couldn't know right and wrong, as Adam could.

"So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:21-22, NIV)

Adam looked in amazement at this special creature. She looked like him, and yet she was very different, too. God had made her beautiful, strong, soft. He gave her a sweet, melodious voice. Best of all, she had an everlasting spirit inside her body. She had a mind and heart like Adam, which could know, love and have fellowship with God and others. Adam could share with her all of God's creations

and enjoy how it reflected His glory. She could know right and wrong. This was the helper Adam was looking for!

“The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” (Genesis 2:23, NIV 1984) Right then and there, they were married and began their wonderful life together in complete purity and honesty.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. (Genesis 2:27-30, NIV)

Dawn of Day Six had long passed. Now the sun was setting deep in the west. Its warm rays were growing dim and the twinkling stars were beginning to show their faces from under the dark blanket of outer space once more. Animals of every kind nestled down for their first night in their newly-made dens. Birds roosted in the trees. And the man and the woman—Adam and Eve— were in their special garden, enjoying perfect fellowship with God and with each other, and delighting in the display of God’s glory in His wonderful creations all around them.

God looked at all He made and said it was very good. It was completely delightful. It was pure and perfect. There was nothing that needed to be improved or changed. It was ready for His plans. “And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.”

Our Bible Truth is:

God Created People Perfectly Good in the Beginning

Our Bible Verse is: Genesis 1:26-28

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Isn’t amazing to think about the special ways the Lord made us humans?! He made millions of creatures to fill this earth, yet we alone did He make in His own image. We alone can know Him, love Him and have fellowship with Him. We alone can look around at creation and see how it Let’s ask Him to use the special minds He gave us to learn about Him, to see His glory reflected in His creation and to rule well over the creatures of the earth.

Yet, there is a problem that all people have that Adam and Eve did not have on that first day. Since that most wonderful, most perfect of time, all people have chosen to disobey God. They have broken the perfect fellowship that we were made to have with God. And now, we deserve God’s punishment for our sins. But there is hope, isn’t there? Why? Because God sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life and offer up His life as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who will ever turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Let’s pray right now and ask God to work in our hearts, that we might turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our Savior. Let’s praise Him for being the great Creator who gave us hearts to know and love Him and who sent Jesus that we might know and love Him, even today.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God created people in His likeness. He made them all powerful and all wise like Himself. Answer: False. God did create people in His likeness, but not in those ways. He gave them a mind that was a bit like His great mind. He gave them a spirit a bit like His Spirit.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who had the working words? What did the working words do? Answer: The LORD. They created everything in heaven and earth.</p> <p>b. What was so unusual about the work they did? Answer: God’s word was so powerful that He could create everything out of nothing...and every bit of it was very good!</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Genesis 1:26-28 “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...” So God ___ man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God ___ them and said to them, “Be fruitful and ___ in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” Answers: created; blessed; increase.</p>	<p>All People Who on Earth Do Dwell <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 11</i></p> <p>Verse 1 All people that on earth do dwell, Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice; Him serve with fear, His praise forthtell; Come ye before Him and rejoice.</p> <p>Verse 2 The Lord, ye know, is God indeed, Without our aid He did us make; We are His folk, He doth us feed, And for His sheep He doth us take.</p> <p>Words Psalm 100; Paraphrased, William Kethes Music Genevan Psalter, 1551 Edition, attr. Louis Bourgeois</p> <p>This hymn reminds us that we, along with peoples of the earth, should serve and praise the Lord because He is our Creator. He made us to know Him and worship Him. Of all people, God’s people, have reason to rejoice in God, their Creator. He saved them through Jesus. He has made them His very own, special people, who He takes special care of.</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being our Creator and the Giver of the spirit inside us so that we might know and love You.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we don’t want to know, love or obey You.. Many times we want to do what we want to do—even if it is wrong. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You that for the spirit You gave each of us to know and love You.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Create in us a new heart, that knows You and loves You, as You created us to.</p>	<p>Then God Said <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 12</i></p> <p>Then God said, “Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image.” Then God said, “Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image.” Male and female, He created them, Male and female, He created them.</p> <p>Then God said, “Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image.” Then God said, “Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image.” Genesis One, twenty-six and seven.</p> <p>Words: Genesis 1:26-27, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>The Bible tells us God made people in the beginning. He made them in His image, that means, they reflect Him in a very special way. Of all the earthly creatures, they alone were created with a spirit, like God’s Spirit, that can know and love God. God created people to be able to see God’s glory in everything He made. And, He created them to care for the world He created as caretakers under Him.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Created People Perfectly Good in the Beginning

People were God's last creation when He created the world. In some ways, God made people like the other earthly creatures. He gave them wonderful, perfect bodies. They were just right for all He wanted them to do and to be--just like He had done for the other creatures.

But in another way, God made people very different from everything else. You see, God created the other creatures after their own kind, but God chose to make people in His own image.

They were to be a one-of-a-kind reflection of who He is. So God gave to them alone a mind that could learn about the world and see how it showed what He was like--a bit like His great mind. And, He gave them alone a everlasting spirit that could know and love Him and each other--a bit like His Spirit. And because God created them good, they could know and love Him and each other without any sin or sadness. How wonderful that must have been!

God put these first people He made--Adam and Eve-- in charge of the earth. They and their children were to enjoy it, care for the creatures in it, explore it and fill it with people until they made all of it their home."

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:26-28, ESV

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Mixed Up Man.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the Mixed Up Man? What was he mixed up about?
2. Who helped him not be mixed up anymore? What did he learn?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place in the 1970's, starting out in the United States.

"I can't believe those Christian missionaries! Who do they think they are going all around the world changing people's beliefs! Why do they think their religion is better than everyone else's?" Sam Turner angrily thought as he walked out of his anthropology class.

In class, his teacher told about native peoples who stopped worshiping their tribe's gods and became Christians when missionaries told them about Jesus. This may sound like something good to us, but not to this teacher. He didn't believe in the Bible nor the good news of Jesus. He thought it was very bad for people to change the gods they worshiped.

"There is no one, true God who made people in His image," the teacher told Sam and the other students. People are just very smart animals who make up their own gods and their own rules about right and wrong," he said. "Christians are all wrong! They shouldn't try to change these native people's beliefs" he told the class.

He thought his teacher was right. Sam didn't believe in the Bible or Jesus either. "One day, I am going to one of those faraway places where Christians have gone to tell people about Jesus," Sam decided. "I am going to see how they have ruined people. I want everyone to see that Christianity is not true and Christians shouldn't be allowed to tell native peoples about Jesus," Sam thought.

Sam got on an airplane and flew all the way from New York in America to Irian Jaya in Indonesia. Irian Jaya is on a large island with some of the wildest land and tallest mountains in the world (over 15,000 feet high!). There are rivers full of crocodiles and even fresh-water sharks. There are spiders big enough to eat birds. And deep in jungly mountains lived hundreds of tribes of people, still living in simple grass huts, hunting with spears and farming with stone tools. Many were fierce warriors who kept their

enemies' heads as prizes. Some even ate their enemies for food! Sam knew that Christians had been coming to Irian Jaya to tell these peoples about Jesus. Many were turning away from fierce ways and trusting in Jesus as their Savior. As they did, their whole lives changed.

"This will be the perfect place to see how the missionaries are ruining people," Sam thought. "I can't wait to tell others about all the bad things the Christians are doing to these native peoples. Maybe I can help stop missionaries from ruining other tribes," he decided.

Sam's plane glided below a circle of towering, green mountain peaks and landed on the tiny airstrip at Wamena village. Sam got out of the plane and felt like he had stepped back thousands of years in time. Men and women of the Dani tribe ran out from grass huts to greet him. They were dressed in almost nothing, their faces decorated with paint markings, and they wore wearing pig bone necklaces and nose pieces. These were the kind of native people Sam longed to see! Untouched by missionaries!

But it wasn't the Dani people who Sam had come to see. He had come to find the Nduga tribe. The Ndugas were a people feared for being cruel warriors. They were known for quickly killing strangers who came into their village. Like the other peoples of Irian Jaya, the Ndugas feared evil spirits. In the last few years, missionaries had come to their village and told them about Jesus. Sam was going there to see how Christianity had ruined the Ndugas. He wanted to prove his teacher right—and the missionaries wrong!

Sam strapped on his backpack and began the long, dangerous hike over the mountains and into the heart of wild Irian Jaya. He crossed deep mountain gulches on flimsy rope bridges. He grunted his way up steep, rocky trails and swam deep rivers filled with blood-sucking leeches and crocodiles. Huge swarms of mosquitoes pestered him every step of the way, but nothing would stop Sam from getting to the Ndugas in Mbuwa Valley...or would it?

Sam got very sick with malaria. His head pounded and his body burned with fever. His muscles ached and he kept throwing up. Sam wanted to stop, but he knew he had to keep going or else he would die. He must get help!

Somehow Sam made it to the Nduga village; but as soon as he did, he passed out on the ground and would not wake up! What would the Ndugas do to this stranger? Kill him like they did other strangers?

No, they would not! The Ndugas were a changed

people. The missionaries had told them the good news of Jesus and they believed! God had forgiven their sins and by His Holy Spirit, changed their hearts. No longer did they hate and kill. Now they loved God and others. They would even love this stranger. They gathered around Sam and tried to help him.

"Whoever this man is, he is very weak and near death," they realized. "We must do something quickly if we are to save him," they said.

They went to Aser, the one man in the village they thought could save Sam and said, "Aser, the missionaries trained you in medicine. Take this man and try to keep him alive."

Aser scooped up Sam's limp body in his strong arms and carried him away to his family's hut.

Day and night Aser and his family cared for Sam, doing everything they knew to keep him alive. Finally, days later, Sam began to stir. As he opened his eyes he was confused to see the plain, wooden plank walls and grassy roof of Aser's hut. "Where am I? What happened to me?" he thought.

Then he remembered: his journey, his sickness and then collapsing with sickness at the Nduga village. "Someone must have brought me here to take care of me, but who?" wondered Sam. "It must be this man," Sam realized, as Aser came toward him. Aser smiled at Sam and said something to him in a strange language. "Thank you!" Sam said to Aser. Aser nodded. Even though Aser did not know English, he seemed to understand.

Sam was getting better, but he still was very, very weak. Aser knew it would take many more days of rest and good food for Sam to get well. Each day he had children bring Sam steaming hot sweet potatoes to eat. When Aser saw that sweet potatoes would not be enough nourishment for Sam to get well, he went out and killed some of his own very precious chickens and ducks to feed him.

Sam could not believe the love and kindness of Aser and the Nduga people for him. "Weren't these people supposed to be fierce warriors? Weren't they known for killing strangers?" Sam puzzled. "What would have happened to him, if the missionaries hadn't come to train Aser in medicine? What had happened to change them into the caring, generous people who sacrificed so much to nurse him back to life?" Sam wondered.

Aser and the others tried to tell him, even though they

did not know much English: "It is the Creator God who changed us through Jesus. He took away our hate and sin. He made our hearts clean and changed us to what He meant us to be when He created us. We love and know Him. His love in us goes out to love you," they told Sam.

Sam could hardly believe what he saw and heard. He remembered what he had been taught in college: "There is no one true God who made people in His image. People are just really smart animals." Hadn't he come all the way to Irian Jaya to prove the missionaries wrong? But now Sam wondered if perhaps he was the one who was wrong. The Ndugas did not think the good news of Jesus had ruined them. They believed it had made them into who they had always meant to be!

Sam got well and stayed on with the Ndugas. They taught him how to farm sweet potatoes with simple, stone tools and how to make twig traps to catch wild pigs. Best of all, they taught Sam more about the God who had saved them and changed them.

The more Sam saw of the wonderful changes in the Ndugas, the more confused he was about what his teacher had taught him. "I must leave the Ndugas and find some English-speaking missionaries who can answer my questions," Sam decided. "I have to know the truth about humans. Are they just very smart animals or are they really created in God's image as the Christians say?" Sam decided. So very reluctantly, he said goodbye to his good friends, the Ndugas, and headed back over the mountains.

After days and days of traveling, Sam finally found some English-speaking missionaries at Jayapura. Sam told them his story and asked them lots of questions about the Bible and the good news of Jesus.

"Take this Bible and these books, Sam, they will help you to understand the truth about the one true God who made us in His image to know and to love Him," the missionaries said.

Sam thanked them and boarded a ship for America. Sam had come to Irian Jaya to prove that the good news of Jesus ruined people, but he left knowing how it changed their lives for the good.... He could how it had begun to change his life, too.

Our Bible Truth is:

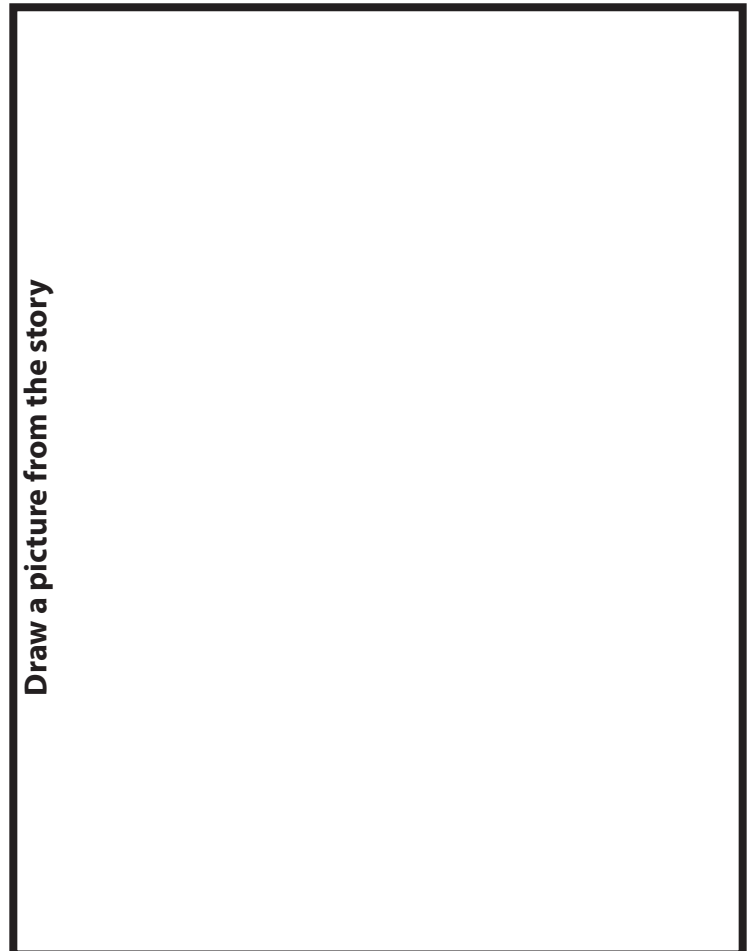
God Created People Perfectly Good in the Beginning

Our Bible Verse is: Genesis 1:26-28

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God used the changed lives of the Ndugas to show Sam Turner the truth about God, about Jesus and about people. God promises to transform our lives, when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

And if we do, He will use our transformed lives to show the people around us the truth about Himself, too. Let's praise God our Good Creator for choosing to make us far more than just smart animals, but unique creatures made in His own image. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts and help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to use our lives to show others the wonderful changes God makes when His Spirit is at work in our heart.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God put people on the earth to enjoy it, to fill it with people and to take care of it.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who was the Mixed Up Man? What was he mixed up about?

Answer: Sam Turner. He was mixed up about people. He thought they were animals, no different from the other mammals.

b. Who helped him not be mixed up anymore? What did he learn?

Answer: The Nduga people. When he saw the great change God's Holy Spirit did inside their hearts, God worked in his heart, too, helping him see that people are made in God's image. They are not just animals. He began to seek God, too.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Genesis 1:26-28

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our _____. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and _____ he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have _____ over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Answers: likeness; female; dominion.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the Creator who gave us a spirit to know and love You. You made us so very different from the animals.

C God, we confess that many times we don't want to know and love You, even though You gave us a spirit so that we can. Many times we use our spirit to rebel against You and to do things our own way--even if it's wrong. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for giving us a spirit to know and love You. Thank You for sending Jesus, who brings us forgiveness of sins and sends the Holy Spirit to work powerful changes in our hearts. He transforms even the worst of sinners into people who love You and others.

S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Give us a new heart, change our lives, like you did the Nduga people. Help us to love You and live for You like they did.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

All People Who on Earth Do Dwell

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 11

Verse 1

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with fear, His praise forthtell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

Verse 2

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed,
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His folk, He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.

Words Psalm 100; Paraphrased, William Kethes
Music Genevan Psalter, 1551 Edition, attr. Louis Bourgeois

This hymn reminds us that we, along with peoples of the earth, should serve and praise the Lord because He is our Creator. He made us to know Him and worship Him. Of all people, God's people, have reason to rejoice in God, their Creator. He saved them through Jesus. He has made them His very own, special people, who He takes special care of.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Then God Said

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 12

Then God said, "Let us make man,
Let us make man in our own image."
Then God said, "Let us make man,
Let us make man in our own image."
Male and female, He created them,
Male and female, He created them.

Then God said, "Let us make man,
Let us make man in our own image."
Then God said, "Let us make man,
Let us make man in our own image."
Genesis One, twenty-six and seven.

Words: Genesis 1:26-27, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

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We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

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PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

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CASE STORY

Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 4-8; John 1:3

Our story is:

The Case of the Twelve-year-old Troubles.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. What were the twelve-year-old troubles? Why did they seem impossible to fix?
2. Who fixed the troubles and why could he fix them?

This story is a New Testament story. It takes place when Jesus lived on earth. It is the story of a woman and a man who lived in Capernaum, a fishing town on the shores of the great Sea of Galilee.

With about two thousand people, Capernaum wasn't a very large town. Most people knew each other by name. And even if people might have forgotten the name of an old man here or a little girl there, everyone would have known the man and woman at the center of this story.

The man was Jairus, the synagogue ruler. He was one of the most important men in town.(A synagogue is a Jewish worship house.) He took care of the synagogue and chose men to read and preach from God's Word. So you can see, Jairus was a very important man, known by all.

The woman in our story was well known, too. Some people knew her because she was rich, but most people knew her for another, not so nice reason: she had a twelve-year-old trouble that no one wanted anything to do with.

What was her trouble? For twelve, long years, this woman had an illness that made her bleed. Her bleeding wasn't enough to kill her, but it was enough to make her sick and weak. And most importantly, it made her what the Old Testament laws called "unclean." That meant that anything she wore, or sat on, or slept on, or even touched had to be thrown away, or kept away from others--until she had been healed for seven days.

Everyone stayed from her, for by the law of Moses, if they touched anything or sat or slept anywhere she had been, they became unclean, too. They would have to take a bath, scrub their clothes and stay away from the synagogue and from everyone else for the rest of the day. The LORD gave these rules to His people not to be mean, but so the sick could rest and wouldn't spread their illness to others.

Now maybe it wouldn't be so bad to be sick or unclean for twelve hours or even twelve days, but twelve years would be terrible! That's what life had been for this lady.

lady. All those years she had never been healed. She lived alone. She ate alone. She sat alone. People cringed when she came near, afraid she might touch them and make them unclean, too. This poor woman couldn't even go in the synagogue or the Temple to hear the Bible read and to worship God! Her sickness would make it--and the people in it-- unclean!

How this woman wanted to be healed! She spent all the money she had on doctors and medicines. Each doctor had his own idea of what would cure her. Some believed if they made her bleed a lot more, then the sickness would leave her body with the blood. Others came up behind her and tried to scare the bleeding into stopping. Yet others gave her mixtures of spices and plants to drink. After each treatment they told her to say, "Arise, bleeding and be gone," but never did the bleeding stop.

But the woman was not the only one with a twelve-year-old problem. Jairus, the synagogue ruler had one, too. The very same year that the woman's bleeding problem began, the synagogue ruler's wife gave birth to a little girl. She was their only child and they loved her very, very much. All those twelve years that the woman had been suffering, they had been enjoying their dear daughter. But just lately, the little girl had become very sick, She lay on her mat, about to die.

There seemed to be no hope for this woman and Jairus' daughter! But then came the good news: Jesus had come! His boat had been spotted coming to shore there in Capernaum that very day! When both the woman and Jairus heard this, they began to hope. They had heard how Jesus healed terrible diseases at His word. The deaf left hearing, the blind left seeing, the paralyzed left walking, even the dead raised from the dead, some said. He forgave sins, too—something only God was supposed to do!

Jairus, himself, had probably asked Jesus to read the Bible and preach at the synagogue. He had probably Jesus' powerful preaching. One Sabbath, he may have even seen Jesus free a man from bondage to an evil spirit right there in the synagogue! Jesus healed people no ordinary man could heal. He taught things no ordinary teacher taught. He promised things no ordinary man had ever promised. Who was Jesus? They must have wondered.

The woman and Jairus did not completely know, but we do. Jesus was the very Son of God through whom all things in heaven and earth had been created in the

beginning. Through Him, human bodies were created and given the breath of life. Through Him, they received an everlasting spirit that could know and love God. He knew humans inside and out. He had power to create their bodies and spirits, and the power to heal their bodies and spirits. That's why He could do these amazing things.

The woman and Jairus headed straight for the shores of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus was. A large crowd surrounded Jesus already, but Jairus pushed his way through. His daughter was dying! He must act quickly!

When at last he got to Jesus, Jairus fell on his knees and pleaded, "My daughter is dying at home! Please come with me. Put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." Jesus turned to followed Jairus to his house; the great crowd of people tagging along, curious to see what Jesus would do.

At the same time, the unclean woman also made her way to Jesus. She slipped unnoticed among the crowd. Her clothes brushed against others, making many a man and woman unclean as she snuck through them. Like Jairus, she was desperate for Jesus' help. Now was her chance to see Him and she wouldn't miss it!

At last she stood right behind Jesus. She watched as the beautiful white and hyacinth-colored (reddish-purple) tassels on the four corners of his tallith--a large, rectangular rabbi's cloak--swayed with His footsteps. "If I just touch the hem of his cloak, I will be healed," she thought as she stretched out and lightly touched the tassles. Instantly her bleeding stopped. Her body was freed from suffering for the first time in twelve, whole years! She was healed!

Now if Jesus had been an ordinary man, perhaps that woman could have snuck away unnoticed. But, of course, Jesus was no ordinary man. He was the very Son of God through whom all things in heaven and earth had been created in the beginning. He had power to create their bodies and spirits, and the power to heal their bodies and spirits. At once Jesus knew that power had gone out from him to heal that woman. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"What a silly question," Jesus' disciples thought. "You see the people crowding against you," They said to Jesus, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to find the one who had done it. He knew He had healed her body, but He wanted

to care for her soul, too. He wanted to speak to her about her faith in Him that she might be saved. The woman, came and fell at his feet. Trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

He tenderly said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you," He encouraged her. "Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

While Jesus was still speaking to her, some men came from Jairus' house with bad news. "Your daughter is dead," they told him. "Why bother the teacher any more?"

Was it really too late for Jesus to help Jairus' little girl? No, it was not. Jesus turned to Jairus and encouraged him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

Leaving the rest of the disciples back with the crowd, Jesus took Peter, James and John and followed Jairus the rest of the way to his home. When they got there they were met with a great commotion of wailing women and flute dirges from inside the house--the professional mourners had already begun the customary seven days of mourning.

Jesus went into the house and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."

"What! Are you crazy!" the mourners mocked Jesus. "We know what a dead person looks like when we see one!"

But Jesus, the Son of God, had power to wake someone from death as easily as we might wake someone from a nap. "Leave the house and leave us alone," Jesus ordered them. Then Jesus, Jairus, his wife, Peter, James and John went into to where the dead child lay.

Jesus reached down and took the cold, lifeless hand of the little girl in His hand and then said, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").

Immediately the warmth and the color of life flooded back into the little girl's body. She opened her eyes and with Jesus' help, stood up and began to walk around. Her parents gave her something to eat. Jesus had raised their little girl from the dead!

What a day it was for that woman and Jairus! In only minutes, Jesus had taken care of both of their twelve-year-old troubles. Best of all, Jesus used the healings to help them put their faith in Him. He wanted them to know that He was the very Son of God through whom all things in heaven and earth had been created in the beginning. Yes, He had power to heal sicknesses and even restore life to

dead bodies. But through faith in Him, He gave something even better: their rebellious hearts could receive forgiveness and be changed. They could become God's people and know Him forever!

Our Bible Truth is:**God Created People Perfectly Good in the Beginning****Our Bible Verse is: Genesis 1:26-28**

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

What about you and me? What should we do when we or someone we love is very sick? Should we feel hopeless? No, we shouldn't! We should pray to our good Creator and ask Him to bring healing. Nothing is too hard for Him to do. If it is His good will, He will do it. And even if He does not heal them, we know that He is not only the God who heals sick bodies. He is the God who raises the dead! Yes! God promises to bring all His people to live with Him forever!

Who are God's people? They are those who turn away from wanting to disobey God and trust in Jesus as their Savior. To all who do, God forgives them all their sins. He sends His Holy Spirit to do a wonderful work in their heart, helping them love Him and know Him more and more. And one day, He will bring them to live with Him forever...and that will be best of all!

Let's praise our wonderful Creator, who made us and knows how to heal both our bodies and our hearts. Let's ask Him to use these bodies and hearts that He has created us with to praise, love and obey Him all our lives.

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God created people just like the other land animals, except that they were smarter. Answer: False. God did give people bodies that are like other land mammals in some ways. But, only to people did He also give a spirit that can know and love Him; and, that never dies.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. What were the twelve-year-old troubles? Why did they seem impossible to fix? Answer: A woman had been bleeding for 12 years and no one could heal her. Jairus' 12-year-old daughter was dead. Who could possible fix that?!</p> <p>b. Who fixed the troubles and why could he fix them? Answer: Jesus. He could heal the woman and raise the little girl to life because all things were created through Him, even people.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Genesis 1:26-28 "Then ___ said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; ___ and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the ___ and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Answers: God; male; sea.</p>	<p>All People Who on Earth Do Dwell <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 11</i></p> <p>Verse 1 All people that on earth do dwell, Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice; Him serve with fear, His praise forthtell; Come ye before Him and rejoice.</p> <p>Verse 2 The Lord, ye know, is God indeed, Without our aid He did us make; We are His folk, He doth us feed, And for His sheep He doth us take.</p> <p>Words Psalm 100; Paraphrased, William Kethes Music Genevan Psalter, 1551 Edition, attr. Louis Bourgeois</p> <p>This hymn reminds us that we, along with peoples of the earth, should serve and praise the Lord because He is our Creator. He made us to know Him and worship Him. Of all people, God's people, have reason to rejoice in God, their Creator. He saved them through Jesus. He has made them His very own, special people, who He takes special care of.</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p align="center"><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being so powerful that He can even raise the dead!</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we don't act like You are our Creator. We forget You and do not ask for Your help. We live life on our own, trying to take care of our own problems. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You really are our Creator. Thank You for caring so much for our hurt bodies and our sinful spirits. Thank You that You want us to know You and will help us to know You. Thank You that no trouble we have is too big for You.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to bring all of our troubles to You. Help us to know You better and happily entrust our whole lives to You. Use them to display what a great God You are!</p>	<p>Then God Said <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 12</i></p> <p>Then God said, "Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image." Then God said, "Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image." Male and female, He created them, Male and female, He created them.</p> <p>Then God said, "Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image." Then God said, "Let us make man, Let us make man in our own image." Genesis One, twenty-six and seven.</p> <p>Words: Genesis 1:26-27, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>The Bible tells us God made people in the beginning. He made them in His image, that means, they reflect Him in a very special way. Of all the earthly creatures, they alone were created with a spirit, like God's Spirit, that can know and love God. God created people to be able to see God's glory in everything He made. And, He created them to care for the world He created as caretakers under Him.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him

God did not create the world because He was lonely or bored. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always been perfectly happy, enjoying each other in perfect fellowship. He had no need for anyone or anything else to be happy. God created the world because He wanted to. He created it all as a display of His glory (who He is).

Everything God created praises and glorifies Him by being little pictures of what He is like. Because God made people in His image, we have the greatest ability to praise and glorify Him. To people alone, of all the earthly creatures, did God give a spirit to know and love Him. Only we can understand how His creations tell us about Him as we look at them.

God placed us in this wonderful world of His creation to enjoy it, and for the pleasure of praising, glorifying and enjoying God, as we see what it shows us about Him.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Psalm 148:7-10, NIV 1984

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

CASE STORY

2 Kings 20-21, 2 Chronicles 32-33

Our story is:

The Case of the King Who Would Not Praise.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the king? Who would he not praise?
2. How did he change? Why?

Our story takes place in Old Testament times, about 700 years before Jesus lived on earth. And it starts out in a graveyard...the Royal Cemetery of King David.

Great, King Hezekiah was dead and the people mourned his passing. Hezekiah had been a good king. He tried to do away with the terrible things his father, wicked King Ahaz, had brought to Judah. He got rid of the worship places to the false gods, Baal and Ashtoreth, Ahaz had set up. He stopped the terrible sacrifices by fire to the idol Molech Ahaz had allowed. Then he restored worship of the LORD in His Temple. With cymbals, trumpets and loud singing, Hezekiah had led the people in praising and glorifying the LORD again.

"We praise You, LORD, as the Creator of this world and Giver of all good things! Thank You for your good gifts! Thank You for being our God!" they sang in their celebrations. This was what Judah was meant to be: a land that praised the LORD. A little picture of how the whole world was meant to live.

And oh, how the LORD was worthy of that praise! He protected Judah and blessed King Hezekiah and the people. He even crushed the fierce armies of mighty King Sennacherib of Assyria who tried to capture Judah. Who had ever seen anything like this! A God who Himself comes to the rescue of His people! Should He not be praised? Should He not be glorified? Yes, He should! So many brought rich gifts to the LORD, and gave presents to King Hezekiah, too, for the LORD's great victory. For the rest of Hezekiah's life, kings and peoples honored him.

But now King Hezekiah was gone and it was the turn of this twelve-year-old boy, who stood by his father's tomb, to rule Judah. He was not too much older than some of you, yet now it was time for him to put away his boyish ways and to put on the manly crown of a king.

Everyone watched and waited to see what young Prince Manasseh would do. Would he be a good king like his father, or not?

Such a young boy as little King Manasseh would need

others to help him. He couldn't possibly rule a nation like Judah on his own yet. But who would he turn to? Would it be the good prophet Isaiah and others who encouraged King Hezekiah to follow the LORD? If so, Judah would enjoy many more years of blessings under the LORD's protection. Or, would it be those others who had remained at court quietly, in the shadows, waiting for Hezekiah to die and for a chance to restore the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, and to re-light the fires of Molech in the garden of the kings, as it had been in wicked King Ahaz's day.

We do not know how or why it happened, but Manasseh chose the advice of wicked men over the good men who had helped his father. Hezekiah had brought back the praise and glory of the LORD to Judah. He had made it a little picture of how the whole world was meant to live. But now, Manasseh tried to choke out the God's praise again and cover up His glory.

Away went the the good and holy laws of God's Word, stashed away in some dusty corner to be forgotten. In Manasseh brought magicians and witches. Away went the beautiful worship things of the Temple! And in Manasseh brought idols to worship the starry host--the sun, moon and stars-- as well as Baal and Ashtoreth. And in the gardens of the kings, Manasseh re-lit the fires of Molech. He, himself, sacrificed in them! Manasseh ordered the people of Judah to follow him in worshiping these gods. Those who refused were killed.

What would happen now? Would the LORD allow His praise to be cut off by King Manasseh forever? Would He allow His glory not to be seen by the world? No, He would not! The LORD sent prophets to warn Manasseh and those who followed him. "Turn away from doing these terrible things! Turn back to worshipping Me," the LORD told them through His messengers, the prophets. "If you do not, then I will allow your enemies to come in and destroy your cities."

Did Manasseh or the people listen? Did they repent? No, they did not! They just kept right on praising and glorifying other gods, and killing those who wouldn't. So just as He had promised, the LORD allowed the same mighty army He had protected them from during King Hezekiah's time. It marched the Assyrian soldiers. They smashed Jerusalem and carried away its riches. And in typical, cruel, Assyrian style, they pierced King Manasseh's nose, and put a hook through it like a pig. They bound him with heavy, bronze

shackles and dragged him off to prison in Babylon.

King Manasseh had plenty of time in that miserable prison cell in Babylon. Plenty of time to think about all of the evil he had done: the people he had killed, the idols he had worshiped, The people he had sacrificed in the fires of Molech! Now all of it paraded before him in his mind's eye.

He remembered the LORD his God and in his distress, he cried out to God. "Forgive me, LORD! Rescue me! No longer will I worship those other gods. You alone deserve the glory and praise," Manasseh prayed.

The LORD was moved by Manasseh's prayer and forgave him. He caused the Assyrians to free him and let him return to Jerusalem. When did cruel Assyrians ever give up a captured king like that! Manasseh knew only the LORD could have done this. He knew and believed that He is God. He was a changed man.

The new King Manasseh must have been a big surprise to the people. The very man who had forced them to worship other gods, now worked hard to make Judah a land full of the praise and glory of the LORD again.

"Rebuild the outer wall of Jerusalem and make it much higher," he commanded his builders. "Station military commanders in every walled city in Judah," he told his generals. "We must strengthen our country against the powerful Assyrians.

"Get rid of the Baals and the Ashtoreth poles!" he ordered. "Take down the carved image I put in the

Temple and the altars to the starry hosts in the courtyards. Go around Jerusalem and find every altar and throw them outside the city in the dump. Put out the fires of Molech!" Manasseh commanded.

Then Manasseh restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it. Once more, with cymbals, trumpets and loud singing, the king of Judah led the people in praising and glorifying the LORD. "We praise You, LORD, as the Creator of this world and Giver of all good things! Thank You for your good gifts! Thank You for being our God!" they sang in their celebrations.

Manasseh could never un-do the terrible things he had done, that was true. Sadly, some of the people still refused to turn away from the idols he had told them to worship. But at least now he had begun to bring Judah to be the little picture of how the whole world was meant to live. A land for the praise and glory of God, as God created it--

and all things--to be.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Created All Things to Praise and Glorify Him

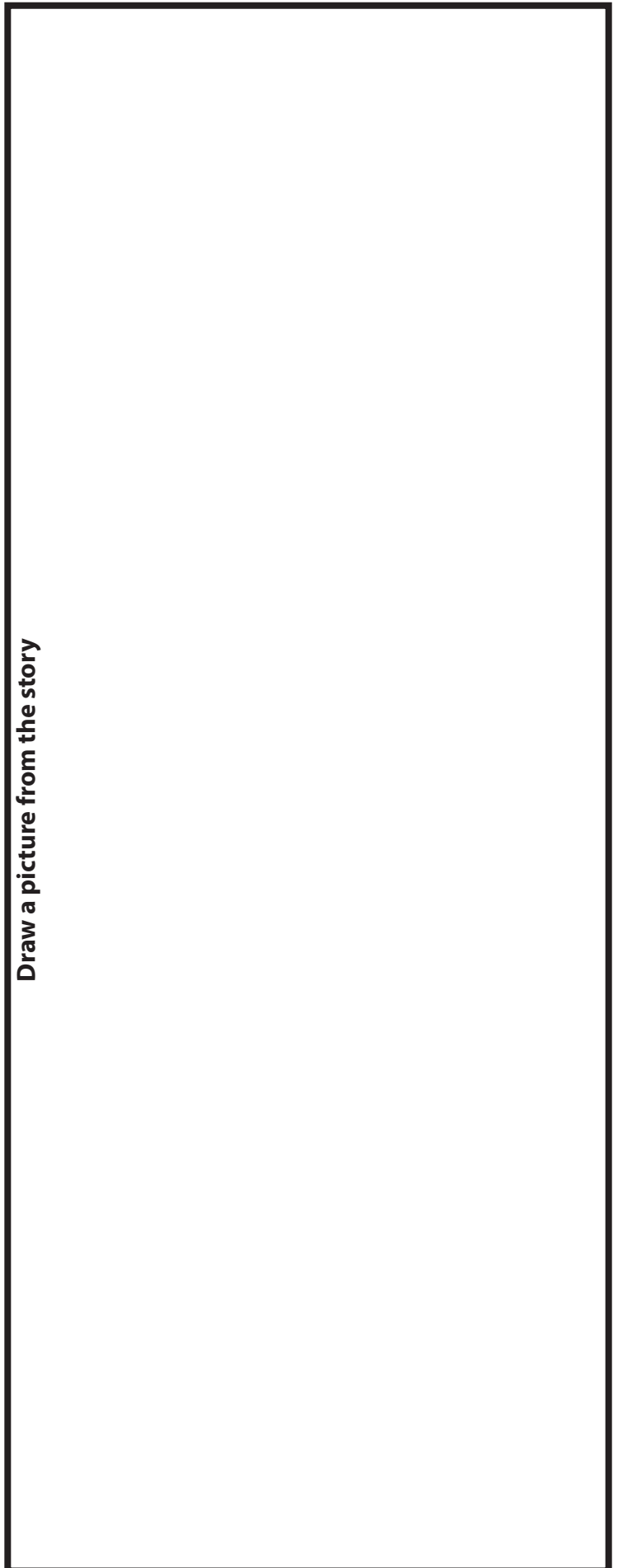
Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 148:7-13

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

Prince Manasseh is not that different from you, in some ways. He learned about the LORD as a child and so are you. And, like Manasseh, you have a choice before you: to serve the LORD or to do things your own way. Let's ask God to help us to learn from Manasseh's story. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts and help us to turn TO Him, not from Him. Let's ask Him to help us to trust in Jesus as our Savior. God was powerful to save Manasseh and He is powerful to save us, if we ask Him to!

Let's pray right now and ask God to work in our hearts, that we might turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our Savior. Let's praise Him for being the great Creator who gave us hearts to know and love Him and who sent Jesus that we might know and love Him, even today.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God created people in His likeness. He made them all powerful and all wise like Himself. Answer: False. God did create people in His likeness, but not in those ways. He gave them a mind that was a bit like His great mind. He gave them a spirit a bit like His Spirit.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who was the king? Who did he praise and who would he not praise? Answer: King Manasseh. He would praise terrible idols instead of the LORD.</p> <p>b. How did he change? Why? Answer: He repented of his sins and turned to worship the LORD after he was put in prison in Assyria. The LORD forgave him, had him released and Manasseh went home and got rid of the idols.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 148:7-10 "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..." So God ___ man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God ___ them and said to them, "Be fruitful and ___ in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Answers: created; blessed; increase.</p>	<p>The Doxology <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 14</i> Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures, here below; Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.</p> <p>Words Thomas Ken Music Genevan Psalter, 1551 Edition, attr. Louis Bourgeois</p> <p>"This hymn reminds us that all creatures here below on the earth and all the heavenly host above in heaven should praise God. He is their Creator and He made them to praise and glorify Him. All the good blessings they enjoy come from Him.</p>
<p>AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p>BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being merciful to sinners, even terrible sinners like Manasseh.</p> <p>C God, we confess that, like Manasseh, many times we choose to turn away from God and His good ways and live life our own way. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You that you provide forgiveness through Jesus. There is no sinner too great that You cannot forgive them through Him.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to be full of Your praise and glory!</p>	<p>Praise the Lord, from the Earth <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 15</i> Praise the Lord, from the earth, All you creatures of the sea, and all ocean depths, lightning, hail, snow and clouds, Stormy winds that do his bidding. Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.</p> <p>Praise the Lord, from the earth, you mountains and all hills, you fruit trees and cedars, animals, flying birds, kings and rulers, men and maidens, Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord. Psalm One-forty-eight, verses seven through twelve.</p> <p>Words: Psalm 148:7-12, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>The Bible tells us God made people in the beginning. He made them in His image, that means, they reflect Him in a very special way. Of all the earthly creatures, they alone were created with a spirit, like God's Spirit, that can know and love God. God created people to be able to see God's glory in everything He made. And, He created them to care for the world He created as caretakers under Him.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him

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Everything God created praises and glorifies Him by being little pictures of what He is like. Because God made people in His image, we have the greatest ability to praise and glorify Him. To people alone, of all the earthly creatures, did God give a spirit to know and love Him. Only we can understand how His creations tell us about Him as we look at them.

God placed us in this wonderful world of His creation to enjoy it, and for the pleasure of praising, glorifying and enjoying God, as we see what it shows us about Him.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Psalm 148:7-10, NIV 1984

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the De Beata Vitae.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. What was the De Beata Vitae? Who wanted it?
2. Where did he look for it and where did he find it?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place about 1650 years ago in Tagaste, a little farming town in the green, fertile mountains of Algeria, North Africa.

Among the schoolboys of Tagaste was a boy named Aurelius Augustine, or just Augustine as everyone called him. Now Augustine was a very, very clever little boy. He had a mind so quick that he only had to read something once and it was memorized. Augustine was good at everything, but he loved learning Latin and giving speeches most of all.

You might think Augustine would be the teacher's favorite student since he was so smart; but, that was far from the truth. Augustine was so bored with the simple lessons, that he entertained himself by playing mean tricks on the other children. It was an unusual week when Augustine did not feel the "Whack! Whack! Whack!" of the teacher's whip across his back as punishment for something he'd done. But no matter how many times Augustine was punished, he kept getting into trouble.

His parents—especially his mother, Monica-- were troubled by his behavior. Monica was a strong Christian and she raised Augustine knowing the good news of Jesus. "Augustine, why do you keep getting into trouble?" she would ask him. "It will lead to nothing good. God created you in His image to praise and glorify Him. He has given you such great gifts of mind and speech. Use these to know Him and find your pleasure there, not in these childish pranks. Turn from your sins and believe in Jesus. That is the happy life," she told him.

But Augustine refused to listen. He thought being a Christian meant giving up everything fun, and Augustine loved to have fun. Sometimes he would pray to God, but it wasn't a real heart-felt prayer. Usually it was just to ask God to spare the teacher's whip for the last mean prank he had played on another child. These are not the kinds of prayers God answers! When Augustine saw that he couldn't use God for his own mischievous purposes, he gave up on Him completely.

One day, Augustine talked his friends into skipping school and stealing all the pears off of his father's prize pear tree. They ate their fill of the juicy, sweet fruit and then when they could eat no more, they tossed the rest to the pigs. Augustine knew what he was doing was wrong, but he didn't care. He lived for the happy life; and for Augustine, that meant doing whatever he felt like doing.

When Patricus, Augustine's father, found out what had happened, he was furious! He punished Augustine and sent him to sleep that night out with the pigs who ate his pears! Once more, Monica pleaded with her son to turn from his wicked ways, but Augustine refused to change.

Not too long after this, Augustine's parents decided the best thing for their smart, trouble-maker would be to send him away to get good teaching. Augustine could become a great teacher or lawyer, if only he could get good training and stay out of trouble. So off Augustine went. He went to high school in the nearby town of Madaura. When he finished there, he went to university in Carthage, a great city near the Mediterranean Sea.

At last Augustine had the good teachers he needed, yet even they were amazed at his gifts. What beautiful Latin he wrote! What powerful speeches he made!

Augustine loved the challenge of these new schools, but he loved the new thrills of life he now had even more. He was away from home and could do whatever he wanted to do. He went to the theatre. He watched the gladiators fight. He found friends to join him in playing mean tricks on others. Best of all in Augustine's mind, there were lots of girlfriends to have and lots of wine to drink. Surely this was the happy life he was looking for.

All the time Monica worried about her son. By letter or in person, she kept pleading with him, "Augustine, why do you do spend your time on all of these terrible things?" she would ask him. "It will lead to nothing good. God created you in His image to praise and glorify Him. He has given you such great gifts of mind and speech. Use these to know Him and find your pleasure there, not in wasting your life on all this wickedness. Turn from your sins and believe in Jesus. That is the happy life." But Augustine refused to listen.

Augustine finally finished his schooling and began to start teaching. For the first time in his life, he began to ask such deep questions as "Who am I? Why am I here in the world?" None of the sinful pleasures he had tried really

made him happy. Monica pleaded with him to become a follower of Jesus Christ, but Augustine still refused. Even though his wicked ways did not make him happy, Augustine still did not want to give them up.

Augustine was a good teacher. He started out in a little school in Tagaste, but before long he was made a professor of Speech at the university in Carthage, then in Rome and finally in the great city of Milan.

Milan was one of the most important cities in the world. It was home to two very, very important men: King Valentinian II, the king of the great Roman Empire; and Bishop Ambrose, a great church leader and powerful preacher.

Augustine was treated like an important man in Milan, too. He was given a huge, beautiful villa to live in there with room enough for all his friends, cousins and his mother, Monica, to come live with him. Never had Augustine had such splendid things and such good students. Surely this was the good life he was looking for, but to his surprise, Augustine found his life empty.

One day Monica asked Augustine to go hear the great Ambrose preach. Augustine agreed, saying "Well, I am a Professor of Speech. Everyone says what a powerful preacher Ambrose is; I guess I should at least hear him once. I will go with you, but not to listen to WHAT he says. I am only going to listen to HOW he says it. I will decide for myself about his skills as a speaker." Monica was overjoyed. At last her son would hear the Word of God preached.

From the moment Ambrose began to preach, Augustine was impressed. "How well he speaks. Surely he is as good a speaker as I was told," Augustine thought. But before long, Augustine found that he wasn't just listening to HOW Ambrose spoke; He was listening to WHAT Ambrose spoke: "In Christ are all things. Christ is everything to us," Ambrose said.

"Could it be that here is the happy life I've been looking for all along? Could Mother have been right?" Augustine wondered.

Augustine kept going back to hear Ambrose preach. The more he heard, the more the Holy Spirit worked inside of him, showing him the truth of God's Word. Augustine became so ashamed of his sin, but what could be done?

One morning in his garden, things came to a breaking point: "How long will it be until you confess your sins and turn to Christ?" he said to himself. "You always say

'tomorrow, tomorrow': why not now, why not let this hour be an end to my sinfulness?" he thought as he tossed aside his New Testament and threw himself down on the ground under a fig tree.

Just then he heard the voice of a child next door, singing, "Tolle lege, tolle lege! Take up and read! Take up and read!"

The simple words seemed like a message to Augustine. He took up his New Testament to read and when he did, his eyes fell on these words: "Don't keep on living in wicked ways. Let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you." (Romans 13:13-14, paraphrased)

At last Augustine he took God at His Word. He confessed his sins and believed in Jesus as his Savior. God took away the shame of his sin and filled his heart with peace for the first time in his life. At last Augustine had found the happy life.

The news that Augustine had become a Christian spread quickly. When Monica heard her son's decision, so fell on her knees and thanked God! Thirty-one years of prayers had been answered at last!

When Easter came, Augustine was baptized by Ambrose himself, rejoicing that he had found peace in his heart, trust in his mind, and joy in his life, by giving up selfish pleasures and devoting his life to the service of Jesus Christ.

Augustine had spent his first thirty-one years looking for pleasure in selfish ways. Now he would spend the rest of his life—the next forty-three years—knowing pleasure in praising, glorifying and enjoying God, as he had been created to. Augustine went back to Africa and became a powerful preacher and church leader, like Ambrose. He used the cleverness and ability to speak that God had given him to encourage believers and to fight against those who tried to teach lies about God and the Bible. He studied and prayed to know God better. And the more he knew of God, the greater was his pleasure.

It was all as his mother had told him from the beginning: "Turn from your sins and believe in Jesus. That is where you will find the happy life."

Our Bible Truth is:

God Created All Things to Praise and Glorify Him

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 148:7-13

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

Augustine spent over thirty years trying to make himself happy in selfish pleasures. In the end, he found the happy life in living for the God who created Him, just as his mother always told him.

What about you? Where are you looking for the happy life? Is it in getting a new toy? Or having more friends? Is it in being the smartest student at school or the best soccer player? If you have parents who know the Lord Jesus as their Savior, they will tell you the same thing that Monica told her son, Augustine: the happy life is only to be found when we live to praise and glorify God as He created us to.

Let's praise God for being the Giver of the Happy Life of knowing, loving and obeying Him, to all who will confess their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Let's ask Him to help us to find our happiness in Him. Let's ask Him to help us to use all the good gifts He's given us to encourage other believers and know Him better ourselves, that we might enjoy Him even more.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God put people on the earth to enjoy it, to fill it with people and to take care of it. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. What was the De Beata Vitae? Who wanted it? Answer: The good life. Augustine wanted it.</p> <p>b. Where did he look for it and where did he find it? Answer: He looked for it in pleasure--in doing whatever he wanted to do. He found it in knowing and enjoying God.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 148:7-10 "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our ____... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and ____ he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have ____ over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Answers: likeness; female; dominion.</p>	<p>The Doxology <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 14</i> Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures, here below; Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.</p> <p>Words Thomas Ken Music Genevan Psalter, 1551 Edition, attr. Louis Bourgeois</p> <p>"This hymn reminds us that all creatures here below on the earth and all the heavenly host above in heaven should praise God. He is their Creator and He made them to praise and glorify Him. All the good blessings they enjoy come from Him.</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, praise You for being the Source of the Happy Life!</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we don't think that loving God and obeying Your good ways is the happy life. Many times we want to do things our own way, just like Augustine. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for Your great patience and mercy towards sinners, like Augustine and like us.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, like Augustine. Help us to know the happy life of knowing, loving and obeying You.</p>	<p>Praise the Lord, from the Earth <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 15</i> Praise the Lord, from the earth, All you creatures of the sea, and all ocean depths, lightning, hail, snow and clouds, Stormy winds that do his bidding. Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.</p> <p>Praise the Lord, from the earth, you mountains and all hills, you fruit trees and cedars, animals, flying birds, kings and rulers, men and maidens, Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord. Psalm One-forty-eight, verses seven through twelve.</p> <p>Words: Psalm 148:7-12, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>The Bible tells us God made people in the beginning. He made them in His image, that means, they reflect Him in a very special way. Of all the earthly creatures, they alone were created with a spirit, like God's Spirit, that can know and love God. God created people to be able to see God's glory in everything He made. And, He created them to care for the world He created as caretakers under Him.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him

God did not create the world because He was lonely or bored. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always been perfectly happy, enjoying each other in perfect fellowship. He had no need for anyone or anything else to be happy. God created the world because He wanted to. He created it all as a display of His glory (who He is).

Everything God created praises and glorifies Him by being little pictures of what He is like. Because God made people in His image, we have the greatest ability to praise and glorify Him. To people alone, of all the earthly creatures, did God give a spirit to know and love Him. Only we can understand how His creations tell us about Him as we look at them.

God placed us in this wonderful world of His creation to enjoy it, and for the pleasure of praising, glorifying and enjoying God, as we see what it shows us about Him.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Psalm 148:7-10, NIV 1984

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

CASE STORY

Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:28-44; Jn. 12:1-17;
Eph. 1;; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 5:11-13

Our story is:

The Case of the Great Day of Praise.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was waiting for the Great Day of Praise? What would happen on that day?
2. When did they think it had come? When will the Great Day of Praise really come?

From the very beginning, the LORD planned for His whole creation to praise and glorify Him, each in their own, special way. The first ocean waves clapped their praise against the fresh, white sands. The first roar of the mighty lion thundered of His might. The first wonderful smell of the honeysuckle whispered the fragrant beauty of His love as it drifted along the wind. The first glittering stars in the endless Milky Way spoke of His unending greatness. The first wisp of the magnificent angel's wings as they moved to cover his bowed head before the LORD spoke of perfect holiness. Yes, from the moment these creatures came into being, they began to testify to the great Creator who made them.

Yet there was one kind of creature God had planned for more than just praising and glorifying Him as their Creator. This creature was created to praise and glorify Him as something even more amazing. They would get to praise and glorify Him as their Savior. Who was this creature? They were God's very own people. He would love them and save them from their sins. He would bring them to live with Him forever.

Sins? But why would God's people need to be saved from sins? Wasn't the world God making without sin? Yes, but soon that would change. People would rebel against their good Creator, plunging the world and themselves into sin and death. Then they would need a Savior to save them from the just, eternal punishment they deserved from God.

So right then--from even before the beginning--God wove His magnificent plan of salvation into His creation. He chose people from every tribe, language and nation to be His very own, adopted people. And He chose His one and only Son, Jesus, to come to earth as a man, and save them, at just the right time.

Through Jesus, God would show even more of Himself

to the world. He would show how great is His holiness as Jesus would live a perfect life. He would show how great is His love, as He would offer it up in exchange for His peoples' sinful lives. As each of His people would come to believe in Him, He planned that their lives would be changed and their voices would rise in praise to Him for being their Savior. Then at last, on one wonderful day, their voices would all join together and swell into a beautiful song of praise to their great God and Savior. And once it started, it would never end. What a Great Day of Praise that would be; and it was the great end of the wonderful plan God had for all creation from before the beginning.

God carried out His plan. He created the heavens and the earth in all their perfectness. He made a man and a woman and put them on the earth to know and love Him. But the man and woman rebelled against Him, as He knew they would. Sin and death came flooding in. And right then, God gave promises of hope to them: of a Savior—the Messiah—who would come at just the right time.

Thousands of years later, that right time came. Jesus came to earth. He taught people about God. He did many amazing miracles. He promised wonderful, everlasting life to those who believed in Him. And He lived a perfect life, so He could be the Savior of God's people. Jesus was like no one else! Surely the people could see! Surely it was time for that Great Day of Praise, when God's people everywhere would raise their voices in praise to God as He created them to.

There certainly was one day, near the end of Jesus' earthly life, when it seemed as if it had come. A great crowd pushed in around Jesus as the donkey He was seated upon came to the top of the Mount of Olives, a hill just outside of Jerusalem. What a sight burst upon their eyes as they looked west. There was Jerusalem in all its beauty! The towering walls of the King's palace rose high above the city. The dazzling, white marble of the Temple shone gloriously.

It was as if in that moment God's plan made sense to these people: Here was the Messiah, Jesus, come to take His throne in Jerusalem, the City of the LORD. At last the LORD had come to save His people!

In one great voice they shouted their praise to God for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna to the Son of David! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" they sang.

Some waved palm branches in a royal salute to the King, while others lay a royal carpet of their robes upon the stony path for Jesus' donkey to walk over. Was this the Great Day of Praise planned for God's people from before the beginning of time? The Day when the song of His people would become an everlasting symphony? Was this day that the King would take up His throne and rule forever and ever as Savior and Lord?

Perhaps the crowd thought so; but they didn't understand. God's plan was even bigger than they imagined. They had seen Jesus' miracles and heard His powerful preaching and they thought these were signs that Jesus had come to Jerusalem as their earthly Messiah to get rid of their earthly enemies: the Romans. They did not understand Jesus had come as the Savior to save them from their biggest enemies: sin and death. This was far better, not but at all what the crowd wanted. Jesus knew that all too soon the cheering crowds would turn against Him when He didn't give them what they wanted.

There were Pharisees--teachers of the Bible-- in the crowd that day. They should have known better about Jesus and why He had come. They knew the many promises in the Bible about the coming Savior. They should have seen how they all pointed to Jesus. But they didn't want to see. They didn't want to believe. They watched the crowds honor Jesus and they were jealous and angry!

"See, this is getting us nowhere! Look how the whole world has gone after him! We must do something to stop him" they said to each other.

"Teacher, rebuke your disciples! They shouldn't be praising you like this! You are not the Messiah!"

"I tell you," Jesus rebuked them, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out!"

Looking down over Jerusalem, Jesus wept. "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes," He said. How sad Jesus was that the people of Jerusalem were blind to who He really was and what He had come to do.

But it was not to be! In just five days, the crowds' happy praise changed to angry cries of "Crucify Him!". Jesus was nailed to a cross to die, then buried in a grave. "Now there would be no more praise for this fake Messiah. There will be no more believing in this fake Savior," the Pharisees thought.

But, of course, we know how wrong they were. It was on

that terrible cross that Jesus actually did what He came to do.

The earth might have been still and silent that Friday as Jesus' body lay in the grave, but heaven was already rejoicing with the good news: Jesus had saved His people by taking all of God's punishment they deserved for their sins as He died on the cross. By His death, they would have eternal life with God!

On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples! Now they joined heaven in rejoicing! Jesus really had beaten sin and death for God's people, once and for all!

Since that wonderful Easter Sunday, Jesus' followers have been spreading the good news of salvation through Jesus. More and more have heard and believe!

With each new believer, the song of praise for Jesus from God's people in heaven and on earth is getting louder and louder.

On it will grow until the end of time when God's people will finally be gathered together for the Great Day of Praise. On that day, they will join together with thousands and thousands of angels and shout: "Jesus died to save His people! He deserves the highest praise! All power, riches, wisdom strength, honor, glory and praise belong to Him!" And together with every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, they will sing the most beautiful song to God: "To Him who sits on the throne and to [Jesus] be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" (Revelation 5:12-13, NIV 1984)

Our Bible Truth is:

God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him

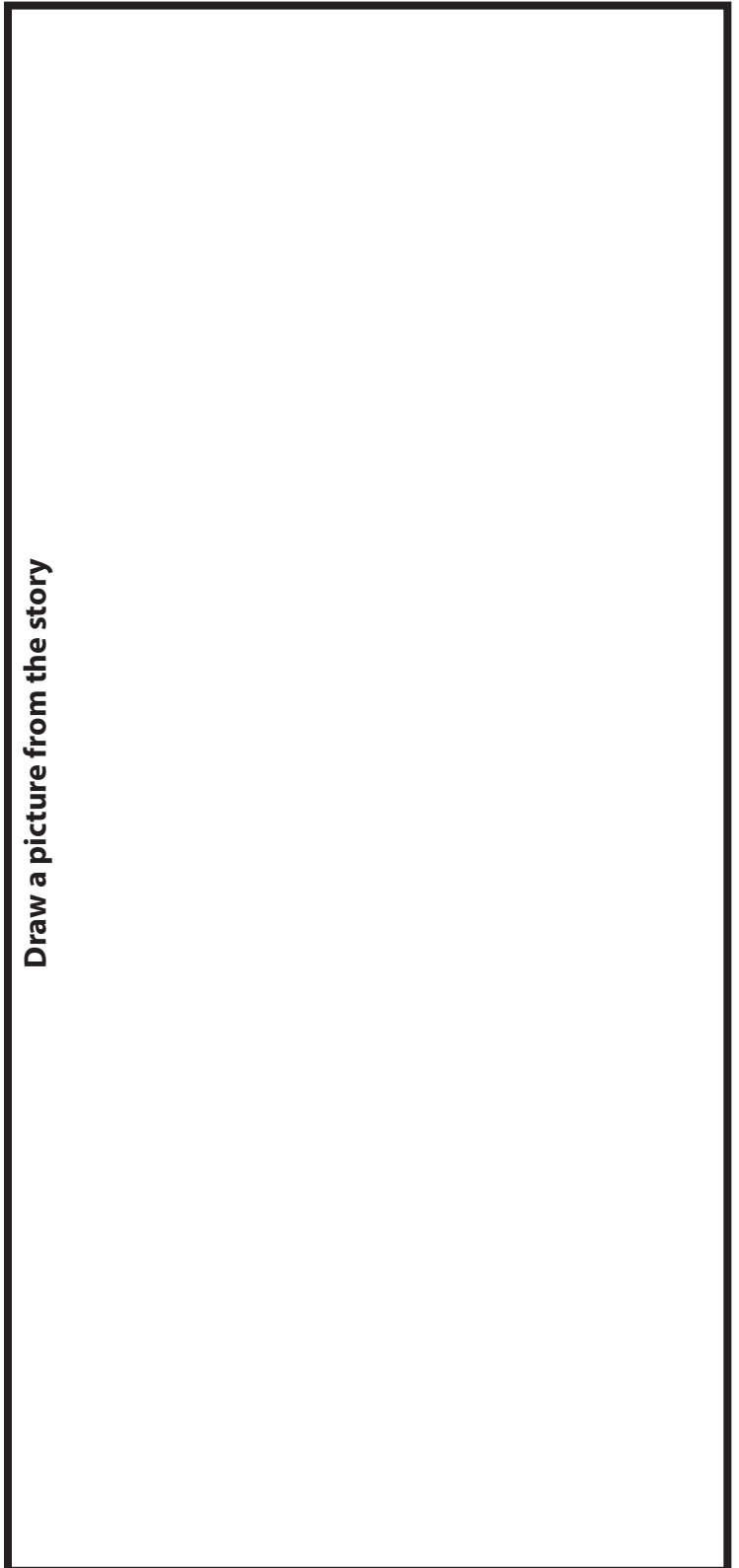
Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 148:7-13

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

What a day will be that Day of Praise! It will be the most glorious Day the world has ever known, when at last all the creatures of earth raise their voices in praise to the LORD.

You and I can be there? How? By confessing our sins to God and trusting in Jesus as our very own Savior. Let's praise God for planning such a wonderful Day for His People to be a part of. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, that we might confess our sins and trust Jesus as our very own Savior. Let's ask Him to change us and turn our voices to sing the song of His praises this very day.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God placed us in this wonderful world of His creations to praise Him, but not to enjoy it.

Answer: False. God placed us in this world to praise Him AND to enjoy it.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who was waiting for the Great Day of Praise? What would happen on that day?

Answer: The people of Israel were waiting for the Great Day of Praise. God's Messiah would save them from their enemies and bring God's kingdom where they would live happily forever.

b. When did they think it had come? When will the Great Day of Praise really come?

Answer: When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the donkey. They thought He was coming to get rid of their enemies and become their Messiah-king. It will come at the end of time when Jesus comes back. Then, He will put an end to sin and death and bring God's kingdom forever.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Genesis 1:26-27

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, ___ and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all ___ on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his ___ alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

Answers: snow; rulers; name.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being our good Creator and King.

C God, we confess that many times we choose to forget You and forget to praise You. We choose to praise other things and people, even ourselves. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for promising to one day bringing an end to all sin and sadness. Thank You that You will bring the Great Day of Praise when all Your people are gathered together to praise You. Thank You for sending Jesus to save us that we might be able to take part in that Great Day of Praise.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to bring all of our troubles to You. Make us praisers of Your name even now!

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The Doxology

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 14

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures, here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Words Thomas Ken

Music Genevan Psalter, 1551 Edition, attr. Louis Bourgeois

"This hymn reminds us that all creatures here below on the earth and all the heavenly host above in heaven should praise God. He is their Creator and He made them to praise and glorify Him. All the good blessings they enjoy come from Him.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Praise the Lord, from the Earth

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 15

Praise the Lord, from the earth,
All you creatures of the sea,
and all ocean depths,
lightning, hail, snow and clouds,
Stormy winds that do his bidding.
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, from the earth,
you mountains and all hills,
you fruit trees and cedars,
animals, flying birds, kings and rulers, men and maidens,
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.
Psalm One-forty-eight, verses seven through twelve.

Words: Psalm 148:7-12, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

The Bible tells us God made people in the beginning. He made them in His image, that means, they reflect Him in a very special way. Of all the earthly creatures, they alone were created with a spirit, like God's Spirit, that can know and love God. God created people to be able to see God's glory in everything He made. And, He created them to care for the world He created as caretakers under Him.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

God's Plans for His Creation Are Good and Unfailing

Before the creation of the world, God planned each day from first to last. Each one would be just as He planned it to be. Every creature in it would live, grow, and reflect His glory, just as He had planned.

As part of His plans for this world, God created people each with a mind to think and a will to act. They would use these to make their own decisions, every day of their life. Yet in God's mysterious and mighty way, before even the first people were created, He had already perfectly woven His good plans into all that they would choose to think and do.

God's plans would never fail. Not even the sin and suffering that would come into the world would ruin God's good plans for His creation. God would use even these terrible things to display His great love for His people by sending His Son Jesus to save them. God's people--people from every nation and language on earth--would all choose to love and obey Him, just as He had planned. Not a one would be lost. God, Himself, by the great power of His Spirit, would make sure that these good things would happen.

There is much about God's plans we cannot understand because God is so much greater and wiser than we are. That's why God tells us not to lean on our own understanding of things, but trust in Him instead. When we remember God's perfect faithfulness in the past and His promises for the future, we can rejoice that whatever happens. It is always, only, a part of His completely good, unfailing plan.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11, ESV

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

CASE STORY

2 Kings 20-21, 2 Chronicles 32-33

Our story is:

The Case of the Lost Donkeys.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who lost his donkeys? Who did he send to find them?
2. What plan did God use the lost donkeys to fulfill?

Our story today takes place in Old Testament times, in the hills of Gibeah, only about six miles north of Jerusalem, about 1000 years before Jesus lived on earth.

What was wrong with the grass of Gibeah where Kish's farm lay? Was it not as juicy or sweet as the grasses whose scent drifted on the wind from the distant hills? I guess you would have to be a donkey to know. But there must have been something that day that lured Kish's she-donkeys away from the safety of his farm and far away to the grasses over the hills.

Kish must have been upset when he noticed the missing donkeys. Donkeys were the cars and trucks of his day. You rode them and used them to carry heavy loads; and, they were expensive! To lose she-donkeys was even worse! You weren't just losing a car or truck, but a car or truck factory! Kish counted on the mother donkeys to provide him with baby donkeys to use in the future. Kish looked everywhere for his she-donkeys, but they were nowhere to be seen. This matter of lost donkeys was serious! Before long they might become a lion's dinner or be the happy find of new owner.

"Saul, come quickly! I need you!" Kish called out to his only son, a tall, handsome, young man. "The she-donkeys have wandered off. They are nowhere to be seen," Kish replied. "Take one of the servants and go find them," he said.

Saul obeyed. He and the servant prepared sacks of food and water and set off in a huge, sixty mile circle around the farm. Up and down the hilly country of Ephraim, they went. Then they turned eastwards to Shallim; and finally, back south through the land of Yemini and towards Zuph. They looked down the grassy valleys and up the hills for the she-donkeys, but no donkeys!

"The donkeys are no where to be found," Saul said to the servant. "Come, let's go back, or my father will start worrying about us, too."

Saul's advice would have been good... if this journey had really only been a matter of lost donkeys. But the truth was, this trip was about a lot more. The LORD who works His own good and unfailing plans in the words, thoughts and

into this search. God had planned for this trip to take Saul away from his home in Gibeah and to the city of Ramah in Zuph, where the prophet Samuel would anoint Saul as the first king of Israel.

The LORD had already spoken to Samuel of his plan: "Samuel, the people have been asking Me for a king. About this time tomorrow I will send him to you from the land of Benjamin. He will be with a servant looking for his father's she-donkeys. Anoint him king of Israel. He will deliver my people from the hand of their enemies, the Philistines," the LORD told him.

Samuel heard the LORD and believed. He knew what the plans of the LORD never failed. He didn't know who this man was, nor how the LORD would bring him to Ramah, but Samuel knew that this man would most certainly come...and come exactly when the LORD said he would come!

Samuel began preparing for the special sacrifice and worship feast for this man, as if he had invited the man and set up the time for the feast himself. He went to the market and chose a lamb. He invited thirty, special guests to join them. He ordered the cook to make the feast food. Then, he prepared the worship feast room at the high place outside of Ramah, where the sacrifice and feast would take place.

By the next day, everything was ready. "After the sacrifice is made, set aside the leg, the best portion, for a special guest," Samuel told the cook. "Make sure the two seats of honor next to mine are not taken," he told a servant. "They will be for my guests of honor."

At last it was time for the feast. The guests went up to the high place and watched as the lamb was roasted upon the altar as a sacrifice to the LORD. They went to the worship feast room and watched as the roasted sacrifice was divided among them--all except he leg, of course, which was set aside, just as Samuel had ordered. Everyone was ready to eat the wonderful meal, but they waited for Samuel and the special guests to arrive. The feast couldn't begin until they had taken their seats and Samuel had blessed the food.

But where were the special guests? No one knew. Not even Samuel! But he was not worried. This was the LORD's plan and His plans are good and unfailing. The special guests would come, he had no doubt.

Sure enough, Saul was on his way. As they neared Ramah, Saul's servant said, "Look, there's Ramah, the home of Samuel, the prophet. Everything he says comes true.

Let's ask him. Perhaps he will tell us which way to take to find the donkeys," he said.

"If we go to him, we should take him a gift. What do we have?" Saul asked his servant.

"Look," he said, "I have a quarter of a shekel of silver, [a whole week's worth of pay.] I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us which way to take."

"Good," Saul said to his servant. "Come, let's go."

As Saul and the servant came up the hill into Ramah, they met some girls coming out to draw water. "Is the prophet Samuel here?" Saul asked them.

"He is headed up to the high place for a worship feast," they answered. "Go up now; you should find him. Hurry, you want to catch him before he goes in the worship hall and blesses the food."

Saul and the servant hurried to the high place. As uninvited strangers, Saul and his servant knew they wouldn't be allowed to interrupt Samuel's worship feast once it began--especially for something like a matter of lost donkeys. Little did Saul know that this feast had been prepared in his honor and everyone was waiting for him!

Saul met Samuel at the gateway to the high place. As soon as Samuel saw him the LORD said, "This is the man I spoke to you about; he will be king." Samuel could see God was fulfilling his plans, just as He promised, but Saul still had no idea what was going on. It was still just a matter of lost donkeys to him.

Saul asked Samuel, "Would you please tell me where the prophet's house is?"

"I am the prophet," Samuel replied. "Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me. In the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. Don't worry about the donkeys, they have been found. We have more important things to talk about. All of Israel's hopes are on you, now," Samuel told Saul.

Saul was happy, but confused. The donkeys were found and Samuel was saying great things about him. But why? "Why do you say this to me? My family is of no importance in Israel!" Saul replied.

But Samuel disagreed. He took Saul and his servant to the worship hall and seated them at the place of honor, next to him. The best meat was brought out and served to Saul. "This special food and these guests are here to celebrate that you have come," Samuel told the surprised Saul.

Saul had much to think about as he sat there at that great feast, the guest of honor of the prophet Samuel. He

had thought this three-day journey was only a matter of lost donkeys, but now he could see that it was part of the bigger plans of God. What did it all mean?

After dinner, Samuel and Saul went to his house, sat on the roof and talked. At daybreak Samuel told Saul, "Get ready, and I will send you on your way."

Saul walked with them to the edge of Ramah, then sent the servant on ahead. "I have a message from God that only you must hear," he told Saul.

Samuel took oil and poured it on Saul's head. He kissed him-- the sign of obedience to a king—and said, "The LORD has made you king of Israel. As you travel home to Gibeah, the LORD will have three special things happen to you to remind you of three important things.

First, you will meet two men near Rachel's Tomb who will tell you the lost donkeys have been found. By this, remember that trip was all part of God's plan--not just a matter of lost donkeys.

Then, at the great tree of Tabor, three men will give you two of the three loaves of bread they are offering to God. By this, remember that God is king over you. He is sharing the rule of His people with you. Care for them His way, not your own way.

Lastly, at the town of Gibeah, you will join a group of prophets who are singing and prophesying about God. God's Spirit will come upon you and you will prophesy with them. Remember that it is only by the power of God's Spirit that you can be the king you should be. Rely upon God!" Samuel said.

"When these things have happened, know that the LORD has prepared you to be king," Samuel told Saul. "Tell no one what has happened today. In a week, I will meet you in Gilgal to make sacrifices to the LORD and present you to the people as king," Samuel told Saul.

Saul left Samuel that morning and everything happened, just as he said it would: the two men gave him news of the donkeys. The three men gave him the two loaves of bread. And by God's Spirit, Saul praised God and prophesied with the singing prophets.

Saul was a changed man and everyone noticed. "What is this that has happened to Saul? Has he become a prophet?"

Saul's uncle had even more questions for Saul. "Tell me what Samuel said to you," he insisted.

"Samuel told us that the donkeys had been found," Saul replied. He kept the rest a secret, just as Samuel had told him to.

And what a secret it was! This trip had been far more than a matter of lost donkeys. It was a part of God's good and unfailing plans!

Our Bible Truth is:

God's Plans for His Creation Are Good and Unfailing
Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 33:11

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

Who would have guessed that God had something so important as anointing the first king of Israel woven into something as plain as looking for lost donkeys? Are God's great and mysterious ways only for lost donkeys, prophets and future kings? No, they are not. God has woven His good and unfailing plans into all the thoughts, words and actions of all His creation.

And what is the greatest plan that God has woven into this world? The plan to send His Son Jesus to die for the sins of His people, as He suffered and died on the cross. How amazing God's plans! How amazing His love for His people! You and I can be His people, too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Let's praise God for being the great Planner who weaves His wonderful plan into our lives. Let's ask Him to help us joyfully trust His work in our lives as we obey Him.

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God created the world and just let things happen however they would. Answer: False. Even before God created the world, He planned each day, from first to last.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions:</p> <p>a. Who lost his donkeys? Who did he send to find them? Answer: Kish. He sent his son, Saul, and a servant to find them.</p> <p>b. What plan did God use the lost donkeys to fulfill? How did God show that these lost donkeys were used as part of fulfilling that good plan? Answer: The LORD used the lost donkeys to take Saul to Samuel to be anointed king over Israel. The LORD told Samuel what Saul was doing, when he would arrive and where the donkeys were. It was clear that He had woven His bigger plans into what happened to these donkeys.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11 "The ___ of the LORD stands ___, the plans of his heart to ___ generations." Answers: counsel; forever; all.</p>	<p>He Leadeth Me <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 16,17</i></p> <p>Verse 2 Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom, By waters still, o'er troubled sea, Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me!</p> <p>Refrain He leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me; His faithful foll'wer I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.</p> <p>Verse 3 Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine, Nor ever murmur nor repine; Content, whatever lot I see, Since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me! <i>Refrain</i></p> <p>Words: Joseph H. Gilmore Music William B. Bradbury</p> <p>"This hymn reminds us that God's plans are good and unailing. God's people know this best of all. They know God is always leading them through life, fulfilling His good plans for them. Whether it is something hard or sad or enjoyable and happy, it is all a part of God's good plans that He has woven into every single day. That is why they can be content, no matter what happens.</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Weaver of Your good plans for creation into everything.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we don't trust that the hard things that happen to us can really be part of Your good, unailing plans. We doubt You and fear. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T Thank You for working Your greatest good plan of salvation through Jesus' terrible suffering and dying on the cross. Because of Him, we can be saved from our sins.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Work out your good plans in our lives, for our good and Your glory!</p>	<p>The Counsel of the Lord <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 19</i></p> <p>The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations; His counsel stand forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations. Psalm Thirty-three, verse eleven.</p> <p>Words: Psalm 33:11, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>"The Bible tells us that God's counsel--that is, His wise plans--stand firm for His creation. Throughout all generations, throughout all of history--every single day--God will do all of His will. And because God's heart is completely wise and purely good, we can trust that His purposes, even in the things we least understand, are always good. We can count on that because He never changes."</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:
Can You Tell What God Made?
God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

God's Plans for His Creation Are Good and Unfailing

Before the creation of the world, God planned each day from first to last. Each one would be just as He planned it to be. Every creature in it would live, grow, and reflect His glory, just as He had planned.

As part of His plans for this world, God created people each with a mind to think and a will to act. They would use these to make their own decisions, every day of their life. Yet in God's mysterious and mighty way, before even the first people were created, He had already perfectly woven His good plans into all that they would choose to think and do.

God's plans would never fail. Not even the sin and suffering that would come into the world would ruin God's good plans for His creation. God would use even these terrible things to display His great love for His people by sending His Son Jesus to save them. God's people--people from every nation and language on earth--would all choose to love and obey Him, just as He had planned. Not a one would be lost. God, Himself, by the great power of His Spirit, would make sure that these good things would happen.

There is much about God's plans we cannot understand because God is so much greater and wiser than we are. That's why God tells us not to lean on our own understanding of things, but trust in Him instead. When we remember God's perfect faithfulness in the past and His promises for the future, we can rejoice that whatever happens. It is always, only, a part of His completely good, unfailing plan.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11, ESV

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Sickness that Brought Life.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who got sick twice? What was the second sickness and what was so bad about it?
2. How did God use both of the sicknesses to bring life to many?

This story takes place in the late 1800's, high up in the Himalayan mountains.

A young woman named Mary Reed lay sick in bed. As the light of morning flooded her room, Mary looked out her window at the snowy peaks of the mighty Himalayan Mountains. She breathed deeply of the cool, crisp, clean mountain air. "How good it is to be here in the mountains! Thank you, Lord, for bringing me here to rest!" Mary quietly prayed.

"How are you feeling today, Missie Reed?" her Indian nurse asked.

"Better, thank you, but still weak," Mary answered.

"Well, it's no wonder you're still sick with the way you've been living down in Cawmpore!" the woman replied. "Day after day you cared for the Indian women shut up in their stuffy, hot zenanas. Why there's more of death than life in those dark apartments!" she said.

Mary couldn't agree more! Four years ago she had left America and gone to Cawmpore, India to lead the zenana ministry to Indian women. A zenana was the special living area for women that Indian men built for their wives. Indian women were not supposed to come into contact with any men except those in their own family. They weren't even allowed to leave the zenanas except to worship at the Hindu temple or wash in the sacred waters of the Ganges River!

Since these women couldn't leave their zenanas, they received little medical help, little education, and most importantly, little of the good news of Jesus that missionaries had come to share. So, missionary women like Mary Reed asked to go into the zenanas to meet the Indian women. Most Indian husbands eagerly agreed. They were happy for their wives to receive education and medical help. And of course Mary and the missionary women were even more eager to tell these women the good news of Jesus.

Work in the dark, unhealthy zenanas was hard! After four years, the long hours and the poor living conditions had finally hurt Mary. She was too sick to keep on working.

Many women might have just given up and gone back home to America when they got that sick; but, not Mary. She chose to go to Pithoragarh in the Himalayas for rest and fresh air, hoping that she might get well and go back to the zenanas again.

Why did Mary do this? Because Mary chose to live on the plans of God. She knew God plans to save a people for Himself, from every people and language. She knew He had woven her life into His plans. God wanted her to tell the women of the zenanas about Him, that they might become His people, too. Mary trusted that whatever happened to her—even if it was sickness and suffering—was somehow part of His good, unfailing plans. So she stayed in India, trying to get well, so that she could go back to the women in Cawmpore one day and tell them more about Jesus.

The mountain air soon make Mary better. Soon she was out of bed and out of the house, exploring the lush, green valley of Pithoragarh and the tall mountains that surrounded it. How very different this place seemed from the poverty, sickness and darkness of the zenanas of Cawmpore! Or was it? Mary soon found out these mountains hid another people as needy as the women of the zenanas of Cawmpore. They hid over five hundred lepers!

Leprosy was a terrible illness that had no cure back then, like there is now. It could be caught from the cough or sneeze of a leper, much the same way we catch a cold. But instead of getting a runny nose or a cough, the sick person got tingling pain, then numbness in parts of their body. Large, open sores appeared on their skin that didn't heal. Many times the leprosy spread to their eyes and made them blind. Saddest of all, lepers were sent away from home so no one else would catch it. That's why the hundreds of men, women, and even children lived up in these mountains in pitiful mud huts: to suffer and die on their own!

When Mary heard about these poor lepers, she longed to help them. She wanted to bandage their wounds and give them a good place to live. Most of all, she wanted to tell them the good news of Jesus. But what could she do? The lepers refused to come near anyone who didn't have leprosy. Mary didn't know how to reach them, but God did. She lived on the plans of God. She knew the Lord planned to save His people, from every people and language on earth. Surely He had woven salvation even for lepers like these into His good, unfailing plan! So Mary began to pray

Before long, Mary was well enough to return to Cawmpore. Once more she made her daily trips to the zenanas. Back down the crowded streets, past the dirty animal stables, and back up the dark passageways, she went to zenana after zenana. Some opened into luxurious apartments of the rich, but most were simple rooms of terrible poverty. Some women were so afraid of this white woman that they would not look at her or even allow her shadow to fall upon them. Most happily greeted her. Mary cared for them and taught them. She loved to sit down on their beds of woven rope and tell them the good news of salvation through Jesus.

Some days, Mary went down to the banks of the Ganges River, where crowds of women came to worship and bathe. They wrongly believed that the waters of the Ganges were holy and had powers to heal. So, as the women washed in the river, Mary would sing to them about Jesus—the one in whom true hope could be found. Many of the women laughed at Mary. Some shouted mean, angry words at her, but Mary didn't care. She kept telling them about Jesus and gave them little books about Jesus to take home and read.

Mary spent many hours praying for these women, too. And as she prayed for them, she remembered the lepers of Pithoragarh, too:

"Please God, work in the hearts of the women I spoke to today, that they might believe in You and be saved. And please Lord, send someone to help the lepers of Pithoragarh, too. Send someone to bind up their wounds and take care of them. Send someone to tell them about Jesus," she would pray. Day after day, Mary worked hard until once more her body gave out. This time, she was so sick that not even a trip to Pithoragarh would be enough to heal her.

"Mary, we're sending you home," the doctors told her.

"Your health is very bad. You will need a very long rest. You may never even get to return to Cawmpore."

Mary didn't like what the doctors had to say, but she knew she really was very sick. She would have to trust that this, too, was part of God's good and unfailing plan. She sailed back home America to see better doctors and be cared for by her family.

As hard as they tried, the doctors in America could not heal Mary. She had begun to have strange symptoms that the doctors had never seen before: tingling and numbness in her hands, then odd spots that turned into sores began to appear.

"What could this odd disease be?" the doctors wondered. Suddenly Mary realized what it was: it was leprosy!

This was terrible news! No one wants to live their life separated from family and friends to protect them from getting it! No one wants the pain of this terrible disease! But for Mary, leprosy was more than just a terrible disease. For her, it was also an answer to prayer. In this illness, she saw God's good and unfailing plans. He had answered her prayers for someone to tell the lepers about Jesus! It was her!

Mary kept the secret of her illness between herself, her father and her doctors. No one else was to know. She wrote to the London Mission to Lepers, who happily agreed to put her in charge of the Chandag Asylum for Lepers, up in the Himalayan Mountains not too far from Pithoragarh. Mary packed her bags, said a final farewell to her family and friends, then set sail back to India.

Eagerly, Mary made the long trip back up to the little mountain village of Pithoragarh, then up into the mountains where the lepers lived in their poor, makeshift, mud huts. "Listen, my friends, I have been called by God to come and help you," she called out to them.

Slowly but surely, the sore-covered faces of the lepers appeared at the openings of the huts. "What was this?" they wondered. "A white lady come to help us? How can this be? No one even from our own people will help us."

"Come out! I have good news for you!" Mary urged them. Slowly a little group of lepers gathered before her, she told them all about the Chandag Asylum where they could live and be cared for. Then she told them the wonderful good news of Jesus. He was the Son of God who Himself had touched and cared for lepers like them. Best of all, He all, He brought salvation to all who turned away from their sins and trusted in Him as their Savior. Tears fell down their cheeks as they heard all Mary had to say. Such wonderful promises she gave them! Words of kindness and hope.

Mary was as good as her promises to the lepers. She worked as hard at the Chandag Asylum as she had in the zenanas of Cawmpore. Even though she struggled with her own painful leprosy, she bandaged up the other lepers' wounds. She help to build nice homes for them to live in. She gave them food and love. Best of all, she told them about Jesus, Many heard the good news of Jesus and trusted Him as their Savior.

Mary stayed and worked in Chandag for 52 years--until she died at the age of 89. How did she die? Rejoicing in God! How good and unfailing were His plans for her! He

used her sickness to care for the lepers and tell them the good news of Jesus!

Our Bible Truth Is:

God's Plans for His Creation Are Good and Unfailing

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 33:11

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

Mary Reed lived a joyful life. Not because life was so easy for her, but because she lived on the plans of God. The plan might many times be woven with sickness and hardship. There might be times she didn't understand what He was doing; but, she knew that God was perfectly wise and good. Whatever He planned, it had to be good. Whatever He planned, it would never fail. More than comforts or health; even more than family and friends, Mary took joy in God weaving His good, unfailing plans into her life. She was especially happy with those plans gave her the chance to tell others the news of Jesus!

What about you and me? What will we live our lives on? Will we live them on comforts or health, family and friends? Will we live them on our own plans? Or like Mary, will we live on the plans of God? We can, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Let's praise God for His perfectly good and unfailing plans. Let's ask Him to work in us that we might turn from our sins and trust in Him. Let's ask Him to give us the desire to live on His plans more than anything else. Let's ask Him to help us to take joy in Him and His good plans, even when suffering or other hard things are part of it.

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God created people each with a mind to think and a will to act. They are able to make their own decisions, even though God has planned each day. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who got sick twice? What was the second sickness and what was so bad about it? Answer: Mary Reed. The second sickness was leprosy. It was bad because it was so painful and there was no cure. And, because she would have to live far away from her family and other loved ones to keep them from getting it.</p> <p>b. How did God use both of the sicknesses to bring life to many? Answer: The first sickness God used to show Mary Reed the lepers who lived up in the mountains. The second sickness God used to make the way for Mary Reed to care for them and to share the good news of Jesus with them. They would not let her live with them if she was not a leper.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11 "The counsel of the ___ stands forever, the ___ of his heart to all ___." Answers: LORD; plans; generations.</p>	<p>He Leadeth Me <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 16,17</i></p> <p>Verse 2 Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom, By waters still, o'er troubled sea, Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me!</p> <p>Refrain He leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me; His faithful foll'wer I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.</p> <p>Verse 3 Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine, Nor ever murmur nor repine; Content, whatever lot I see, Since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me! <i>Refrain</i></p> <p>Words: Joseph H. Gilmore Music William B. Bradbury</p> <p>"This hymn reminds us that God's plans are good and unailing. God's people know this best of all. They know God is always leading them through life, fulfilling His good plans for them. Whether it is something hard or sad or enjoyable and happy, it is all a part of God's good plans that He has woven into every single day. That is why they can be content, no matter what happens.</p>
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<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, praise You for being the Maker and Fulfiller of Your Perfect Plans for Creation.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we do not react like Mary to hard things that happen to us. Many times we do not see them as a part of Your good and unailing plans. We grumble against You for letting them happen to us.</p> <p>T Thank You for Your plan to save people from every people group on earth. You even care that people in lonely places, like these lepers, come to know You.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us want to serve You in Your good plans, however You want us to.</p>	<p>The Counsel of the Lord <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 19</i></p> <p>The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations; His counsel stand forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations. Psalm Thirty-three, verse eleven.</p> <p>Words: Psalm 33:11, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>"The Bible tells us that God's counsel--that is, His wise plans--stand firm for His creation. Throughout all generations, throughout all of history--every single day--God will do all of His will. And because God's heart is completely wise and purely good, we can trust that His purposes, even in the things we least understand, are always good. We can count on that because He never changes."</p>

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We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

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As part of His plans for this world, God created people each with a mind to think and a will to act. They would use these to make their own decisions, every day of their life. Yet in God's mysterious and mighty way, before even the first people were created, He had already perfectly woven His good plans into all that they would choose to think and do.

God's plans would never fail. Not even the sin and suffering that would come into the world would ruin God's good plans for His creation. God would use even these terrible things to display His great love for His people by sending His Son Jesus to save them. God's people--people from every nation and language on earth--would all choose to love and obey Him, just as He had planned. Not a one would be lost. God, Himself, by the great power of His Spirit, would make sure that these good things would happen.

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BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11, ESV

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CASE STORY

John 8-9

Our story is:

The Case of the Beautiful Blindness.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was blind? Why did most people think he was blind?
2. What made the blindness beautiful? What did it show?

This is a New Testament story that took place when Jesus lived on earth.

"It's a boy! It's a boy!" two, proud parents spread their good news. Every child was a blessing from the LORD, but to the Jews in Jesus' day, a boy was the greatest blessing of all. He could work and make money. He could carry on the family name one day! No wonder his parents were so happy!

But all too soon their happiness was crushed by a terrible discovery: their little boy had been born blind! Surely these parents were sad that their boy would never see a beautiful sunrise or the faces of his family. Surely they worried about what kind of job he could get to make money. But what they probably felt more than anything else was shame! You see, many Jews in Jesus' day wrongly believed that any baby born with something terribly wrong with it--like blindness--was God's punishment. Maybe the parents had done something very bad; or maybe it was the baby who had done something bad--while still inside his mother. It may sound silly to us, but that is what many in Jesus' day wrongly believed. So, as word spread about this poor, little blind baby, so did the wondering whispers and the judging glares as to what terrible secret sin these parents or their child God was punishing them.

"Darkness for darkness," people thought. The baby had the darkness of blind eyes because of the darkness of some sin. Yet what the sin was, no one knew. Many years passed. The baby grew up. How many times as a young boy, did he wish he could see the little lamb whose soft fur he stroked? How many times as a young man did he long to see the changes in his own face as he could feel his own, stubbly beard begin to grow? How many times as an older man did he long to see the glittering, pure white stones of the great Temple, by whose gate he sat and begged for money? Or, the ripples on the Pool of Siloam when he plunged his cupped hands into its cool spring water for a drink? Probably many times! But never

did it happen. "Darkness for darkness" was all this blind man knew.

"What was my parents' sin, or my sin that God has been punishing me for all these years?" the man must have wondered. "I wish I could know."

But despite what the Jews thought, this man's blindness was not at all God's special punishment upon him or his parents. It had always been part of something wonderful that God had planned long, long ago, as this man was about to find out. For on one, particular Sabbath morning, Jesus, Himself, was to answer this question that had troubled the blind man and his parents all these years.

Jesus had been with His disciples in the Temple courts. As He was teaching, some of those who were listening became furious with what He taught. He rebuked them for their stubborn hearts, dark and blind with unbelief. "You teachers know God's Word! You should know that I am God's Son, but you don't want to believe and follow Me. You are acting just like Satan. He chose to rebel against God, too!" Jesus told them.

How angry these men were at Jesus' words! They picked up stones to kill Him for calling Himself God's Son. Jesus and His disciples escaped the shower of rocks by slipping away from the Temple grounds.

Not long after this narrow escape, who should Jesus and his disciples see along the way, but the man born blind. And what was the first thing to roll off of the lips of the disciples, but the same, old question that had troubled this poor, blind man for years: "Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" they asked Jesus.

Then came from Jesus the most unexpected answer: "This is not darkness for darkness, like the people say," Jesus told them. "Neither this man nor his parents sinned. This man's blindness happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. This man might see darkness, but I am the light of the world."

The blind man could hardly believe it! His blindness a part of God's good plan? Would God really display His good work through his blindness? How?

The blind man soon found out. The same Jesus who had formed man from the dust of the earth, thousands of years earlier at the creation of the world, now stooped down, scooped up dust, mixed it into mud with His own saliva, and spread it upon his blind eyes.

"Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam," Jesus told him. So with mud oozing down his eyes, the blind man felt his way along the cobbled streets of Jerusalem as quickly as he

could.

Carefully, he felt his way down the steps to the cool, spring waters of the Pool of Siloam. He lowering himself down onto his knees, the blind man plunged his cupped hands into the flowing water and rinsed the mud from his face. Even as the mud washed away, the man began to sense light. But then the indescribable joy when he opened his eyes completely and the first rays of light flooded upon him in brilliance. Jesus had healed him! He could see! He could see!

Eagerly the man leaped up the stone steps and hurried home, his hungry eyes feasting upon the colors and sights all around him that he had only know as shapes, smells, textures and sounds before. And oh, the amazement of his mother and father as he burst into their home shouting, "Mother, Father, Jesus healed me. I can see!"

The shocking news of the blind man's healing spread quickly through town. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"

Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."
"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked.

"The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes," he replied. "He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

"Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

"Could Jesus really have freed this man from the darkness of the secret sin that supposedly caused his blindness? How could this be?" the people wondered. So they brought the man to the Pharisees to see what they would say.

The Pharisees gathered around the man and questioned both him and his parents. There was no doubt: Jesus had done an amazing miracle. But no matter what they heard or saw, the Pharisees' hearts remained shut in dark disbelief: "That man, Jesus, is a sinner. He is not from God," they said to the man. "He healed you on a Sabbath. He's a lawbreaker. How can anyone be from God who's a lawbreaker? Jesus isn't the Light of the World. He's not the Messiah or the Son of God. He's nothing but a sinner. Give glory to God, man!" they ordered the man. "Admit that Jesus is a sinner!"

The Pharisees hoped that this man would be scared of them and give in, but he would not. For even better than the light that poured into his blind eyes, was the light of truth that the Holy Spirit had poured into his heart that

day.

The man stood up to the Pharisees and said, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!...We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing," he declared.

The Pharisees were furious! "You're just a blind man punished for your sins from the day you were born! Don't talk to us like this!" And they threw him out.

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, Jesus said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man [the Messiah]?"

"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

You are looking at Him. It's Me!" Jesus said.

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him.

In one day, Jesus had flooded the dark world of this blind man with light. Jesus had given his eyes sight to see the beauty of all God had created; and better yet, He had given his heart spiritual sight to see that He was the Son of God. Jesus had even used His life as a display of His power that others might see and believe in Him, too.

This was just the beginning of the good plans God had in store for blind man's blindness. For in the more than two thousand years since the day he received his sight, God has continued to display His work in this blind man's life. Millions and millions of people have read how his story in the Bible and been encouraged to trust in Jesus, too. How wonderful and unfailing are the plans of God!

Our Bible Truth is:

God's Plans for His Creation Are Good and Unfailing

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 33:11

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations."

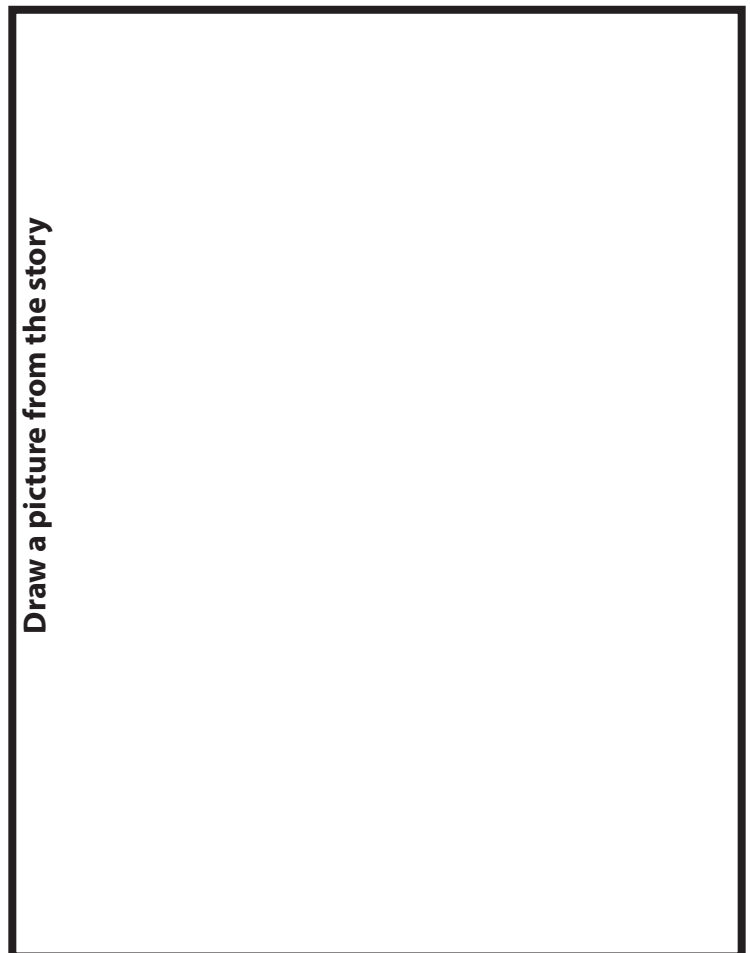
Does it seem strange or cruel for God to allow suffering in the weave of His good, unfailing plans? It would be easy for us to think so, since suffering is so hard and we have such very small brains with which to grasp God's great and mysterious ways. Perhaps there is suffering in your life or in the lives of those you love that doesn't make sense. Sometimes God, in His graciousness, shows us His good plan in allowing suffering, but many times He does not.

Perhaps we forget that we are all sinners who have

chosen to rebel against God and His good ways. Perhaps we forget that while we all deserve God's punishment for our sins, that God sent His very own Son to suffer worse than anyone for the sins of all those who will ever turn from their sins and trust in Him. Jesus' sufferings were all part of God's good and unfailing plans for creation from before the beginning...and from those sufferings brought about the most wonderful part of God's plans. God's people can know that their sufferings will be much smaller than anything Jesus went through, yet God will make all of them part of Him good and unfailing plans, just as surely as He did with Jesus!

God's people also know that one day, God will put an end to suffering forever. And in the light of eternity, all His good plans will be made clear. There will be nothing but praise for God for His unfailing and good plans for creation.

Let's praise God for being the Maker of Good and Unfailing Plans for everything in our lives. Let's ask Him to give us faith to trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to make each and every one of our sufferings a display of His work in our lives that would lead us and others to Him, just as He did with the blind man long ago.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: 1. Bible Truth Question, True or False: God wove His perfect plans into everything that we decide. God's plans would never fail. Not even our sinful rebellion against Him would ruin His plans. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions: a. Who was blind? Why did most people think he was blind? Answer: The son of a couple was born blind. Most people thought that he was blind as God's punish-ment for something sinful that he or his parents did.</p> <p>b. Who changed the blindness? How did He make the blindness beautiful? Answer: Jesus healed the man. He explained that God planned for this blindness to bring God's glory. Some saw what Jesus did and put their faith in Him. Even today people read about how Jesus healed this blind man and see God's glory. This made even this blindness a beautiful thing.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 33:11 "The counsel of the LORD ___ forever, the plans of ___ to all generations." Answers: stand; his; heart.</p>

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>He Leadeth Me <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 16,17</i></p> <p>Verse 2 Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom, By waters still, o'er troubled sea, Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me!</p> <p>Refrain He leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me; His faithful foll'wer I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.</p> <p>Verse 3 Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine, Nor ever murmur nor repine; Content, whatever lot I see, Since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me! <i>Refrain</i></p> <p>Words: Joseph H. Gilmore Music William B. Bradbury</p> <p>"This hymn reminds us that God's plans are good and un- failing. God's people know this best of all. They know God is always leading them through life, fulfilling His good plans for them. Whether it is something hard or sad or enjoyable and happy, it is all a part of God's good plans that He has woven into every single day. That is why they can be content, no matter what happens.</p>

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the great God who even weaves His people's suffering into His good and un- failing plans.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we don't see the hard things we go through as a part of Your good and un- failing plans. Instead we grumble against You. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T Thank You for planning everything Your people go through to be for their good and Your glory. Thank You for sending Jesus to suffer more than any of us will ever suffer, in order to save sinners.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Work out Your good and un- failing plans through us, even through our sufferings.</p>

BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p>The Counsel of the Lord <i>PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 19</i></p> <p>The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations; His counsel stand forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. The counsel of the LORD stands forever; The plans of His heart to all generations. Psalm Thirty-three, verse eleven.</p> <p>Words: Psalm 33:11, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>"The Bible tells us that God's counsel--that is, His wise plans--stand firm for His creation. Throughout all generations, throughout all of history--every single day--God will do all of His will. And because God's heart is completely wise and purely good, we can trust that His purposes, even in the things we least understand, are always good. We can count on that because He never changes."</p>