

✦ The King is Coming ✦

December 1

In the Beginning (Genesis 1-2)

In the beginning, there was nothing. There was nothing to smell, nothing to see, nothing to touch. No animals, no lakes, no flowers, no sun, and no people. But God was there. God had a plan to make something out of nothing – actually EVERYTHING out of nothing! For the next 6 days God made his creation. He spoke and it happened. On each day, God said “Let there be” and creation replied “it was so.” First, God made the heavens and the earth and the light and dark. It was good. On the second day, space was made over the earth and it was named the “sky” and God said it was good. On day three, all the water was gathered into groups and land was formed. There were trees and plants on the land and it was good. The sun, moon, and stars were hung in the sky on day four and God saw that they were good. On day five, swimming animals and flying animals were created. Each animal was uniquely special and said to be good. On day six, God filled the land with other animals – roaring animals, tall animals, small animals, crawling animals. They were all called good. But God wasn’t done! God made people. Out of all the things God created, He loved people the most. People were made in His image – first Adam, then Eve. God put his people in charge of the animals and vegetation and gave them everything they needed. All God’s creation was complete and He looked at it and said it was very good. So on day seven of creation, God rested and blessed the day as holy.

Reflection Questions:

1. How many days did God use to create the world (can you describe each day)?
2. Why do you think God rested on the seventh day?
3. When you hear “God made something out of nothing,” what does it make you think about God?



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December 2

Sin in the Garden (Genesis 3)

Everything was going great in Eden. The beautiful garden was filled with all sorts of fruits and vegetables for the first two people – Adam and Eve – to eat. But God gave them one rule, “You may eat from any tree in the garden, except for one. Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If you eat from that tree, you will die” (Gen 2:16) One day Satan, disguised as a serpent, appeared to Eve and asked her “Did God really tell you not to eat from any tree in the garden?” Eve told the sneaky snake that they could eat from all the trees, but God said they couldn’t eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. And if they ate from it, or even touched it, they would die. The sneaky serpent told Eve “That’s not true! God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Eve believed the snake and saw how good the fruit looked. She ate some of the fruit and gave some to her husband, Adam. Immediately, things changed! They realized they were naked and wanted to cover themselves. Later that evening, they heard God walking in the garden and they hid. But they couldn’t hide from God. God was angry with them, but He still loved them. He made clothes for them and sent them out of the garden. Because they disobeyed, they were no longer welcome to live in God’s perfect kingdom. Adam and Eve left the garden sad, but before they left, God made a promise to put an end to the sneaky serpent once and for all. They didn’t understand it at the time, but God had a big plan that involved a king – a king that would save the world. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. How did the serpent trick Adam and Eve?
2. Why do you think Eve ate the fruit?
3. What are some ways you are like Adam and Eve?



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December 3

The Big Boat (Genesis 6-9)

After some time had passed, Adam and Eve had children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. There were many people in the world by now! But God was forgotten, the world was wicked and all people were doing evil things. This made God angry and he decided to wipe out what He created with a big flood. But a man named Noah loved God and followed him, so God showed him favor. God told Noah to build a big boat, a really big boat, where Noah, his family, and all kinds of birds and animals would be safe from the coming flood. It took Noah more than 100 years to build the boat. When the boat was completed Noah and his family entered the boat and seven days later, the rains came and the winds blew. Throughout the forty days of rain, the waters surged and lifted the ark higher than the mountaintops. Everything on the earth died. The waters stayed on the earth for 150 days (that's about 5 months!) God remembered Noah and when it was time for them to come out of the boat, Noah immediately thanked God for rescuing them. God promised He would never send a flood to cover the earth again. He put a rainbow in the clouds to be a reminder of His promise. It wasn't long before things went wrong again, but God never breaks his promises. Remember His first promise in the Garden of Eden – that He was going to send a rescuer to save us from the sin that started with Adam and Eve. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Why did God send the flood?
2. Who/what got to be on the boat? Why did God choose them?
3. What can you think about when you see a rainbow?



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December 4

Father Abraham (Genesis 12-20)

A few generations after the flood, a man named Abram was born and lived in the land of Ur. Things hadn't gotten any better and people were still making sinful choices. Abram and his wife Sarai were in their seventies when Abram was told by God to move far away from their home. God made a promise that Abram would be given a big family and land to live on. God said "all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Abram followed God's directions and he, Sarai, and his nephew Lot moved to the land of Canaan. After several years went by (over 20 actually!), Abram and Sarai still hadn't had a child. Many things had happened in that time: Abram and Lot separated and lived on different lands, battles were fought and won, Abram acquired much livestock as well as gold and silver. One night, God led Abram outside to look at the stars and told him that he would have as many people in his family as the stars as he saw (no one can count all those stars, that's a ton of family!) When Abram was 99 years old, God spoke to him again. God said, "I am changing your name to Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you. You and all your offspring will get the land that you're living on and I will be their God." Then God changed Sarai's name to Sarah and told her she would be blessed with a son and he would be named Isaac. God planned to use Abraham's line of children to bring about the King we would need. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What special promise did God make Abram?
2. What new names did God give Abram and Sarai? (bonus: what did they mean)
3. Have you ever made a promise to someone and not kept it? Do you find it surprising that God keeps His promises?



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December 5

From Coat to Cloak (Genesis 37-50)

Abraham's son Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons, but his favorite son was Joseph. Jacob loved Joseph so much that he gave him a special coat. When Jacob's brothers realized that Joseph was the family favorite, they did not like him. On top of that, Joseph was having strange dreams where his brothers bowed down to him (they didn't like to hear that!) One day, Jacob sent Joseph to go check on his brothers who were tending sheep in the field and when they saw him coming, they came up with a plan to get rid of him. They stripped him of his coat and threw him into a pit in the ground. Instead of killing them, they sold him into Egyptian slavery and went home and told their father Joseph had been killed by wild animals. Throughout Joseph's time in Egypt he was accused of something he didn't do and was thrown in jail. But God had made it so Joseph could understand what people's dreams meant. When Pharaoh started having dreams and heard that Joseph could interpret them, he gave him the chance. Joseph was then put into a position of power, he got to help be in charge of Egypt! One of the dreams Joseph explained was about a famine that was coming to the land. People came to Egypt trying to buy food to survive, including Joseph's brothers (remember the ones who sold him into slavery?) Joseph could have been mean to them, but he wasn't. He forgave them and invited them all to come and stay in Egypt! Joseph trusted and obeyed God, and God saved many people through him. But God was planning to send someone else to save even more people. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What did Joseph's brothers do to him?
2. How did God keep Joseph safe in Egypt?
3. How can we learn from Joseph to love our brothers (and sisters) when they do something unkind to us?



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December 6

From Basket to Bush (Exodus 1-3)

Joseph and the rest of his brothers had grown old and died, but their children's children remained in Egypt and their family grew and grew! They were called the Israelites because they came from Jacob (who was also called Israel). A new Pharaoh, or king, took over and this Pharaoh didn't like the Israelites. He feared that they would grow to outnumber the Egyptians and take over the land. This pharaoh was mean to the Israelites and made them slaves – they had to work really hard! Not only that, but Pharaoh ordered that all Israelite baby boys be killed as soon as they were born. It wasn't long after this that some brave women found a way to save the baby boys. These women feared God more than Pharaoh. Because of this, a baby boy was born and hidden as long as he could have been, but then released in a basket down a river. He was found by Pharaoh's daughter and she named him Moses. Moses grew up in Egypt, but eventually noticed God's people being treated unfairly. After making a bad choice, he left Egypt and found a job as a shepherd. He married a woman named Zipporah and worked for her father Jethro. One day when he was tending his sheep in a field, he saw a bush that was on fire. The fire was behaving oddly – it was flickering with flames, but not burning up. Then he heard God's voice from the bush. God said, "My people are suffering, I have come to rescue them. I want you to lead them out of Egypt to a land I have for them." Moses questioned God and asked what he should say if they ask who sent him. God replied "I AM WHO I AM." God told Moses his job wouldn't be easy, and Pharaoh wouldn't like it, but one day the people would be free. So Moses went back to Egypt. What Moses didn't realize is that God had a plan that would make the way for a better king than anyone could have ever imagined. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Why did the baby's mother put him in a basket in the water?
2. What did God appear to Moses in? What was special about it?
3. What would you do if you saw a bush that was on fire but not burning up?



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December 7

Rescue From Egypt (Exodus 5-12)

On Moses' journey back to Egypt, his brother Aaron met him along the way. They approached Pharaoh and told him, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go!" But this Pharaoh questioned who this "Lord" was and said "no!" He actually made the Israelites work even harder as a result. So, God gave Pharaoh ten warnings called plagues. The plagues included turning a river into blood, frogs, gnats and flies, the death of their livestock, sore spots, hail, locusts, and even darkness for three whole days. Throughout it all, Pharaoh refused to let God's people go! Finally, Moses and Aaron warned Pharaoh that the last plague would be the worst of all. Moses said, "The firstborn son in every family in Egypt will die." But God's people would be safe. Pharaoh refused to listen. God told his people to put the blood of a lamb on their doorpost as a special mark that they could see, and He would "pass over" the house. That night, every firstborn son of Egypt died and Pharaoh finally told Moses and Aaron to "go!" The Israelites gathered their things and left quickly. In Pharaoh's rage, he forgot about all the work the Israelites did and decided to chase them down to bring them back to Egypt. God knew this would happen and helped the Israelites cross the Red Sea. While God's people were safe on the other side of the sea, God caused the water to crash down and destroy Pharaoh and his army. When the Israelites saw what had happened, they thanked God and knew God was real. They believed Moses was sent to lead them. Moses was a great leader, but little did they know that God had a better leader on the way. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Can you name three or four of the terrible plagues that God sent to the Egyptians?
2. Why do you think Pharaoh wouldn't let God's people go?
3. What's a great thing you have seen God do?



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December 8

The Law (Exodus 19-20)

It wasn't long before the Israelites seemed to forget what God had done for them and their grumbling began. They were no longer slaves, but they were wandering in the wilderness. Over and over again, God heard their grumbings and provided food and water. But their complaining continued. God led them to a mountain called Mount Sinai and they set up camp. Because God loved them, He wanted to make a covenant, or special promise, with them. God called Moses up the mountain to give him a message to share: "The whole earth is mine, but you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation." The people agreed to do what God said. Then God called Moses back up the mountain and the mountain shook. God came down the mountain in a fire, and smoke covered the mountain. God said, "I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Then God gave them the Ten Commandments (rules to live by). The first four commandments told the Israelites how to have a right relationship with God: "Do not have other gods besides Me. Do not make an idol for yourself. Do not misuse the name of the Lord. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." The last six commandments told the Israelites how to have a right relationship with other people: "Honor your father and mother. Do not murder. Do not cheat. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not want what other people have." The people had committed to following God and promised to keep these rules that God commanded. But God knew they wouldn't be able to. He was still following through on his plan to send someone who could keep all these rules. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Can you name three to four of the Ten Commandments? Read the rest of them.
2. When Moses told the people God's commands, what did the people say they would do?
3. Do you find it easy or hard to follow God's rules? Why or why not?



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December 9

The Promised Land (Joshua 1-2; 6)

After Moses died, God gave his people a new leader named Joshua. By this time, God's people had been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. God told Joshua he was to lead the people across the Jordan River to the land He had promised them. So, Joshua sent two spies across the Jordan to check out the Promised Land around the city of Jericho. Jericho was a city that was surrounded by solid walls, almost like a fortress. The two Israelite spies went into a house of a woman named Rahab and she hid the two men from being found. Rahab told the men that she believed their God had given them this land and asked them to make a promise that her family would be safe. They made a plan of escaping and Rahab helped them. The men told Rahab to leave a red rope out her window and no one in her family would be hurt when the Israelite army came to take the city. Joshua and his army prepared to overtake the city and God instructed them on how to do it. Even though the plan sounded odd, they followed God's directions. They marched around the city once every day for six days and on the seventh day, they were to march around Jericho seven times and blow a loud horn followed by a shout. Those strong, tall walls crumbled before their eyes. The Israelite army rushed into Jericho and overtook the city. The only people who were spared were Rahab and her family. Now this is where it gets really interesting – Rahab (a woman who was not an Israelite) went on to live with the Israelites and made her home among God's people. God used Rahab and her Israelite husband, Salmon, to continue his path to bringing a perfect king to earth. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What did God tell Joshua to do to be able to overtake the city of Jericho?
2. How was Rahab brave? How did God reward her bravery?
3. When is a time where you had to show courage? How did it make you feel after?



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December 10

The Family Redeemer (Ruth)

After Joshua died, the Israelite people fell into idol worship. They rejected what God's law said and this angered God. He sent armies to fight against the people. When they finally stopped worshiping idols and asked God for his help, he sent judges to help govern the people. The judges helped the people fight against their enemies. During the time that the judges ruled Israel, a man moved his family from Israel to Moab to be able to find food. He and his wife had two sons and those two sons each had a wife. After about 10 years the husband and sons died, leaving only the wife, Naomi, and her two daughter-in-laws, Ruth and Orpah. Being alone with no protection, Naomi wanted to go back to their home in Israel and Ruth vowed to not leave her. So Naomi and Ruth went back to Judah, in Israel. Ruth and Naomi needed food, so Ruth went to gather grain that had been dropped in a nearby field. The field was owned by a man named Boaz. Boaz spotted Ruth and wanted to protect her so he told all the field workers to leave grain in the field for her. When Ruth went home and shared of Boaz' kindness, Naomi shared that Boaz was a family relative and was a "family redeemer." He was someone who could help them. Over an agreement, Boaz vowed to redeem Ruth, buy back her family land, and marry her. Ruth and Boaz married and had a son named Obed. Obed grew up and had a son named Jesse, who was the father of David. God was using ordinary people for his extraordinary purpose. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. How did Boaz show that he was kind?
2. Do you notice any connections between the courage of Rahab and the courage of Ruth?
3. What was your favorite part of this story?



The King is Coming

December 11

The Shepherd Boy (1 Samuel 16-17)

The time for the judges was over. A man named Samuel was a great judge, but he was getting old and his sons were not good judges. The people demanded a king. So God told Samuel to give the people what they wanted. The first king appointed, King Saul, wasn't working out. He started to disobey God and he didn't love God with his whole heart. This made Samuel sad. God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem, to a man named Jesse's house. God said He would show Samuel which one of Jesse's sons to anoint as king. Jesse had many sons, eight to be exact! Meeting each of Jesse's sons, starting with the oldest, Samuel knew none of these were chosen by the Lord. Finally, he asked if Jesse had any more sons and Jesse replied, "There is one more. My youngest son is out taking care of the sheep." When Samuel met Jesse's youngest son David, he knew David was the one chosen by the Lord (even though he was the youngest and the smallest). So the Lord sent his Holy Spirit into David's heart to make him wise, but the Lord also took his Spirit away from King Saul. It wasn't too long after that David proved he had God's favor and defeated a large, scary, Philistine giant named Goliath. Through David, God had saved his people from the Philistine army and David was seen as a hero. But even though David would do a lot of great things in his future, David wouldn't be THE hero of God's story. Don't forget, the King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. How many brothers did David have and was he the oldest or the youngest?
2. Why do you think God wanted David to be chosen over his other siblings?
3. What would you do if you had to battle a large, scary giant? What did David do?



The King is Coming

December 12

The Promise to David (2 Samuel 1-7)

After defeating Goliath, David caught the eye of King Saul and spent a lot of time at the palace. He even became best friends with King Saul's son, Jonathan. But King Saul wasn't doing a good job being king and eventually died after many years of war. The time had come for David to be the new king of God's people. David was thirty years old and many years had passed between the time Samuel anointed him as a boy in his house in Bethlehem. But David knew that God had chosen him to be the next king. David became king over Israel and Judah and unlike Saul, he loved God with his whole heart. He loved God so much that he wanted to build God a house! God told David that he didn't need a house from him, but He made David a promise instead. He promised that David would have a son who would become king after him. His son would be a strong king and that son would be the one to build a house for God. But the promise got even better – God promised that future kings would always be someone from David's family. David was elated and praised God with thanksgiving. King David ruled for seventy years. He was a great king, but he wasn't perfect. He did some terrible things, but God would keep his promise. The Savior king would come from David's family and that king would be perfect. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Why was David such a good king?
2. What promise did God make to David?
3. How does it make you feel to hear that God keeps his promises, even when we sin?



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December 13

A Wise Leader (1 Kings 3-12)

Solomon was David's son and when David died, Solomon became the new king. One night, God talked to Solomon in a dream. God said, "Solomon, ask. What should I give you?" Solomon replied, "You have shown great and faithful love to my father David. You continued your great love by giving him a son to sit on his throne. But I am young and have no experience in leadership. Please give me wisdom to help me lead your people and help me know the difference between what is right and wrong." It pleased God that Solomon asked for wisdom over riches, so God granted Solomon's request and made him the wisest person who had ever lived. He told him he would be greater than any other king while he was alive. Then Solomon woke up from his dream. King Solomon ruled with wisdom and power. He also built a temple for God (just as God told David he would). But like the kings before him, he wasn't perfect and made sinful choices. Ultimately, Solomon's rule as king ended badly and it resulted in the kingdom dividing and God's people being taken captive. History was repeating itself. But God knew this would happen and He had made promises to his people. God never breaks his promises so we can trust that the King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What did Solomon ask for when God promised to give him anything he wanted?
2. What would you ask for if God promised to give you anything you wanted?
3. What was the result of Solomon not being a good king?



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December 14

A Bright Light (Isaiah 9:1-7)

During the time of the kings, God had raised up prophets (people who spoke for him) to help the kings lead his people better. Because God is so good, he continued to speak through prophets even after He allowed his kingdom to divide. God reminded his people that He was working behind the scenes and that He never breaks His promises. God promised that a Rescuer would come from Eve's family. The prophet Isaiah shared a message about God's promise to send a Rescuer 700 years before He actually came! The Rescuer would be called the Messiah, which means "anointed one" or "chosen one." This is what Isaiah wrote: "The people are living in darkness now, but they will see a great light. A light will shine on them. God will grow the nation and give the people joy. People will rejoice like they do at harvest time or after a war is won. This is how God will keep His promise: A child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on His shoulders. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." God planned to send a king who would bring peace to the whole world. He would be a good, fair, and loving king who reigns forever. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What is a prophet? Can you name some from the Bible?
2. What did God promise through the prophet Isaiah?
3. What were some of the names this "Rescuer" would be called (hint: look at Isaiah 9:6)?



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December 15

A New Covenant (Jeremiah 31)

Jeremiah was a prophet to God's people of Judah and told them messages from God, even when they were prisoners in the foreign land of Babylon. No matter how often they were reminded, they seemed to forget that God was just and loving. God took their sins seriously, but He also loved them and had a grand plan for His people – a plan that had been in motion since the first sin in the garden. This is what God said to Jeremiah, "One day, I will make a new covenant with my people. I will bring them back to their land. I will be their God and they will be my people. Their hearts will be different! This new covenant will not be like the old covenant that I made when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. They will know me and their sins will be forgiven and never remembered." This was great news for God's people because this new covenant wasn't something that required anything from them. Their animal sacrifices wouldn't be necessary anymore because God was going to do something miraculous through someone who would come and sacrifice himself for their sin. It was their future king. And the King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. If a covenant is a promise from God, what did God promise through the prophet Jeremiah?
2. What was something the people wouldn't be required to do anymore through the new covenant?
3. Do you have any ideas about who God was planning to send as the sacrifice?



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December 16

The Big Fish (Jonah 1-3)

One day, God told a man named Jonah to go to a place called Nineveh to tell those people to stop doing evil things. Well Jonah did not go to Nineveh like God told him to do. Instead, he got on a boat to go in the opposite direction. God sent a fierce storm and Jonah eventually was tossed into the raging sea by the sailors. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah and he stayed in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Jonah had a ton of time to think sitting in the stomach of a sea creature, so he prayed and thanked God for sending the fish. Without that fish, he would have drowned! Then the fish spit Jonah onto dry land and Jonah finally agreed to go to Nineveh and preach God's message. The people heard the message and stopped sinning. Jonah's story reminds us that even when things seem hopeless, God is working. In a similar way to Jonah, the Savior King would lay in the darkness for three days. But this Savior King would rise on the third day, beat death, and bring salvation to the world. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. How did Jonah try to get away from God?
2. Why do you think the people of Nineveh believed God?
3. What does this story teach us about God and His plans?



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December 17

From Furnace to Felines (Daniel 1-3; 6)

During the time of a split kingdom, God's people were taken captive. History was repeating itself and now a foreign king named Nebuchadnezzar was ruling God's people. Daniel and three others were chosen to serve the king directly and were taken back to Babylon to serve in his palace. But Daniel and his friends loved God and they didn't want to dishonor God with sinful living that took place in a foreign land. They were bold and refused to eat and drink things that God forbid in his law, and they also refused to bow down to gold statues. All throughout this time, Nebuchadnezzar had grown fond of Daniel and his friends, but when his friends refused the command to worship the gold statue, Nebuchadnezzar was angry. They were thrown into a fiery furnace, but came out unscathed! Their clothes smelled of smoke, but nothing on them was burned! After this, Nebuchadnezzar believed that their God was the one true God and the boys found themselves in a place of leadership. Some time later, when Daniel was much older, a new king had taken over named King Darius. He liked Daniel, but the other princes were jealous and tricked Darius into making a law to get Daniel in trouble. Because of this, Daniel was thrown into something, but it wasn't fiery – it was a pit of lions! When morning came, Daniel was taken out of the den unharmed. Daniel was faithful to God and God was faithful to Daniel. God preserved Daniel in the same way that he preserved the line of the coming ruler. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar want Daniel and his friends to do?
2. Why did Daniel get thrown into a pit of lions (see Daniel 6:10-11)?
3. What is the reason that Daniel's friends weren't burned up in the furnace or Daniel wasn't eaten by the lions?



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December 18

A Royal Rescue (Esther)

God's people were still being held captive in foreign lands. Some of God's people were in a land called Persia. A king named Ahasuerus ruled and chose Esther to be his queen. He didn't know it, but Esther was a Jew (one of God's people). One day, Esther's cousin Mordecai overheard a plan from Haman, one of the king's helpers. Haman planned to destroy the Jews. Once Mordecai heard this, he told Esther and told her she must help. Esther was afraid because she herself was a Jew, but Mordecai reminded her that maybe she had become queen for this exact reason and time. Esther boldly approached the king, following all the rules of approaching him correctly, and was able to share the evil plan of Haman. King Ahasuerus was angry and ordered Haman to be taken away. He then made a law to protect the Jews from their enemies. God's plan was to send the coming King through the line of Abraham (the Jewish people). No evil plan can stop God. By saving the Jews, God continued to make a way for the King to enter the world. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What was Esther's secret that the king didn't know about her?
2. Similar to Rahab and Ruth, how was Esther brave?
3. What would you have done if you had to approach the king the way Esther did?



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December 19

The Rebuild (Ezra 2-8; Nehemiah 1-10)

Slowly but surely, after being in captivity for 70 years, God's people started to make their way back to their homeland of Judah and wanted to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem that had been destroyed. A man named Zerubbabel led the first group, Ezra led a second group, and Nehemiah led a third. The temple was built by Zerubbabel and the group of people who accompanied him. After a period of about sixty years, a Jewish priest named Ezra brought a group of people with him to Jerusalem. Ezra desired to teach God's laws to the people. When Ezra arrived, he was saddened by the people's lack of understanding and the way they were living. Not too long after, Nehemiah heard that the temple had been rebuilt, but that Jerusalem's walls were still broken down. They were unprotected. Nehemiah led the third group of people out of captivity back to their homeland of Jerusalem. One day after the walls were rebuilt, the Jewish people met at a gate in the wall and Ezra read the law. They wanted him to continue to read because when the people heard the laws, they remembered how often they had disobeyed them. With all the rebuilding of the temple and the walls, God was doing some rebuilding of His people as well. They recommitted their promise to follow God. But their promise wouldn't last and there would be a 400 year silence. While it seemed that God was not working, He actually was doing exactly what He said He would do when He promised Abraham that He would give him a family that outnumbered the stars in the sky. He was doing exactly what He said He would do when he promised the future kings would all come from David's children. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Who were the three guys who led God's people back to Jerusalem?
2. When the people heard the law read, what did they promise to do?
3. Why do you think the people couldn't keep their promise? Do you think it is hard to keep promises?



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December 20

Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25)

The silence was about to be broken. There was an old priest who worked in the Temple named Zechariah. He and his wife Elizabeth were followers of God's commands, but they were never able to have a child. They had lived long, faithful lives and one day an angel appeared to Zechariah and gave him some interesting news. Zechariah was frightened at first, but the angel told him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. Many will rejoice at his birth. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while he is still in his mother's womb. He will go before the people and tell the Israelites of the Savior who is coming." Zechariah immediately questioned the angel and because of that, the angel told him he would not be able to talk until these things came to pass. All throughout Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy, Zechariah was unable to talk. This was all part of God's plan. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Who were Zechariah and Elizabeth?
2. Why do you think Zechariah had a hard time believing they would have a son? Would that be hard for you to believe?
3. How can we remember to trust in God's timing and not our own?



✦ The King is Coming ✦

December 21

John the Baptist (1:57-80; Matthew 3:1-6)

The time had come for Elizabeth to have her baby and God gave her and Zechariah the son that had been promised. There was much rejoicing and when it came time for the child to be presented in the temple, there was confusion on his name. The people wanted to name the baby "Zechariah" after his father, but Elizabeth said, "No, we will name him John." Remember, Zechariah still couldn't talk! So when the people asked him what he thought, he wrote on a tablet, "His name is John." Immediately, his mouth was opened and his tongue was set free. Zechariah praised God and he and Elizabeth served as witnesses for God's miraculous act. John grew and the Lord blessed him. When he was older, he lived out in the wilderness and when the time was right, he began to preach about the coming of Jesus. The child given to Zechariah and Elizabeth was John the Baptist, who indeed came to prepare the way for Jesus the Savior. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What does the Bible tell us about John when he got older (hint: refer to Matthew 3:1-16)?
2. How do you think Zechariah felt after finally being able to speak?
3. Why was John nicknamed John "the Baptist?" Do you think it was a good nickname for him to have?



The King is Coming

December 22

An Angel Comes to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

One day, God sent an angel named Gabriel to Nazareth to a woman named Mary. Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph, who happened to be in the line of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Mary, the Lord is with you!" When she heard this, she was trying to figure out what the angel could mean. The angel told her, "Don't be afraid, God has an important plan for you. You will give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be very great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. He will rule and reign over Israel forever. As Mary was hearing this, she was confused. She asked the angel, "How could this happen?" She wasn't even married yet. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit would visit her and she would have the power of God. The baby being born would be called the Son of God. Knowing Mary still needed reassurance, the angel told her that her relative Elizabeth (who was very old) became pregnant. The word of God is always true. Mary told the angel, "I am the Lord's servant" and was honored to give birth to the newborn King. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What did the angel say to Mary? How did Mary react? Why do you think she reacted that way?
2. What was going to be so special about Mary's baby? Why was this important for her to know?
3. Can you name a time when you've been scared or nervous? How does knowing that God is in control help us in situations like these?



The King is Coming

December 23

An Angel Comes to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)

After Mary was engaged to Joseph, it was discovered that before they had lived together she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Joseph was honorable and didn't want to embarrass Mary so he decided to separate from her in private. He didn't understand how this could happen, but he worried about what other people might think. Just as he had made up his mind to not be with Mary anymore, an angel appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." This was the fulfillment of something that was prophesied in the book of Isaiah (hundreds of years before!) When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel commanded him. He stayed with Mary, married her, and protected her. It was all falling into place. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. Take some time to research Joseph's lineage to King David. Why was Joseph's relation to King David an important detail? (Hint: Read 1 Samuel 16 and 2 Samuel 7:11b-16)
2. What do you think Joseph was thinking when he was planning to leave Mary?
3. What would you do if an angel appeared to you and gave you some unexpected news?



✦ The King is Coming ✦

December 24

Travel to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-6)

Mary and Joseph lived in the town of Nazareth. When Mary was pregnant with Jesus, a ruler named Caesar Augustus wanted a list of all the people who were living in the land. He sent out an order: "Everyone must return to his hometown to be counted!" Since Joseph was part of King David's family, he and Mary traveled the long trek to Bethlehem, the city of David. The distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem is about 90 miles and would have taken them several days. When they arrived, there was nowhere to stay due to the many people returning to their hometowns. Mary and Joseph found somewhere outside to give birth to their baby. The King is Coming!

Reflection Questions:

1. What city is 90 miles away from Wilmington? Could you imagine walking that far?
2. Why did the coming King have to be born in Bethlehem? (hint: use Micah 5:2 to answer)
3. Can you think of a time where you traveled a long distance to an unfamiliar place? How does that compare to the journey Mary and Joseph had to make?



✦ The King is Coming ✦

December 25

Birth and Shepherds (Luke 2:6-21)

It was time! Jesus was born and was laid in a manger. On the night Jesus was born, the shepherds were guarding their flocks of sheep in the fields. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them and the shepherds were scared. They saw the radiance of God's glory. The angel told them, "Don't be afraid, I bring you good news! The Savior has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!" The angel told them they would recognize him when they saw the baby wrapped with cloth in a manger. Suddenly more angels appeared and all the angels praised God saying, "Glory to God and peace on Earth!" When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds hurried to see baby Jesus. When they arrived at the village, they saw the animals, the manger, and the baby proclaimed by the angels. After seeing all this, they went back to their flocks and told everyone. They praised God for all they had heard and seen. The King had come!

Reflection Questions:

1. What did the angel say to the shepherds? How did the shepherds respond?
2. Why do you think God chose to tell the news about Jesus' birth of the shepherds first?
3. How was the coming King such good news for them? How is He such good news for us?



