

Growing in God's Love

A Story Bible Curriculum

Job and Jonah



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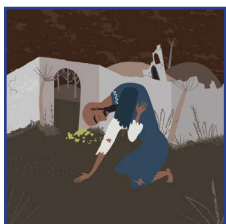
A Story Bible Curriculum

Unit Overview and Connecting pages written by Carol A. Wehrheim

Sessions written by Luther Young

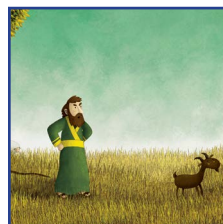
Job and Jonah

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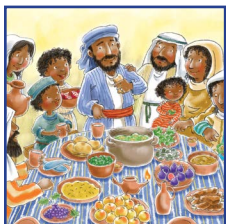
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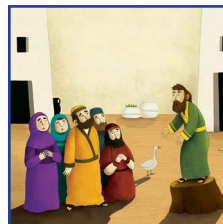
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Connecting with the Biblical Text

Chapters 1 and 2 set up the story of Job, one of the wisdom books in the Old Testament. The conversation between God and the Adversary sounds like it is one of many, a kind of coffee break chat. But this chat turns serious for Job. After God asks if the Adversary has noticed the faithful Job, the Adversary chides God into testing Job, and God agrees. The Adversary departs at the end of the second chapter and is heard from no more. But the thirty-eight chapters that follow take us through various arguments for the cause of suffering in the world. By the end of chapter 2, Job has lost everything and is living in pain, with boils covering his whole body. Why does he still praise and not curse God? Why doesn't he simply confess to whatever he has done to cause God to exact this terrible punishment and get it over with? Both his family and friends ask these questions. But Job insists he has done nothing wrong and will not question God.

To explore Job and his plight more deeply, visit bit.ly/GL19thSunday.

Connecting with the World

Suffering is difficult to watch, wherever it is, but seeing children hurting tears deeply at our hearts. Check out these organizations that work to alleviate the suffering of children:

- For decades, UNICEF, originally the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund but now known as the United Nations Children's Fund, has worked on behalf of children around the globe. Learn about their work, which began after World War II, at www.unicef.org.
- Save the Children has been protecting children for over one hundred years. To find out how to support a child, go to bit.ly/GLSaveChildren.

God of faithfulness, listen to my questions and hear my complaints. Assure me of your presence. Amen.

✦ **Goal:** To learn the importance of not giving up.

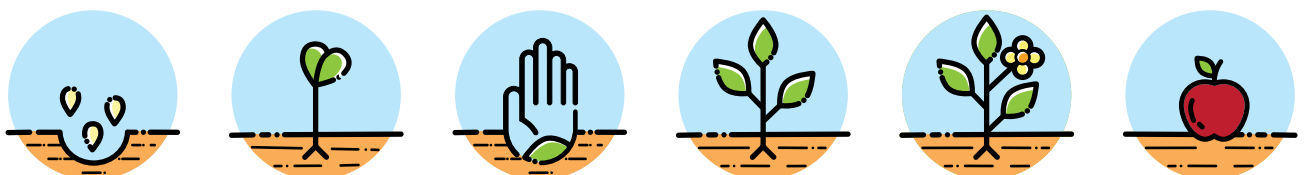
- Become a court-appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteer. CASA was begun in 1977 when a judge felt unable to make a decision about the future of a three-year-old child. CASAs promote the best interests of a child who has been abused or neglected. To learn about this national program, go to bit.ly/GLBeVolunteer.

Connecting with the Spiritual Lives of Children

When encountering suffering, children who feel cared for and secure question why this suffering happens. They sometimes wonder why the adults in their lives don't do something about it. As they get older, they wonder why God lets this happen, now engaging that age-old question with which we all struggle. Assure the children that God is with us no matter what is happening, a certainty that will become more clear in the next section, which concludes the story of Job. One of the things Job learned about God in his travails was that God is always there.

Connecting with the Spiritual Lives of Adults

- What would you do if you found yourself in such despair as Job? What three friends might come to you with advice and counsel?
- Read Psalm 10. Bring to mind individuals or groups who would identify with the various complaints. When does the psalmist turn from the list of tragedies to praising God? What makes that possible?
- The Taizé chant "Nothing Can Trouble" recalls the assurance of God's presence with us during troubling times. Listening to it or softly singing it over and over can bring peace to your soul. Listen to it on YouTube at bit.ly/GLNadaTeTurbe (3:57).



Enter — — — —> Read — — — —> Pause — — — —> Engage — — — —> Wrestle — — — —> Bless

Gathering Supplies

Based on your choices, you will need:

- ✓ *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*
- ✓ Cushions, floor pillows, beanbag chairs
- ✓ Drawing supplies
- ✓ Internet-connected device
- ✓ Copies of Resource Page 1
- ✓ Large bowl of water (filled about halfway)
- ✓ Balloon

Preparing to Lead

Read the story from the Bible, Job 1–2. As you read, note which aspects of the story you relate to and what questions are raised for you. Then read the story “Giving Up Isn’t Really Easy” in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* (p. 120).

Think about the following as you engage with this text:

- ✓ Could you have remained as faithful as Job?
- ✓ What are some things God can brag on you about?
- ✓ What challenges have arisen in your life that have tested your faith and your faithfulness to God? How do you respond in times of tribulation?
- ✓ Whom can you trust to give you good advice when you need it?
- ✓ How has reading this passage been enlightening for you?

Consider the children in your group. What questions might they ask about this story? What might sound odd, out of place, or confusing to them? What do you most want them to learn from your time together? Take a moment to pray for each one of the children by name and for any children you may meet during the session. Thank God for this opportunity to learn and grow alongside them.

To prepare for the “Staying Afloat” activity, fill the bowl halfway with water. Blow up the balloon to half the diameter of the bowl and tie it off. Bring it with you to the circle when you gather.

As children gather, invite volunteers to create a comfortable seating area by arranging cushions, floor pillows, or beanbag chairs in a circle. Gather drawing supplies and place them where the children can reach them if they desire to use them.



Enter into sacred space together.

Invite children to gather in the seating area. Greet the children by name and share with them that you will be hearing a story about Job, a special person who loved God very much.

Lead the group in this prayer of thanksgiving:

God of everyone, /
be with us today. /
Help us to hear you /
and to obey your commandments /
even when it is hard to do. /
Amen. /

Point out the drawing supplies. Invite children to use them during the session to write or draw anything that comes to mind as they explore the story of Job.



Read a story of God's people.

Invite children to listen to the story of Job and how he did not give up.

Read the first six paragraphs of the story “Giving Up Isn’t Really Easy” (p. 120). Ask the children if they have ever lost something really important to them, and if so, how did they feel about it? Encourage the children to think of a time they had to do something really difficult. Did they give up or keep going? If they kept going, how did they do it?

Read the rest of the story.



Pause to let God's Word enter into hearts and minds.

Ask the children to sit silently for a few minutes to let the story find its way into their hearts and minds. Encourage them to use their imagination and think carefully about the story. Suggest they may sit or use the drawing supplies quietly to illustrate any images or feelings that arise from the story.

You may wish to play meditative music as children pause to reflect on the story, such as the YouTube video “Morning Relaxing Music—Be Calm and Focused (Sia)” (bit.ly/GLMorningMusic, 3:03:33).



Engage curiosity and imagination with God's story.

Encourage the children to engage with the story using the following prompts:

- ✔ Who is in this story? What happens in it?
- ✔ Why did God point out Job while talking with Satan?
- ✔ How do you think Job felt after losing everything? How do you think his wife felt?
- ✔ Why did Job stay faithful to God even though all of the bad things happened to him?

○ Staying Afloat

- ✔ Set the bowl of water in front of you. Place the balloon in the water. Ask children to notice how the balloon sits on top of the water, like a boat sits on top of the ocean or a raft helps us stay afloat in a pool.
- ✔ Invite a volunteer to push the balloon into the water. Ask the children to share their observation of what happens when the person lets it go.
- ✔ Invite another volunteer to push the balloon into the water and hold it down for a little while longer before releasing it. Did holding the balloon under water longer make a difference?
- ✔ Explain that no matter how much pressure you put on the balloon and no matter how long you keep it down under water, it will always come back to the top. Like Job, the balloon just will not give up. That's how we should try to be when we are under pressure!



Wrestle with our place in God's story.

Invite the children to imagine what Job experienced. What might it feel like to have everything taken away? How might it impact your faith? Wonder together:

- ✔ Has anything like what happened to Job happened to you before? What was it like?
- ✔ What do you do when you are sad or lonely? Who or what makes you feel better?
- ✔ Do you think you could stay faithful like Job, or do you think you would have given up? Why?
- ✔ God could brag on Job because Job was a good and faithful person. What is something that God can brag on you about?

Choose one or both options:

After a Disaster

- ✔ Show "Grivit Kids, 'Disaster Relief'" ([bit.ly /GLDisasterRelief](https://bit.ly/GLDisasterRelief), 1:55), a video about Nettie, a young girl who lost everything when a cyclone hit her community. Explain that a cyclone is like a hurricane or a really bad storm with lots of wind and rain.
- ✔ Discuss the implications of the video using the following prompts:
 - Why did this bad thing happen to Nettie and her family?
 - Sometimes it can feel as if it's our fault when bad things happen. Did Nettie's family do something wrong?
 - What did Nettie's family do after the storm?
 - How is Nettie's story like or unlike what happened to Job?
- ✔ Affirm for the children that sometimes bad things just happen, even to good people. But because God stays with us, we don't have to give up.

○ Magic Miracle Wand

- ✔ Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and writing or drawing supplies.
- ✔ Invite the children to think about what they might change about the world if they had a magic wand that could work miracles.
- ✔ Discuss briefly what the children might add to the world, but encourage them to think deeply about what they would take away or get rid of.
- ✔ Encourage the children to use words or pictures on Resource Page 1 to describe what they would use their magic miracle wand to remove from the world.
- ✔ When everyone has had the opportunity to complete their description, invite children to share their words or illustrations of the world they created.



Bless one another with God's grace.

Invite the children to sit in a circle. Close by singing “Peace like a River” as a reminder that Job had peace through his hard times because of his faith in God. If you need a refresher on this classic song, show the YouTube video “Peace like a River” (bit.ly/GLPeaceRiver, 2:18).

Lead the children in prayer:

God whose love never runs out, /
we thank you for everything— /
all of the good stuff and even the bad stuff /
we sometimes have to go through. /
We know that no matter what happens, /
you are always with us. /
Help us to never give up, /
because you never give up on us. /
Amen. /



Grow with more.

- In God's Hands
 - ✔ Job keeps faith that God is in control. Even when his wife and friends challenge this belief, Job stays strong.
 - ✔ The classic song “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands” reminds us of this same truth. Sing it together as a group, but give it a modern remix by using gender-inclusive language or a variety of pronouns for God. (For example, “God’s Got the Whole World in God’s Hands,” “She’s got the whole world in Her hands” or “They’ve got the whole world in Their hands”).
 - ✔ Show “She’s Got the Whole World in Her Hands” (bit.ly/GLWholeWorld, 3:19) for an example or to sing along to.
- Sharing Art
 - ✔ Invite the children to share any art they have created during the session.

I want to wave my magical miracle wand and change the world by . . .