

40

PICTURES
TO SHARE
WITH YOUR
FAMILY

WHO IS
JESUS?

BY KATE HOX ILLUSTRATED BY JOE HOX



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*In loving memory of my dear mom,
Doris Jean Boer. This book would not exist
without your encouragement. We love you
and can't wait to see you again in glory.*

-KH

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance
taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

ROMANS 15:4

INTRODUCTION

After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to two of his followers on the road to Emmaus. “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Wouldn’t you love to have been there? Can you imagine Jesus himself explaining the Scriptures, or can you guess which stories he shared? The Bible is filled with stories and pictures that point us to Jesus as the Savior, the One who can bring us back to God.

God had this plan for salvation way back in the beginning—before baby Jesus in the manger, before all those famous prophets and kings, before greats like Moses and Abraham, before Adam and Eve and their disobedience, and before the creation of people and bugs and trees and the entire world! Before it all, God had a plan to save his people—before he even created them (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:18–20)! Jesus was not God’s “Plan B” after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The events of the Easter story were God’s great plan all along!

God has the best plan, and the biggest and best story. As we dig into his salvation story over the next forty days, we are going to keep one important question at the forefront of our minds:

Who is Jesus?

Let’s get started!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Each devotional includes a key verse, Bible passages for reference, and reflection questions. Choose whatever features are best for the various ages and attention spans in your family. Possible answers to most questions are included at the back of the book.

If your family enjoys singing as part of your devotional time, take note of the song suggestions in the back of the book corresponding to each day. Consider adding new songs your family enjoys so you can refer back to it year after year.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK FOR LENT AND EASTER

With forty days of readings, *Who Is Jesus?* fits perfectly as a family devotional leading up to Easter. If you’d like to follow the Lenten calendar, it begins on Ash Wednesday, six and a half weeks before Easter. (Lent traditionally does not include Sundays, including Easter Sunday.) If you get behind, don’t worry! Day 35 is the Good Friday story, and Day 36 is the Easter story, so being a bit behind isn’t necessarily a bad thing. You may also consider lighting candles to make your devotional time special.



DAY
1

JESUS IS THE FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-17

In the beginning there was only God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It was just the Trinity, together. There were no humans, no animals, no plants . . . nothing. Not even dirt! Genesis tells us “the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (1:2).

It was just God in the beginning—just God and an

amazing plan. This plan involved his Son Jesus, and it also involves YOU.

God’s masterful plan was bigger and better than anything you or I could ever dream up! God would make one special planet in the midst of a vast universe reaching farther than any human mind could comprehend. This planet, named Earth, would be a place where green things would grow, and where millions of intricately designed creatures would live. Bugs would

crawl on delicate flowers, deer would dance through glowing meadows, and fish would dive in bubbling streams. God would take the empty, formless earth and make it full—full of life, color, noise, and beauty.

And then God would form human beings, special creatures made in his own likeness, in his image. These people would have the ability to know him well. They would walk and talk with him in a majestic garden. They would also be able to make choices, and sadly they would fail to make the right ones. Their disobedience and sin would separate them from God. Would it be sad? Yes. Would it be a surprise to God, proof that his plan had failed? No!

You see, in the beginning God had a plan—a plan to send his one and only Son, Jesus, to save the world by dying on a cross. God knew people would disobey him even before he created the first man Adam, but he created them anyway!

So God spoke.

He spoke and by the power of his voice he lovingly created our world. Out of the dust of the ground and the breath of his mouth, the first man, Adam, came into being, and from that man's rib came the first woman, Eve. God blessed them and commanded them to be fruitful, filling the earth with people who would rule over it and take care of it. God's wonderful plan was just beginning.

In the book of Colossians Paul gives Jesus, the center of God's plan, an important name: the firstborn over all creation (1:15). This doesn't mean that he was born first, or created first. Jesus existed before creation, and in fact *is* the Creator! To say that Jesus is the firstborn over all creation is to say that Jesus is exalted over all creation. The next verses tell us that all things are created by him and for him, and in him all things hold together. As Creator and Savior, he's the center and the focus. He's the most important, the most special, the most powerful. All creation glorifies *him*, the Savior, and he rules over it all forever.



REFLECT

1. Which persons of the Trinity were present at creation?
See Genesis 1:2, 26; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; and Revelation 13:8.
2. Can you name what God created on each day of creation?
3. What does it mean to be created in God's image?
4. How does it make you feel to know that God created people even though he knew they would disobey him?
5. What does it mean that Jesus is the "firstborn over all creation"?

BIBLE REFERENCE GENESIS 1; JOHN 1:1-3

KEY VERSE COLOSSIANS 1:15-17



DAY
2

JESUS IS THE SERPENT CRUSHER

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

GENESIS 3:15

God made a home for Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, a slice of heaven on earth. God assigned Adam to work in the garden and take care of it. Everything was perfect. Adam and Eve could eat from the Tree of Life and walk in the garden with God himself.

God gave them just one rule: they could not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God warned Adam that if he ate of it, he would surely die.

Along came a crafty serpent, the devil himself. He

tempted Eve to eat the fruit, telling her that when she ate it, she would be like God, knowing good and evil. Did Adam and Eve trust God, or would they eat the fruit?

The fruit looked so good! So Eve took a bite. Then she gave some to Adam, and he ate it too.

The world changed at that very moment. Adam and Eve had sinned. Their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked. They sewed some fig leaves together to make clothes for themselves. And they hid from God.

“Where are you?” God called. He knew where they were. Perhaps he was fishing for a confession, or maybe he was asking, “Where are your hearts? Why didn’t you trust me?”

Then it all spilled out. Adam and Eve started pointing fingers. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent.

God is holy and just, and so are his actions. In response to their sin he brought pain, hard work, thorns, thistles, sweat, and dust. Dust—did you catch that? Adam would return to dust. In other words, he would die. Lastly, God banished them from the garden. No longer would they be able to eat from the Tree of Life. It’s a sad, sad story.

But that’s not the end of the story! God didn’t just give out punishments; he also gave a promise. Because remember, God had a plan. Sin and evil would not win.

The promise came as God cursed the serpent, and it’s easy to miss if we read too fast. God told the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

One day, one of Eve’s descendants would defeat the serpent by crushing his head.

Who is this descendant, this serpent crusher? It’s Jesus! Yes, the serpent would strike and Jesus would suffer, but Jesus would win!

How would this all happen? God gave us a clue when he made clothes for Adam and Eve out of animal skins. This was a beautiful gift, and not just because they wouldn’t have to wear fig leaves anymore. God sacrificed an animal, one he had not long ago lovingly created, and used it to cover their bodies and the shame they now felt as a result of disobeying God. One day his Son Jesus would be sacrificed, erasing our sin and covering our shame, clothing us in righteousness instead. But the serpent would not win, because Jesus’s death would not be the end of the story! Three days later Jesus would rise so that sin—and even death itself—would be crushed in Jesus’s victory.



REFLECT

1. How did sin enter the world? See Romans 5:12.
2. Why is sin such a big problem? See Isaiah 59:2 and Romans 3:23; 6:23.
3. Where do we see the promise of Jesus in this story? See Genesis 3:15.

BIBLE REFERENCE GENESIS 3

KEY VERSE GENESIS 3:15



DAY
3

JESUS IS THE ARK AND THE DOOR

“I am the door.
If anyone enters by me,
he will be saved.”

JOHN 10:9A ESV

Noah's ark sounds like just about the cutest story in the Bible, doesn't it? You've probably seen pictures of wide-eyed baby tigers scampering next to bunnies, mice riding on the backs of elephants, and giraffes so tall their poor skinny necks have to stick out the windows.

But all those cute illustrations can give us the wrong idea of the story. It's kind of a scary one, actually. It's about God's hatred of sin and his judgment because of it. You see, in Noah's time, people were very wicked. It was so bad that the Bible says every thought in their

hearts was evil all the time (Genesis 6:5). The Bible says God was grieved that he had made people and his heart was filled with pain (6:6). So he decided to send the flood.

Noah wasn't perfect; he was born into sin just like you and me. But the Bible tells us he was a righteous man who walked with God. And he had great faith. We know this because when God told him to build a giant boat in a place with likely very little water, he obeyed, down to the smallest detail. His neighbors probably thought he was crazy!

When Noah finished the boat, he, his family, and the animals entered the ark. Then God shut the door. Not long after that, the rains God had promised started to pour.

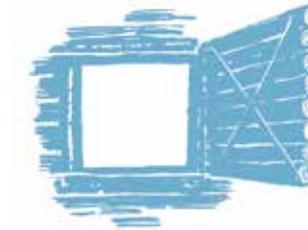
The rains came down and the fountains of the deep opened up. Rain, rain, and more rain for forty days; more than you can possibly imagine! Rain of judgment over sin, and perhaps the tears of God. The water covered the mountains, so all living things on the ground died. Only Noah, his family, and the animals on board survived.

After the waters finally receded, God told Noah to leave the ark with his family and all the animals. What joy they must have felt walking through the door and onto dry ground at last! Noah built an altar and burned an offering to thank and praise God. The Lord smelled the soothing aroma of the offering and was pleased. Then he made a covenant with Noah, a promise to never flood the entire earth again. He gave the rainbow as a sign of his promise and his great mercy.

Did the flood fix the problem of sin? No, people still sinned. Even Noah, the man who “walked” with God, sinned after the flood. God’s plan was that Jesus would be the ark that we can enter into and be saved. Jesus is our ark and he’s the one and only door to salvation (John 10:9). Just as God was pleased with Noah’s sacrifice after the flood, one day he would be pleased

with another, far greater sacrifice, the sacrifice of his Son Jesus.

God has provided a way for us to escape the floodwaters of sin. Will you trust God as Noah did? Will you enter into the perfect ark?



REFLECT

1. How is Jesus like our ark?
2. Read John 10:9 and discuss how it relates to our story today. Note that some versions use “gate” and others use “door.”
3. Read Genesis 9:12–16 ESV, and think about not just a rainbow, but a hunting bow. What do you think God is saying here?
4. Read Revelation 4:3 and discuss why we might be seeing a rainbow here.
5. Read Genesis 8:20–22. What comfort does this bring to you?

BIBLE REFERENCE GENESIS 6:1–9:17

KEY VERSE JOHN 10:9A ESV



DAY

4

JESUS IS THE ONE THROUGH WHOM THE WORLD IS BLESSED

“All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

GENESIS 12:3B

Meet Abram, a man whose remarkable faith gives him the most verses in Hebrews 11’s “hall of fame.” A man who, unlike many familiar Bible figures, didn’t grow up knowing God, but instead his family worshiped idols. Then God spoke to him, asking him to leave his home and go to the land God would show him.

God said, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you,

and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:2-3).

Abram trusted this God he barely knew and embarked on an incredible journey into the unknown. He left behind his home of many years and all that was familiar. But many years passed, and he and his wife Sarai still had no children. How would he become a great nation?

Then God came to Abram again. “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your very great reward” (Genesis 15:1).

God invited Abram to look up at the clear night sky. Could he count the stars? That's how many descendants he would have! Abram looked and he believed God's promise. And the Lord credited it to him as righteousness (15:6).

Then something strange happened. Well, it seems strange to us, but it wasn't to Abram. You see, in Abram's time people would make promises to each other by cutting up animals, and then walking between them. It seems kind of gross, but in effect what they were saying was, "If I break my promise, let me be like this animal!" This was serious business! Both people making the covenant would have to walk through, both promising the other could take their life if they didn't keep their side of the covenant.

God told Abram to bring him a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon. Abram brought them and knew what to do. He cut them in two and arranged them with the halves opposite each other.

The sun began to set, and Abram fell into a deep sleep. The Bible says that a thick and dreadful darkness came over him, which means he was really scared! God told Abram about his future, and the future of his descendants. Then a smoking firepot and a blazing torch appeared, both symbolizing the presence of God, and they passed between the bloody pieces. Abram didn't

have to walk through—just God! God took all the responsibility of keeping the covenant. What relief Abram must have felt!

More years passed, and when Abram was 100 years old, he did have a son and then eventually many descendants. But one of these descendants would truly make Abram the father of many. His name was Jesus, and through his death and resurrection, all who believe are welcomed into Abraham's family and can share in the blessing.

If you are a child of God, you are a child of Abraham. One of those stars was lit for you! You are loved and pursued as Abraham was. You are forgiven and righteous. You will have blessing and great inheritance. You are blessed to be a blessing. And God, the covenant keeper, assures all these blessings through the blood of his Son Jesus. Like Abraham, we could never keep the covenant on our own, so the Son of God gives his own life, and we must believe.

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). What a blessing!



REFLECT

1. Did you notice that Abram's name changed to Abraham? God did this! Do you know what each name means?
2. Read Genesis 15:6 and try to explain it in your own words.
3. Why is it significant that only God passed through the dead animals, not Abram?
4. How have you been blessed, and how can you be a blessing to others?

BIBLE REFERENCE GENESIS 12:1-3; 15:1-21;
GALATIANS 3:6-9; HEBREWS 11:8-12

KEY VERSE GENESIS 12:3



DAY
5

JESUS IS THE LAMB GOD HAS PROVIDED

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

JOHN 1:29B

For years, Abraham and Sarah waited, prayed, and hoped. At last, God blessed them with a son. They named him Isaac, which means “he laughs.” Oh, the laughter! First laughter of disbelief that such an old man and old woman could have a son, but then laughter of joy and thanksgiving! Isaac was the son of the promise, the son who would make Abraham the father of many nations. Finally God’s promises seemed to be setting into motion. Abraham probably gazed at the stars every night and thought about his future grandchildren and the blessings they were promised.

Then God did something surprising: he tested Abraham.

“Abraham!” God spoke.

“Here I am,” Abraham replied.

“Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will show you” (Genesis 22:2).

Now Abraham had built many altars and burned many sacrifices to worship God. But sacrifice his son? His only son? The son of the promise?

It must have seemed unthinkable, but Abraham reasoned that if Isaac did die, God could raise him from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). Talk about incredible faith!

The next morning Abraham got up early and obediently headed out on a three-day journey to the mountain with his dear son Isaac. When they reached Moriah, he told his servants to stay with the donkey while he and Isaac went up to worship, saying they would be back.

Abraham put the wood on Isaac's back and they started climbing.

"Father," Isaac asked, "where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

"God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (Genesis 22:8).

They continued on until they reached the place God had told him about. Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood. Still no lamb.

Then Abraham bound Isaac and laid him on the altar. Isaac, being much younger and stronger than his

father, probably could have resisted him, but that's not what we see in the Bible. Instead, he obediently submitted to his father's will.

Abraham took the knife and raised it to slay his son.

"Abraham! Abraham!" the angel of the Lord called out. "Do not lay a hand on the boy! Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (22:12).

What relief they must have felt! And nearby there was a ram, caught by its horns in the thicket. A substitute—a merciful substitute! Abraham grabbed the ram and sacrificed it on the altar instead of his son. Then Abraham named the place "The Lord Will Provide."

The Lord had provided a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac. Isaac could live.

Many years later God's Son, his only Son, would carry the wood of the cross on his back—the cross that would become a place of sacrifice. He would do it willingly, as Isaac did. Only God would not spare him as he spared Isaac. There would be no ram in the thicket, no other way to atone but through the flesh of God himself. Jesus is the lamb that Abraham believed God would provide, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.



REFLECT

1. How many similarities can you find between the story of Abraham and Isaac and the death of Jesus?
2. What is one major difference between the story of Abraham and Isaac and the death of Jesus? See Matthew 26:53 and Romans 8:32.
3. Read John 1:29. What do you think the people of Jesus's day thought when they heard this?
4. What did Abraham name the mountain, and what was/is the significance of that name?

BIBLE REFERENCE GENESIS 22:1-19; HEBREWS 11:17-19

KEY VERSE JOHN 1:29B