
BIG IDEA: TURN TO GOD, NOT TO SIN

DATE: SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2021 — **STORY:** CAIN & ABEL

BIBLE BASIS: GENESIS 4

SERIES: UNFAILING LOVE

Join us throughout the month of September as we learn about God's great UNFAILING LOVE! We will be going through stories in Genesis.

MEMORY VERSE

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. —JOHN 3:16

SCHEDULE

0:00–0:10	Welcome Activities/Check-In
0:10–0:15	Transition to Large Group (B100)
0:15–0:30	Large Group (Worship, Memory Verse, Global Partner Spotlight)
0:30–0:35	Transition to Small Group (Back to Classrooms)
0:35–1:05	Small Group (Storytelling, Questions, Big Idea Connection, Respond Activity)
1:05–1:15	Dismiss/Additional Activities (During Check-Out)

SERIES OVERVIEW

Date	Story	Big Idea	Bible Basis
August 21-22	ZONK		Review Weekend
August 28-29	Creation	God is Creator	Genesis 1-2
September 4-5	The Fall	God's Love Never Ends	Genesis 3
September 11-12	Cain & Abel	Turn to God, Not to Sin	Genesis 4
September 18-19	Noah & The Flood	God Helps Us To Obey Him	Genesis 6-9
September 25-26	Abraham	God Is A Promise Keeper	Genesis 15, 17, 18, 21
October 2-3	Isaac	I Can Always Trust God	Genesis 22
October 9-10	Jacob & Esau	God Has A Plan For Me	Genesis 25, 27

SEPTEMBER 11-12

STORY: CAIN & ABEL

GENESIS 4

DEVOTIONAL

I think most of us are probably familiar with the concept of things going from bad to worse. You're running late for an important meeting with some important people. As you sprint through the torrential downpour toward your car you step in a giant puddle of mud, sinking almost up to your ankle. While trying furiously to shake the mud free, your shoe flies off your foot and lands in another, bigger, deeper puddle. Not willing to give up your shoe for lost and attend the important meeting in your socks, you hop on one foot to retrieve the wayward shoe. On your last hop before reaching the shoe, you land awkwardly on the curb, twist your ankle and fall headlong into the giant shoe-eating puddle. Your day just went from bad to worse.

"From bad to worse" is a pretty good way to describe what happens in chapters 3 and 4 of Genesis. In chapter 3, Adam and Eve kick things off with a little bit of disobedience. One generation later, though, Cain is committing the world's first murder. If Adam and Eve were the ones who first stepped in the mud, it was Cain who fell headlong into the deep puddle.

In Genesis 3 and 4 we see both Cain and Abel bringing the first recorded sacrifices to God. Notice how God has already provided a snapshot of His big rescue plan. It would ultimately be the shedding of Jesus' blood that would redeem the world from its sin. Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God, but Cain's was rejected. Why? The physical quality of Abel's sacrifice was certainly better than that of Cain's, but that wasn't central to God's displeasure. Ultimately it was their hearts that God was after. Cain's sacrifice simply lacked heart.

Fast-forward to today. We are no longer bound by the Old Testament system of grain and animal sacrifices, but we still make sacrifices to God. For many of you, one of those sacrifices comes in the form of your service with the kids in your children's ministry. What's your motivation, though? Where's your heart? Are you doing it out of obligation like Cain or are you doing it like Abel, with a heart of devotion and love for God? As you prepare for your time with the kids, pray that God would lead you to not only sacrifice your time, but your whole heart to Him through service.

David Rausch

Go Tell It President

PROVIDED RESOURCES

Welcome Activities: Coloring/activity pages; coloring supplies

Storytelling: None

Big Idea Connection: Lamp

Respond Activity: Memory Match Cards

Additional Activities: White board markers, beach ball

***If you need any additional resources, please let us know so that we can provide that for you!*

WELCOME ACTIVITIES

OPTION 1: COLORING PAGE/ ACTIVITY PAGE

Allow students to color the coloring page or do the activity on the back.

OPTION 2: ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS:

An activity to connect to today's lesson.

Choose two kids from your group to go first. Have them battle it out through a game of "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Determine which kid wins. The winner of the battle will get a piece of candy and will answer the following question:

What is one of the biggest battles or fights you've had with your brother or sister? *(If some of your kids are only-children, they can talk about battles they've had with their friends.)*

Next, have the child who lost the battle challenge another kid in the group. Have the winner answer the above question. Continue the battles until every kid has won a battle and answered the question.

OPTION 3: STUDENT CHOICE

Allow students to choose which option they would like to do.

**Students can also choose to do the coloring/activity page while they wait their turn to participate in Option 2.*

STORYTELLING

I'm so glad you're here today because we're going to learn how to do one of the most important things you could ever do—say “no” to sin. We're going to learn that through the story of the first ever sibling rivalry. Do you all know what a sibling rivalry is? (*Take answer from kid.*) You got it! It's when brothers and sisters don't get along. And in today's story, these brothers definitely didn't get along.

I'm just curious, when your brothers or sisters get on your nerves and make you mad, what kind of things do they do? (*Take answers from kids.*) Wow! That sounds pretty rotten! But let me ask you this—has your brother or sister ever killed you? (*Kids respond.*) Of course not!! That's a silly question! I don't think you'd be here today if that happened. But in today's part of the Big Bible Story, that's exactly what happened.

In the beginning of Genesis, God created a perfect world, but Adam and Eve's sin brought destruction. The Bible says that after Adam and Eve sinned, they were kicked out of the Garden of Eden. They finally found a home outside of the garden, but life was tough now. The land no longer produced enough food on its own. Picture Adam looking tired and sweaty, working hard to raise enough crops and animals to eat. And now there were even more mouths to feed. In Genesis chapter 4, the Bible says that Adam and Eve had two sons named Cain and Abel. Abel grew up and was in charge of caring for the animals. What do you think he looks like? What's he wearing? What do you think it smells like to be surrounded by animals?

Cain grew up and became a farmer. Can you see Cain out in the fields harvesting his crop? What does Cain look like? When harvest time arrived, Cain began cutting his crops down to eat, but first he gathered up some of his crops to give to God as a gift. Unfortunately, Cain's heart had wandered from God and he didn't appreciate Him, so he gave God the left-overs, the worst of his crops. Imagine Cain picking through the best of his crops looking for the stuff he didn't want. Picture Cain carrying the trampled crops in his arms to give to God.

Unlike Cain, though, Abel picked out the best of his flock to give to God as a gift. Imagine Abel searching through the herd of sheep looking for just the right one. What did that perfect lamb look like? Picture Abel carefully picking the sheep up and carrying it from the field. Imagine what it feels like to carry a sheep. Is the wool rough on your arms or is it soft?

It came time to present their gifts to God. (*Have a volunteer read Genesis 4:3-5.*) God accepted Abel's perfect lamb, but He wasn't so pleased with Cain's gift. It was their hearts that God wanted more than anything else, and the heart behind Cain's gift was hard. Imagine

STORYTELLING (CONT.)

Cain's reaction to finding out that God had loved Abel's gift, but had rejected his. What does his face look like? Imagine how jealous he must have been of his brother.

(Have a volunteer read Genesis 4:6-7). Can you imagine what sin must look like waiting at the door of your heart? Cain didn't listen to God's warning, though. Slowly Cain opened the door of his heart to sin.

Later, Cain invited his brother out into the fields. While they were there, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed Him. God knew everything that happened. *(Have a volunteer read Genesis 4:9.)* Imagine the fear inside of Cain as he tries to come up with a lie to tell God. *(Have a volunteer read Genesis 4:10-12.)* God knew what Cain had done, and from that day on, the ground would no longer grow any crops for Cain and he would wander throughout the land without a home. Imagine what Cain looks like as he leaves his home for the last time. How is he walking? Does he look back?

It's hard to imagine that Cain would hate his brother that much. God warned him not to open his heart to sin, but he did it anyway. Little by little, sin walked right into his life. At first it was just jealousy, but then it turned into anger and then hatred for his brother. It kind of makes you wonder—how would things have been different if Cain had just closed the door to sin and chose to follow God with all of his heart?

QUESTIONS

This can be done as a large group or in table groups

For Younger Kids:

1. Of all the things you imagined, what was your favorite? Describe it.
2. Why do you think God liked Abel's gift better than Cain's?

For Older Kids:

1. Of all the things you imagined, what was your favorite? Describe it.
2. What do you think this story teaches us about God?

BIG IDEA CONNECTION

Did you notice how Cain had to choose whether he was going to follow God or follow sin? He couldn't do both. But have you ever wondered why you can't do both at the same time? It's because God is holy. That means that God is separate from the evil in this world—there's no sin in Him and He never makes any mistakes. Let me show you what I mean. *(Place lamp to the side of the teaching area ahead of time. At this point, turn on the lamp and turn off all the other lights in the room.)*

This light is kind of like God's holiness. There is no sin or darkness in God. Now look what happens when I face the light and stand close to it. *(Illustrate for the kids.)* What happens to the front of me? *(Let kids respond.)* That's right—it lights up my front, but what about my back? *(Kids respond.)* You got it! The darkness is behind me. When we look toward God and stay close to Him, his holiness lights up our life and drives the sin and darkness away from us. But that's not what Cain did, is it?

In today's story, Cain turned away from God and toward sin. *(Turn so that your back is to the light.)* And every time Cain chose to sin, he took a step further from the light. At first Cain just let a little bit of jealousy into his life. Cain was jealous of Abel's gift to God. *(Take a little step away from the light.)* Then Cain chose to sin some more and his jealousy turned into anger toward his brother. *(Take a bigger step away from the light.)* Then, Cain chose to let the anger he was holding onto turn into murder. Cain was so angry at his brother that he killed him. *(Take a giant step away from the light.)* Do you see what happens every time I step further from the light? *(Take a few more steps away to illustrate the effect.)* The light of God shines less brightly on me and I get darker and darker.

You see, **God is holy and He wants us to turn toward Him and away from sin.** *(Turn back towards the light.)* Every time you say no to sin, you take a step closer to God and the light of His holiness shines more brightly in your life. When you refuse to gossip about other kids *(take a step toward the light)* or you choose not to scream at your brother *(take another step)* or you honor your parents by doing what they tell you *(take another step)*, you turn your back to sin and walk in the light of God's holiness.

For some of us, it can be really hard to do the right thing. Sometimes it's a lot easier to just open the door to sin, but the more we do that, the further we step out of God's light. Every day we have to decide if we want to walk toward God or toward sin. Unfortunately, we all make mistakes and walk toward sin sometimes, but here's the great news. Even when we make mistakes and sin, God never stops loving us! Because of Jesus, we can always turn back to God. Whenever we ask Him for forgiveness, it's like we're turning towards God again. He takes our sins away and shines His light in our life.

RESPOND ACTIVITY

In today's story, kids learned about Cain and Abel. Instead of following God with all his heart, Cain chose to turn and open up the door for sin that led him to do a terrible thing—he killed his brother. We face the choice to turn to God or turn to sin every day. God helps us to close the door to sin and turn back to Him.

“STOP” MEMORY MATCH:

Say: Today we talked about closing the door to sin. One way we can do that is to STOP whenever we are tempted. The “S” in STOP stands for “Stop.” Whenever you’re tempted to sin, just stop before you go any further. The “T” stands for “Think.” Think about what God would want you to do in that situation. The “O” stands for “Obey.” Obey what the Bible says to do. And the “P” stands for “Pray.” Pray that God would give you the strength to make the right choice. We’re going to play a game right now that will help us remember how to STOP in different situations.

Directions: Spread the memory match cards face down on the floor in the center of the group. Choose a kid to go first. Tell that kid to choose two cards. Have him knock on each card and then flip it over. If the sins on the cards do NOT match, flip them back over and have the next kid take a turn. If the sins on the cards DO match ask the following two questions:



1. What are some times when this sin knocks the most. In other words, what are some times when kids might be the most tempted to commit this sin?

2. How can we STOP and close the door to this sin in our life?

Tell the kids that you’re going to now close the door to that sin. Pick the matching cards up from the center of the group and place them next to you in a pile face down. Continue having the kids take turns until all of the cards have been matched. When finished, remind the kids

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

*These **additional activities** are completely optional. These activities are meant to fill any time that you may have left. Students can participate or finish their respond activity. Have your adult helper check-out students while you do one or more of the options with the students who are waiting to be picked up by their parents.*

TIC-TAC-TOE REVIEW:

Bible Story Review Game

Draw a tic-tac-toe grid on the whiteboard. Divide the class into two teams (X's and O's). Alternate between each team and allow one student at a time to answer a question about the Bible Story. If they get it right, they get to mark an X or O in the tic-tac-toe grid for their team.

Possible Questions:

1. Who were Cain and Abel?
2. What did Abel do when he grew up?
3. What did Cain do when he grew up?
4. What did Abel bring to God as an offering?
5. What did Cain bring to God as an offering?
6. What terrible choice did Cain make?
7. What did God do after Cain sinned?
8. What happens when we open the door to sin instead of close it?
9. How can we say no and close the door to sin and turn to God? (*Various answers*)

PASS THE WORD:

Bible Memorization Activity

Give them a minute or two to read and memorize our memory verse (John 3:16).

For the younger kids who cannot read, read the verse out loud slowly a few times. When enough time has passed, begin the game. Pass a beach ball to one of the kids in your group. Instruct him to say the first word of the verse and then pass the ball to another kid who will then say the second word. Tell the kids to continue passing the ball around the group until the entire verse has been recited by memory. Give them one practice round and then begin timing them with a stopwatch to see if they can say it faster and faster. If saying one word at a time proves too difficult for some of the younger kids, have each kid recite the entire verse when they receive the ball. When your group is finished with the game, ask them the following questions: What does this verse tell you about God? How does it make you feel?