

Old Story New

Ten-Minute Devotions
to Draw Your Family to God

New Testament

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Introduction

The greatest hope of all Christian parents is to see their children come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Most parents would climb the highest mountain or slay the fiercest dragon should it guarantee their children's salvation. But just as our conversion was a work of grace, so the conversion of each of our children depends upon the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, not our labors. And yet we are not powerless to act, for in God's kindness he chose to partner with us in his saving work by giving us something to do.

We get to tell God's story to our children—the mighty life-transforming message of the gospel. The gospel, the Bible tells us, is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). We are sowers who plant the seeds of faith each time we speak the truth of God's story to our children. Like a farmer sprinkling the newly planted seed with his watering can, we send our prayers to God while we keep our eyes fixed upon the soil of their lives, waiting to rejoice with the first sprouting leaves. Even then, though we've sown the seeds of the gospel, we still marvel and wonder about how they sprouted (Mark 4:26–29).

The gospel story, filled with adventure, suspense, drama, and mystery, easily captures the attention of our children. A good book is said to come alive when you read it if it captures the imagination. The gospel story in the Bible goes a long step further: It *is* alive and able to cut through the hardest sinful heart, giving life to the deadest, unbelieving soul.

Like a double-edged sword cuts an apple in two, the Word of God cuts through our

pride to show us our sin. Then it points us to Jesus, the only hope for our forgiveness before a holy God. As John said toward the end of his Gospel, it was written “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). We are saved, and our children are saved by the Holy Spirit as we review the story of Christ in the gospel.

Why is it, then, that, for so many Christian families, the Bible sits on a table unopened or remains hidden on a shelf, sandwiched between storybooks and a dictionary? One common explanation that some good Christian parents offer is that they don't know where to begin. The Bible seems long and sometimes complicated. They are not sure how much to read at one time or what to say to their children about what they just read. They are not sure where to begin or how much to share and, if they give it a try only to be met at the end by their children's blank stares, they get discouraged.

Many parents have burst out of the gate running like a racehorse with all the excitement of how the Bible was going to transform their children, only to tire after the first bend in the track. Somehow their Bible ends up back on the shelf with the other books. Discouraged, they say to themselves, I guess I must not be one of the super-parents who can explain the Bible with commentaries and teach their children words from the original Greek.

There are no super-parents. We all struggle, and we all need help to stay on course. That is where I hope *Old Story New* can help

make sharing the Bible with your children a whole lot easier. By dividing the Bible story into shorter parts and giving you everything you need to lead a ten-minute family devotion, *Old Story New* does the hard work for you. Simple discussion questions (and answers!) for each day's devotion help you interact with your children over what you read to them. You'll get fewer blank stares, and you will be surprised at how much they understand and remember from day to day.

As you read and discuss God's Word, you can be sure the Holy Spirit is also at work drawing your children closer to God and opening their minds to understand the life-giving message of the gospel. Remember, our job is to plant the seeds and water—God is the one who makes the seeds grow.

All You Need Is Ten Minutes a Day!

If you can find ten minutes a day, you can use this tool to pass on the most valuable treasure the world has ever known. Contrary to what many believe, daily family Bible study need not take a lot of time. God can use a short, simple family devotion consistently practiced over time to yield more fruit in the lives of our children than we realize—a quick daily devotion not as easily derailed by our busy schedules. Each day as the gospel is presented, God is at work.

Our hope in God is to see our children reading their Bibles and having devotions on their own, not because they have to, but because they want to. The truth of God's Word brings us to Christ and is effective to sustain us and help us to grow all of our days. There is simply no greater delight for Christian parents than watching the Spirit of God guiding their children through faith-filled study of God's Word. No earthly treasure compares.

God's Word, when hidden in our hearts as children, is used again and again in our lives later on. The Spirit of God will bring it back to our minds to help us in our walk with God

and to enable us to encourage others we meet along the way.

Every family can find a few minutes in the daily routine. Some families gather for their devotional at the start of their day; others try the dinnertime approach. Lay the devotional book and your Bible(s) beside your plate at the dinner table. As soon as everyone is finished eating, take ten minutes for family Bible study. *Old Story New* does the work for you! All you need to do is read the passage of Scripture for the day, follow that with the short commentary, and then ask the listed questions. Finish it all up by inviting one of your children to pray.

It's Simple to Use

Old Story New when used with *Long Story Short* is a family devotional program designed to explain God's plan of salvation from Genesis through Revelation. *Long Story Short* covers the Old Testament, and this volume, *Old Story New*, covers the New Testament. Together, they provide three years of family Bible study! For every Old Testament lesson your family will learn the answer to the question, "How does this passage point forward to Jesus?" For every New Testament lesson the question is, "Where is the gospel?" Since the Bible is the story of God's unfolding plan of redemption, every passage of Scripture points forward or back to Calvary.

Each week starts off with a creative activity, exercise, or bit of trivia to introduce the passage. On days one through four you review a portion of the week's Scripture passage. Special attention is given on day three to connect the current passage to the gospel. On day four we've added a question for your older children to ask *you*, and on day five you and your family will investigate a Bible passage from the book of Psalms or an excerpt from one of the prophets to discover how the passage points forward to Christ.

This devotional book can be used differently depending on the ages of your children. Since this book is rich in gospel truth, it works for families with children of all ages. Take a

look at the following categories to find the one that best describes your family.

If Your Children Are Preschoolers

The best time to start consistent daily Bible study is with children in the four-through six-year-old age group. *Long Story Short* and *Old Story New* work wonderfully with children in this age group. Don't be fooled by your five-year-old's inability to answer the listed questions. Children at this age can often understand much more than they can express. Consider some of the following techniques:

- ∴ Feel free to skip the discussion questions and just read the answers, most of which are in complete sentences. The first time through, use the study to familiarize children with the Bible. If your child starts the program at age four, he or she will finish three years later at age seven with a tremendous foundation of gospel truth that has accumulated day by day and week by week.
- ∴ You can also skip over the creative introductions and save them for a second time through when your children reach grade school.
- ∴ Try rephrasing the questions to make them very simple or by making them multiple choice.
- ∴ Another parent can be the helper, actually whispering the answers to your children. This might sound dishonest but in reality it is the repetition that helps them remember the material.
- ∴ You can make up simple questions for your toddlers yourself. Basic questions about the characters such as, "How did Jesus heal the man?" are great for younger children.

If Your Children Are in Grade School

Elementary school is the time to call for your children to participate with you in family Bible study. Don't be afraid to call them to that participation. Some children might be reluctant at first, but persistence soon pays off. Even the most challenging child is able to handle ten minutes a day. Remember, day by day they are being exposed to the gospel truth God uses to transform lives. The creative introductions at the beginning of each week will pique the interest of your children. Read them yourself a day or so ahead to give you time to gather any objects needed for the lesson.

Start by making sure all your children have a Bible. You might have toddlers mixed in with your grade school students. That's okay. Just have them open up their toddler Bibles to the right page (that means anywhere close). Read through the passage for the day. On days when the passage is shorter, try having your older children read. (Remember, labored reading won't encourage them or the others, so wait until your children can read well before passing that responsibility to them.) If you have toddlers in the mix, let them come along for the ride but don't cater to their lower learning level. All day long they are learning by watching the older children in their daily routines. They learn about God the same way.

Read the passage, the short paragraph summary, and then move to the questions. Here are a few ideas to consider to make your discussion time work well:

- ∴ After asking a question of your family, look back in the passage and tell them which verse to look for to find the answer.
- ∴ Encourage all attempts to answer the question even if they miss the answer.
- ∴ Consider inviting children to add to their brothers' and sisters' answers.

Sometimes children who are reluctant to start an answer can add to an answer to expand it.

- ∴ Don't be afraid to call on your older children. If they seem stumped even after you tell them which verse they can find the answer in, give them clues.

Finish by asking your children to pray. Help your youngest children by having them repeat after you. As your children grow older, encourage them to pray on their own. Always help them along if they get stuck. Soon, they will be praying on their own without your help.

If Your Children Are Moving Out of Grade School

Long Story Short and *Old Story New* work well with older grade school children and young teens too! They set a wonderful example for their younger brothers and sisters in answering the questions and even leading the devotions themselves.

If you have a teen who thinks the Bible studies are too easy or boring, try this exercise. Open up randomly to one of the Bible studies and start asking her a few questions. She is sure to find out like we all have in our lives that everybody needs to review.

Try some of the following ideas with your older children:

- ∴ Use your older children to lead the creative introductions at the beginning of each week with their younger brothers and sisters.
- ∴ Try holding your older children in reserve, allowing the younger children to answer first. Then, have the older children amplify the answers their younger siblings gave.
- ∴ Pair up a younger child with an older child and allow the older child to help give the answer to his younger brother

or sister. This might sound like cheating but the value is in hearing and remembering the details of the gospel over and over.

- ∴ Consider where your children are in their lives on a given day. Feel the freedom to add a more subjective question to draw them out about how the passage relates to their lives personally. Questions like, "What does God want to teach you from reading this passage?" can be used for any lesson.
- ∴ If your mix of children includes a teen, assign her to lead the Bible study once a week. Encourage her to read the passage and the devotion a day in advance to become familiar with what is being asked. If you pull her aside later and offer some encouragement, she will be all the more eager to lead Bible study again.

Remember, the devotional is designed to work through simple repetition over time. If you skip a day, that's okay, just pick up where you left off.

Reaping the Harvest

So, there is no need to climb a tall mountain or go toe-to-toe with a dragon to battle for your children's salvation—God will do that work. Remember, we plant the seed, do a little watering, and then God makes it grow—that is his promise! Consider these words from Isaiah:

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so

shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:9–12)

God's Word will accomplish his purpose and will not return empty. So, as you faithfully lead your children through the devotions in this book, don't just read it as history. It is history, but it is so much more! Lead with expectation that the God of history will visit with your family. Wait and watch to see what God will do. Cling with faith to this hope: that through the gospel proclamation in your home, the Holy Spirit will regenerate the hearts of your children and lead them to faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone!

Week 1

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

Story 79 – *The Gospel Story Bible*

Prior to Bible study, find a photograph of some people (in a magazine or online) that has a lot of detail. Make a list of questions to ask your children that will test their skills of observation. The children will look closely at the photo and then answer questions to see how well they remember the details. Questions like, “What color shirt was the man wearing?” or “What was sitting on the table?” will work well to test the skill of your eyewitnesses. During Bible study, give everyone one minute to study the photograph taking in as much detail as they can. Then ask the questions from your list to see how observant they are. Explain to your children that this week you will be reading from Luke’s Gospel, which was written from eyewitness accounts.

DAY ONE

Picture It

Can you remember a time when you were startled? Perhaps someone walked up behind you in a quiet room, and you didn’t know anyone was there until you felt a hand on your shoulder. If something like that can scare us, imagine what it would be like to be alone in your room and suddenly see an angel appear out of nowhere. Probably you would either scream in fright or be scared into silence. Let’s see what happened to Zechariah and Mary in our story today when angels suddenly appeared to them.



Read Luke 1:1–38.

Think about It Some More

When we read the story it can seem like seeing angels was a normal part of life, but it wasn’t. Zechariah had been a priest all his life but he’d never seen an angel before. Serving in the temple was scary enough, for God’s presence lived inside the temple. Even before he saw the angel, Zechariah would have walked very cautiously into the temple’s inner room. He knew God was holy and that he was a sinner. If he made a mistake, he could die—like Uzzah, who had touched the holy ark with his hand and been killed (2 Samuel 6:6–7). So when the angel suddenly appeared, fear must’ve shot through him like a lightning bolt. Similarly, when the

angel appeared to Mary, she also was afraid. Angels had to calm people's fears before speaking their messages.

Talk about It

- ∴ Why did Zechariah lose his voice? (*Zechariah lost his voice because he didn't believe the angel's words to him.*)
- ∴ How was Mary's answer to the angel different from Zechariah's answer? (*Mary trusted that what the angel said to her was true. She had faith and did not doubt.*)
- ∴ Whose throne was Jesus going to sit on? (*Verse 32 tells us that Jesus would sit upon David's throne. If you have smaller children, you can read verse 32 and ask them to raise their hands when they hear whose throne Jesus would be sitting upon.*)



Pray about It

Thank God for sending his Son, Jesus, to the earth to die on the cross for our sins.

DAY TWO

Remember It

What do you remember about yesterday's story? What do you think is going to happen today?



Read Luke 1:39–45.

Think about It Some More

After the angel told Mary about God's plan, Mary went to see Elizabeth, a relative of hers. When Mary arrived and walked through Elizabeth's front door, the little baby growing in Elizabeth's tummy jumped, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Even before Mary could tell Elizabeth that she was pregnant, Elizabeth already knew. The Holy Spirit told her that Mary was going to have a baby, a very special baby. She said that Mary's baby would be her Lord! That means that she knew Mary's baby was God and would rule over her life.

Talk about It

- ∴ What was amazing about Elizabeth's greeting? (*She knew what happened to Mary even though Mary didn't tell her.*)
- ∴ What did Elizabeth's baby do when Mary arrived? (*Elizabeth's baby, who was later to be known as John the Baptist, jumped inside of her.*)
- ∴ Why did Elizabeth's baby jump inside her? What was so special about Mary's baby? (*Jesus was no ordinary baby; he was the Son of God. Jesus came to earth so that he could die on the cross for our sins. He is only a little baby in our story, but he is still the Savior of the world.*)



Pray about It

Thank God for the way he used Mary and Elizabeth to work out his plan to send us Jesus.

DAY THREE

Connect It to the Gospel

Today is the day we connect this week's Bible story to the gospel. The gospel is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for our salvation. Can anyone guess how our story this week looks forward to or back at the gospel?



Read Luke 1:46–56.

Think about It Some More

When Mary saw that Elizabeth was also going to have a baby, she realized that all that the angel Gabriel had told her was true, and she began to praise God. Mary understood that the baby inside of her was no ordinary baby. He was going to grow up to become her Savior—the one who would save her from her sins. Although Mary was very special to be chosen to give birth to Jesus, she was a sinner like you and me. She needed to be forgiven and saved from her sins too.

Her prayer tells us that she understood that God's promise to Abraham was connected to the baby growing inside of her. When God told Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3), he was pointing to Jesus. Jesus was born into the family of Abraham and died on the cross so that people from every nation could be saved.

Talk about It

- ∴ What does the word *savior* mean? (*A savior is someone who rescues. Jesus is our Savior because he rescues us from our sins.*)
- ∴ Why did Mary call God her Savior? (*Mary called God her Savior because she knew that she was a sinner and that only God could save her from her sin.*)
- ∴ Do we also need a Savior? Why? (*Yes, we also need a Savior. Our sin separates us from God. As sinners, we can never save ourselves. It is only by God's mercy in sending Jesus that we can be saved.*)



Pray about It

Thank Jesus for coming to earth to save us from our sin.

DAY FOUR

Remember It

What has God been teaching you this week through our Bible story?



Read Luke 1:57–80.

Think about It Some More

Can you imagine losing your voice for almost a year? That is what happened to Zechariah. From the day the angel appeared to him until the day his newborn son was named John, he could not speak. It all happened just as the angel of the Lord said it would. Elizabeth gave birth to a son, and as soon as Zechariah wrote on a tablet that the child's name was John, he was able to talk again. And when he spoke, God used Zechariah as a prophet to announce that the time had come for God's people to be saved.

He said that God was raising up a “horn of salvation” from the house of David to save them (v. 69). The people listening didn't know it yet, but Zechariah was talking about the baby Jesus, who was soon to be born as the Savior of the world. Zechariah's son John grew up to be the man God used to announce the start of Jesus' ministry.

Talk about It

- ● KIDS, ask your parents if they can remember why they picked your
- ● name for you when you were born.

(Parents, let your children know why you picked the names you did for them.)

- ∴ Do you remember why Zechariah and Elizabeth named their baby John? *(The angel told them to call him John [Luke 1:13].)*
- ∴ After Zechariah could talk again, he spoke a prophecy about Jesus. What do we learn about Jesus from what he said? *(Parents, if you have younger children, reread verses 68–79, and instruct them to raise their hands when they hear something about Jesus. Jesus is the “horn of salvation” [v. 69] from the house of David. Jesus will bring “holiness and righteousness” [v. 75] to God's people, and will save us from our enemies [v. 71]. “Holiness and righteousness” speaks of Jesus' perfect, sinless life that he would give all of us in exchange for our sins when he died for us on the cross.)*
- ∴ What did Zechariah say about his own son? *(Zechariah said his son, John, would become a prophet and go before the Lord to prepare a way for him [v. 76].)*



Pray about It

Praise God for his wonderful plan of salvation. God had a plan to save us through Jesus long before Jesus was even born.

DAY FIVE

Discover It

Today is the day we look at a different Bible passage—from the book of Psalms or one of the prophets—to see what we can learn from it about Jesus or our salvation.



Read Isaiah 4:2–3.

Think about It Some More

After God gave Zechariah his voice back, Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak words that God gave him—he began to prophesy—about what was going to happen in the future. He said that God was bringing salvation out of King David’s family line, just as the prophets of old had foretold. Isaiah was one of the prophets who talked about Jesus long before Jesus was ever born, and he wrote the Scripture we read today.

In his prophecy, Isaiah talked about a “branch” that will be “beautiful and glorious.” The word *branch* is something like a code word the prophets used in their prophecies to describe the Savior. Jeremiah and Zechariah also called the coming Messiah the branch. We know that Jesus is the branch Isaiah is talking about. This branch, Isaiah said, was going to grow out of the family tree of King David and Jesse, David’s father (see Isaiah 11:1, 10), and become a king who would rule forever.

Talk about It

- ∴ What words did Isaiah use to describe the branch? (*Isaiah said the branch was beautiful and glorious.*)
- ∴ What are all the people left in Jerusalem going to be called? (*The people left in Jerusalem—all of God’s people—will be called holy.*)
- ∴ How do you think sinners—who are not holy because they sin against God—will become holy? (*Jesus, the branch, is going to die on the cross to take their sins away and then give them, as their own, his perfect, obedient life to make them holy.*)



Pray about It

Thank God for sending the branch—his Son, Jesus—to die on the cross so we could be forgiven and have our sins taken away.

Week 2

The Birth of Jesus

Story 80 – *The Gospel Story Bible*

Whatever month it is, when you begin this week’s Bible study take some time to celebrate Christmas. Pull out the Christmas decorations and place a few ornaments around the room. Get a small gift for each child: a candy bar or snack bar wrapped up in leftover Christmas wrapping paper works well. Give your children the presents on Day One and announce, “Merry Christmas! This week we will be reviewing the Christmas story.”

DAY ONE

Picture It

When a leader wants to know how many people are living in his kingdom or nation, he can call for a *census*, which is just a fancy word for counting up the people. In our Bible story today, Caesar Augustus, the ruler of Rome, wanted to count all the people in the whole Roman Empire. To make counting them easier, he told everyone to go back to the town their family came from. That is why Mary and Joseph had to return to Bethlehem, since both their families were from that town.

Imagine if our president commanded that kind of census today. How far would your family have to travel to get back to your dad’s hometown? Then imagine you had to walk there! Remember, back in Mary and Joseph’s day, there were no cars. The best they had were donkeys and camels or chariots, but most people had to walk—some for hundreds of miles!



Read Luke 2:1–7 and Matthew 2:1–6.

Think about It Some More

In Matthew’s version of the Christmas story, at the spot where the wise men came to find baby Jesus, Matthew included a very special prophecy, which had been given by the prophet Micah. Long before Jesus was born, even before Mary and Joseph were born, God told Micah that a Savior would be born in Bethlehem. That tells us that Jesus was not born in Bethlehem by accident. All of it—even Caesar’s census—was all a part of God’s plan. God picked the town of Bethlehem, and God picked the perfect time. Later in the Bible, the apostle Paul said that Jesus was born at just the perfect moment in time according to God’s plan (Galatians 4:4).

Talk about It

- ∴ How did the chief priests know that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem? (*The prophet Micah had written about it in his book in the Bible.*)
- ∴ How did Micah know which city Jesus was going to be born in long before it happened? (*God told Micah where Jesus was going to be born.*)
- ∴ Read Galatians 4:4. What do we learn about how Jesus was born from what Paul said in this verse? (*We learn that Jesus was born in the “fullness of time.” That simply means that he was born at the exact right time—the time God planned it. From Paul’s writing we learn that Jesus was born according to God’s plan at just the right time.*)
- ∴ How should God’s ability to plan all things encourage us? (*Not only was Jesus born at the perfect time, so were we! Read Acts 17:26. We are all a part of God’s perfect plan!*)



Pray about It

Praise God for the way he is in control of all things.

DAY TWO

Remember It

What do you remember about yesterday’s story? What do you think is going to happen in today’s story?



Read Luke 2:8–21.

Think about It Some More

Each year when families set out their Christmas decorations, a manger scene is often among them. It usually consists of a shepherd or two, a few animals, the wise men, Mary and Joseph, and the baby Jesus lying in a manger (a food box that animals eat from). Many children first learn the story of Christmas from their family’s manger scene.

Did you know that what those manger scenes depict is the story we read from Luke’s gospel today? Imagine what it would have been like to be one of the shepherds who saw the heavens opened with thousands of angels announcing Jesus’ birth. Or imagine Mary when the shepherds told her all they had seen. Or picture the wise men arriving sometime later to see the Savior. Next Christmas, when you set up your manger scene, remember that it tells a true story—a story that really happened!

Talk about It

- ∴ Can you think of a Christmas song that tells part of the story from our Bible passage today? (*Parents, see if your children can think of a Christmas song like “Silent Night” or “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” Take time to sing a verse or two. It is good not to limit your celebration of the Christmas story to December.*)

- ∴ What did the angel of the Lord tell the shepherds? *(The angel said he had good news of great joy for all people, and that the shepherds would find the Christ child lying in a manger.)*
- ∴ What did Mary do with the story the shepherds told her? *(She treasured it up in her heart.)*
- ∴ Why was the angels' message—that Jesus was born—considered good news? *(The announcement of Jesus' birth was good news because Jesus would grow up and one day die on the cross for our sins to open a way for us to live in heaven forever.)*



Pray about It

Sing your favorite Christmas hymn and then thank God for the good news—that Jesus Christ was born!

DAY THREE

Connect It to the Gospel

Today is the day we connect this week's Bible story to the gospel. The gospel is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for our salvation. Can anyone guess how our story this week looks forward to or back at the gospel?



Read Luke 2:10–11.

Think about It Some More

Even though these are the same verses we read yesterday, rereading them today encourages us to take a closer look at the angel's words to the shepherds.

Did you notice the angel of the Lord called Jesus a Savior? Savior is a word we use to describe someone who rescues someone else. A lifeguard who saves a drowning person could be called a savior—with a lowercase “s.” But when we call Jesus a Savior we use an uppercase “S” because Jesus was God who came as the Savior of the world. Jesus came to die on the cross and save everyone who believes in him from the punishment we deserve for our sins.

Talk about It

- ∴ What does the title savior mean? *(The title savior simply means someone who rescues someone else.)*
- ∴ Can you think of people who live around us that we could give that title to because they save people from danger? *(A lifeguard could be called a savior, as could a doctor who prescribes medicine to save us from disease, or a fireman who rescues people from a fire.)*
- ∴ How is Jesus a savior? *(Jesus came to die on the cross to save us from the punishment we deserve for our sins.)*
- ∴ Why do we use an uppercase “S” when we are calling Jesus Savior? *(We use an uppercase “S” because Jesus is God.)*



Pray about It

Thank Jesus for coming to earth as our Savior to die on the cross for our sins.

DAY FOUR

Remember It

What has God been teaching you this week through our Bible story?



Read Matthew 2:7–21.

Think about It Some More

God’s plan is unstoppable. That means that no one can stop what God wants to do. But not long after Jesus was born, King Herod attempted to stop God’s plan by trying to kill Jesus. Herod did not want someone else to be king. Nevertheless God’s plan to bring a Savior to his people could not be stopped, even by a powerful king. When Herod found out he had been fooled by the wise men, he again tried to stop God’s plan by having all the baby boys younger than two years old killed. But once again, God was a step ahead of the evil ruler and sent Jesus to Egypt until Herod was dead. Not only did God win the battle against Herod, God knew what would happen even before Herod was born.

Hundreds of years beforehand, the prophet Hosea foretold the day when Jesus would be sent to Egypt and then brought back out again. In Hosea 11:1, the prophet foretold this: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” God was not surprised by Herod’s threats; even those threats were a part of God’s unstoppable plan.

Talk about It

- ● KIDS, ask your parents to tell you what their favorite part of the
- ● Christmas story is.

(Parents, think of the shepherds, wise men, or another part of the Christmas story and share what part you like best and why. Then ask your children to tell you what their favorite part of the story is.)

- ∴ Why did Herod want to kill the baby Jesus? *(Herod heard that Jesus was going to become a king. Herod wanted to be the only king in Israel.)*
- ∴ Why did God make sure to stop King Herod’s evil plan? *(Parents, this is an interesting question. At first you might think that God would not allow anyone to kill his only Son, but then God did not stop the Jews from killing him on the cross. God did not allow Jesus to die as a baby because it was not God’s plan. God sent his Son, Jesus, to die, but not as a baby. God’s plan was for Jesus to die on the cross for our sins.)*

Pray about It

Thank God the Father for protecting the baby Jesus from Herod's evil plans.

DAY FIVE

Discover It

Today is the day we look at a different Bible passage—from the book of Psalms or one of the prophets—to see what we can learn from it about Jesus or our salvation.

 Read Hosea 11:1–2.

Think about It Some More

Sometimes Bible passages have two meanings. In today's passage, Hosea was writing about Israel coming out of Egypt. Do you remember how God's people were slaves in Egypt and God sent Moses to deliver them? While the Holy Spirit moved Hosea to write about Israel, Matthew tells us that God was also using him to talk about Jesus.

It is amazing to think that long ago in Hosea's day God was already planning to send his Son, Jesus. God's plan to save his people from Egypt points us to Jesus. God gave hidden clues through the prophets of how he was going to do it. This passage in Hosea is one of God's hidden clues that Matthew reveals to us. If it were not for Matthew, we probably never would have guessed it. Looking back we can see that all history is directed by God.

Talk about It

- ∴ Parents, have your children recount as much of the exodus story (when God delivered Israel from Egypt) as they can remember.
- ∴ What other parts of the exodus story point to Jesus? (*The most important part that points to Jesus is when the blood of the lamb is placed on the doorframes of the Israelites so that the angel of death will pass over them. That points forward to when Jesus would die for our sins so that God's judgment would pass over us. See Exodus 12:6–12.*)
- ∴ How was God able to know that Jesus was going to go to Egypt and come back out again? (*God controls the future. God knows all things and makes all things happen. He is not a human like you and me; he is God over all.*)

Pray about It

Praise God for the way he knows and controls all things.