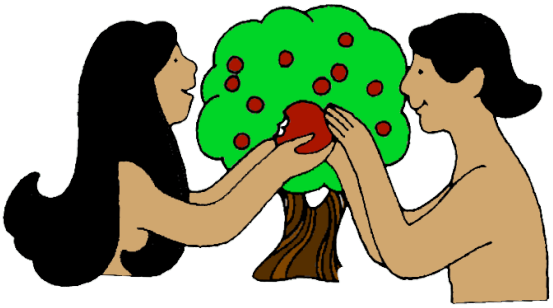
The Fall of Man



Scripture Reference: Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-24

Suggested Theme: God loves us and makes rules that will help us be healthy and happy. Satan wants bad things to happen to us, so he tempts us to disobey God.

Memory Verse: “So give yourselves to God. Stand against the devil, and the devil will run away from you.” James 4:7, ICB

Story Overview:

Adam and Eve were happy in the Garden of Eden, where God provided for all of their needs. God gave them only one rule: do not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. The serpent came to Eve, tempted her with lies, and convinced her to eat from the tree. Then, Eve gave some of the fruit to Adam, and he also ate it. They both realized their sin and guilt for disobeying God at that point. For the first time, people experienced shame. Because of their sin, God banished Adam and Eve from the garden.

Background Study:

The Garden of Eden was the name of the specific location in God’s creation where He placed Adam and Eve. Genesis 2:4-25 details God’s creation and how Adam and Eve related to it. God created Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed life into him. Adam was responsible for caring for the garden, but God did not mean for Adam to do this alone. God brought all of the animals before Adam and gave him the honour of naming them. As he reviewed the animals, Adam must have found it obvious that each animal had a mate. God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep and removed one of his ribs. From this rib, God formed a woman. The creation of mankind was now complete. Adam and Eve were beautiful and pure. They experienced no shame or need to cover up with clothes.

They were complete in this place because God provided for all of their needs. He gave them only one prohibition: they were not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden – commonly called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

How long did they live in obedience before they began to allow the temptation to overcome them? The Scripture does not mention the length of time that Adam and Eve lived in the Garden before this story takes place. Satan brought this temptation. Speaking through the serpent (Revelation 12:9), he told Eve that she and Adam could actually become “like God” or “as gods” (the Hebrew word “Elohim” can be translated either way) if they ate from the forbidden tree. When Adam and Eve decided to “become like God” by

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listening to someone other than God, they sinned. By disobeying God, they placed their own will and wisdom above God's.

God is pure and perfect. His wisdom is perfect. Adam and Eve's rejection of God's wisdom for their own flawed wisdom had terrible consequences. Sin always has consequences. The serpent was cursed for its part in the temptation. For Eve (whose name means "life" or "life giver"), the consequence of her sin was that her pain would increase in childbearing. For Adam, the consequence was that he would now have to sweat and toil to work the ground, raise food, and provide for his family's needs. He had worked in the Garden before this time (Genesis 2:15), but this would now be more difficult.

Adam and Eve's sin also ended their intimate relationship and partnership with God – the equivalent of spiritual death. When they were exiled (or banished) from the garden, they were also denied access to the Tree of Life, so death came into the world because of their sin.

God disciplined Adam and Eve, but He did not stop loving them. He showed His love and care by giving them better clothing before He sent them from the garden and gave them a way to renew their relationship with Him. Even at this time, God had already made a plan by which sin could be banished forever and humanity find forgiveness. He had already planned for Jesus to die for the sins of the world.

Special Note: Satan is the Great Deceiver and has tricked many people into believing he does not exist. This is the greatest deception of all. Children need to know that the Devil is not just an imaginary creature or something as weak as a dress-up costume at a party or a toy with a red suit and horns. He is powerful and evil. On the other hand, we need to be careful not to give a child more information than he/she can make sense of. Talk about Satan and his evil mission to hurt and trick us, but be sure that all children understand that God is stronger than the Devil and will protect those who love and obey Him. If God's strength and loving protection are not emphasised, then young children can have nightmares and an unhealthy fear of Satan. Another great deception!

Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children to name all the rules they can think of. These can be rules at home, school, traffic, libraries and hospitals, or any others you can think of. Talk about which are easy to obey and which are difficult. "Children, when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden God gave them a rule. He told them they could eat anything they wanted except for one thing. Just one rule! Do you think that would be hard to obey? What do you think that Adam and Eve did? Let's find out as we listen to the story."

The Story:

Adam and Eve were the first man and woman to live. They lived happily in a beautiful place called the Garden of Eden. They knew God loved them and even spent time with Him when He walked in the garden.

Only good things had ever happened in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had never felt shame or guilt. They did not wear any clothes, but that did not even bother them because they had never even heard about feeling embarrassed.

The garden had many trees, so there was always plenty of fruit to eat. God told Adam and Eve that there was one tree in the garden they must never ever eat fruit from.

Adam and Eve had only ever known good, but eating from this tree would give them the knowledge of good AND EVIL.

Only God could understand good and evil. If people ate from this tree, they would experience something that had never happened before in the garden. They would die.

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Adam and Eve had only ever obeyed God, but that was about to change.
There was one animal in the garden that was different. This animal was a snake that was very clever and very tricky. This snake could talk, and he spoke to Eve.

“Did God REALLY say that you must not eat fruit from ANY tree in the garden?” he asked.

Well, that really was a tricky question. Eve explained, “We can eat from any tree in the garden, but God’s rule is that we must never ever eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. He says that if we even touch it, we will die.”

But the snake was very bad. In fact, later, we will learn that this was really the devil. You see, the devil only wants to hurt people and get them to do bad things. He does not want people to love God.

So the snake told the woman a lie. He said, “You will not die! If you eat fruit from the tree you will know all kinds of things like God knows.”

Thinking about and feeling like maybe you want to do something bad is called “temptation.” The snake was tempting Eve to do something bad. Eve began to look at the fruit, and she thought it looked good to eat. She began to think about that more than about God’s rule.

And then it happened. Eve wasn’t just thinking about it anymore; she decided to actually take some of the fruit and eat it. Then she gave some of the fruit to her husband, Adam, and he ate it, too.

Oh, no! What had they done? It was just as God said. Before they ate the fruit, they had only thought good things. Now, they began to think about bad and evil things, too. They felt guilty, embarrassed, and ashamed.

They just wanted to hide and cover themselves so they would stop feeling this way! They sewed leaves together to cover themselves.

When they heard God walking in the garden, they were so ashamed that they hid from Him.

“Where are you?” God asked.

“We were afraid and naked so we are hiding,” Adam answered.

Yes, everything had changed. God knew they had eaten from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They were no longer only thinking good things.

When God asked Adam why he ate the fruit, he blamed Eve. He said, “The woman You made for me gave me the fruit so I ate it.”

When God asked Eve about it, she blamed the snake. “The snake tricked me so I ate the fruit.”

Everyone blamed everyone else, but one thing was certain: Everything would be different now. Evil had come to the garden, and everyone would suffer.

So God cursed the snake. No one knows what the snake was like before, but God said that from that point onward, the snake would be the lowest of all animals and crawl on its stomach. It would be so low that it would feel like it was eating dust.

The devil would always be an enemy to people, but someday, a descendant of the woman would destroy him.

And there was a curse for the woman, too. From now on, having a baby would bring her more trouble and pain, and her husband would be the ruler over her.

Everything had been easy in the garden, but even the ground would be different now. There would now be thorns and weeds, and Adam would have to sweat and work very hard his whole life just to make things grow.

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But the worst punishment of all was that Adam and Eve could no longer live in God's special garden. The garden had been a place where they could have only good and live forever. But now they knew about being bad too. Because they had disobeyed God and eaten the fruit, they would start getting older until a day would come when they would die. God made them clothes out of animal skins, but cherubim (winged creatures) stood guard at the gate of the garden so they could never ever return.

Even today, the devil keeps trying to trick people and tempt them away from God. Even if we can't see him, he still tries to get us to do bad things. He wants you to think he is stronger than God, but GOD IS STRONGER!

This is what is written in the Bible book of James.

"So give yourselves to God. Stand against the devil, and the devil will run away from you." James 4:7 (ICB)

Now you have a choice. Will you obey God or listen to the devil?

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- What was the name of the place where Adam and Eve lived? (The Garden of Eden)
- What was God's rule for Adam and Eve in the garden? (Do not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden)
- Who told Eve that she should eat from the tree? (Satan, in the form of a snake)
- What did Adam and Eve do after they knew they had disobeyed God? (They hid from God)
- What happened because of Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God? (the snake was cursed, Eve's childbearing be more painful, Adam would rule over her, and the ground would be harder to work to get food)
- What did God give Adam and Eve when they left the garden? (Clothes made of animal skin)
- Why do you think God asked Adam and Eve not to eat the tree?
- Why do you think God gave Adam and Eve clothes even though they had disobeyed?

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- How did God treat Adam and Eve when they disobeyed? (He gave them consequences but still showed their love by giving them clothes and being their God)
- What do we learn about God from this story?
- What do we learn about people from this story?

Reflection:

- What do you think the fruit that Adam and Eve ate looked like?
- What part of this story is the most interesting to you?
- If you were Eve, would you have listened to the snake or not?
- How do you think Adam and Eve felt after eating the fruit?
- How do you think God felt when Adam and Eve ate the fruit?
- What question about this story do you have for God?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Shake the Devil Off Song
- 1-2-3 The Devil's After Me Song
- We Will Roll the Gospel Chariot Along
- I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy
- This Little Light of Mine
- Goodbye World Song
- Our God is an Awesome God Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Write brief descriptions of situations on cards (appropriate to the children you teach) and let the children take turns drawing a card and acting out the situation in two ways. God's way and Satan's way.

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- Memorise today's memory verse. Click here for ideas to help children memorise scripture.
- Play a simple word game. Bible Wordz Game is an adaptable game in which children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to those in the Bible lesson.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Make play-dough or salt-dough snakes.
- Pre-school snake craft: Tear paper and glue or tape onto the snake
- Use a felt pen or Sharpie pen to write "James 4:7" on a craft stick. Wrap chenelle wire (pipe cleaner) around the craft stick to look like a snake.
- Give each child two paper plates or paper cut into circles. Have them make one into a happy face and one into a sad face. Tell them to hold up a happy face when you say something "obeying God" and a sad face when you say something "obeying Satan." Then, describe various actions and let them hold up the proper face. (Example: helping, swearing, cheating on a test, being kind, etc.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring pages (Church House Collection)
- Colouring page with text (Ministry Spark)
- Colouring page of Adam and Eve (Christian Answers)
- Colouring page of Adam and Eve and the serpent (Christian Answers)
- Colouring page of Adam and Eve's exit from the garden (Christian Answers)
- Other: Various activities and crafts1 (Church House Collection)
- Other: Various activities and crafts2 (Church House Collection)
- Other: Visual aids to print (Bible Fun For Kids)

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