

## WEEK 2: SINFUL HUMANITY

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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#### Big Picture

*This is where we're going... the big ideas you want people to understand more deeply during this session.*


- Every human has chosen to sin—to choose self over and apart from God
- God looks at the heart
- Self and sin lead to separation and death... Obedience leads to life and relationship with God
- God has created and commanded us to be fruitful
- God is the source of grace and mercy.

#### Set the Training Tone

*You will not need to repeat this list every week, but be aware of these and reestablish the right tone as necessary.*

- We are here to learn and change (not just a social time, but we also desire to grow closer and build community)
- Have fun, keep things moving and participatory.
- Welcome a challenge from me or others in the group (let's give each other permission to challenge us—probe, ask questions etc.).
- Strive to be honest and vulnerable and we should honor that by keeping what is shared in confidence.
- We are going to try and answer questions as much as possible from within the Story found in the Bible. Everything we need to learn about God and humans can be found right here in his Story!

#### Review Last Week's Story

-  **Last Week...** We looked at God creating the angels and the foundations of the earth. We saw Lucifer's attempt to place himself above God—to be like God. And we learned that God will never allow evil to remain in his presence, so he cast Lucifer and the demons out of heaven, away from his presence.
- We also saw how God finished creating the earth and all living things, including humans which he created in his image to be like him. God blessed the humans by sharing his authority with them and telling them to be fruitful and multiply, continuing in creation. We learned that humans were given the ability to choose and ultimately chose to disobey God and attempt to manage right and wrong for themselves, apart from God.
- Again, God will not allow evil and rebellion to remain in his presence and cast Adam and Eve out of the garden, away from his presence. God continued to show his care for the humans by not destroying them and also creating clothing for them out of animal skins so they would not be naked and ashamed outside of the garden.

## THE STORY & DIALOGUE

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### Scene 1: Two Brothers

*Story from Genesis 4*

After leaving the garden, Adam and Eve had two sons named Cain and Abel. When they grew up, Cain became a farmer, and Abel became a shepherd. At harvest time, Cain brought to God a gift of his farm produce, while Abel brought several of the very best lambs from his flock. God accepted Abel and his offering of the lambs, but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and upset.

*"Why are you so angry?" God asked him. "Why do you look so down? Won't you be accepted if you do what is right? But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at your door, waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must bring it under control."*

Later, Cain suggested to his brother, Abel, *"Let's go out into the fields..."* And while they were there, Cain attacked and killed his brother. This was the first murder described in the Bible.

Afterward, God asked Cain, *"Where is your brother Abel?"* *"I don't know!"* Cain replied. *"Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?"* But God said, *"What have you done? Listen... your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! You are now banished from the ground you have corrupted with your brother's blood. No longer will it produce abundant crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, constantly wandering from place to place."*

Cain replied to God, *"My punishment is more than I can handle! You have removed me from my land... and from your presence; you have made me a wandering fugitive. All who see me will try to kill me!"*

God replied, *"No! They will not kill you. Anyone who tries to harm you will receive seven times your punishment."*

So God put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. Then Cain left God's presence and traveled to the land east of the Garden.

## Scene 1 Dialogue: Two Brothers

Remember **this is a dialog, not a quiz**. The “answers” below each question are there to help you as a leader guide the discussion toward some key ideas.

**NOTE: You’ll need to move quickly through this dialogue to have enough time for Scene 2.**

**1. What did God say to Cain after he rejected his offering?**

**What do you think that meant?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *Won’t you be accepted if you do what is right? But if you refuse to do what is right, sin is waiting...*
- *God looks at the hearts—it was a heart issue. God spoke to Cain about doing what he already knew was right... he didn’t do it... it’s a heart issue—not a gift issue!*

**2. Why do you think Cain killed his brother?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

**3. [Icon] What do you do when you don’t feel accepted?**

**4. [Icon] What are you willing to do for acceptance?**

**5. [Icon] How would your life change if you knew you were already loved and accepted regardless of what you did?**

**[Icon] [Resting Slide]**

**6. What was God’s reaction to the murder?**

**Why didn’t God just ignore what Cain had done? What punishment did Cain deserve?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *Cain deserved death.*
- *God did not repay evil with evil—he showed fairness and grace.*

**7. What do we learn about humans in this story? (Where in the story did you see this?)**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *We try to hide from our sins.*
- *We want what other people have.*
- *We have the choice to do what is right.*
- *We have the tendency to not listen to God.*

**8. What do we learn about God in this story? (Where in the story did you see this?)**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *God is interested in people’s lives—he wants to interact with them.*
- *God punishes sin. God is merciful.*
- *God knows all things.*
- *God provides a way for us to live with him.*
- *God alone is good. God’s ways are not our ways.*

**9. Who do you think you are most like in this story?**

## Scene 2: The Flood

Story from Genesis 6-9

The number of humans on the earth grew rapidly. Not only did sin spread from Adam and Eve to their sons—it spread from generation to generation.

Even though humans were created in God's image, everyone chose to disobey God. They constantly acted out in violence against each other. God saw that people's thoughts were completely evil—all of the time. This broke his heart and made him wish he had never created humans.

So God decided to start over. He said, *"I will completely wipe out this human race that I have created. I am sorry I ever made them."*

But there was one man, named Noah, who found grace in the eyes of God. Noah had a close relationship with God and was the only blameless man living on earth at that time. So God said to Noah, *"I have decided to cover the earth with a flood, destroying everything alive! But I will give you a plan to keep you safe."*

God then told Noah to build a large ark, giving him specific instructions about how big to make it and what it should be like. God said to him, *"Make an ark from wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then build many decks and stalls for animals inside of it. I promise to keep you safe in this ark! Bring seven pairs of animals I have approved for sacrifices and one pair of each of the others. These animals will come to you to be kept alive. And remember, take enough food for your family and for all the animals."*

So Noah did everything exactly as God told him to do. Just as God said, the floods came—water burst out from the earth and rain poured from the sky. When the waters came, Noah and his family and all of the animals boarded the ark. As the waters rose, the ark floated safely on the surface. The flood covered even the tallest mountains and all living creatures on the earth were destroyed; except for those on the ark.

After 40 days the rains stopped. Many months passed as the waters slowly began to dry up. For weeks, Noah sent out a dove to see if it could find dry land. Finally, the dove returned with an olive leaf in its mouth. So Noah sent the dove out again, and when it didn't come back, he knew it was safe to return to land.

As soon as Noah came off of the ark, he built an altar, selected pure animals from every species, and sacrificed them to God as a symbol of thankfulness and worship.

God was pleased with Noah's sacrifice and said, *"I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things with a flood, even though people's thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood. God blessed Noah and his sons, telling them to be fruitful and multiply, go have many children and once again fill the earth with people."*

Then God told Noah and his sons, *"I have put all animals under your control. You can use them for food, but you must never eat animals that still have their lifeblood in them, and I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person's life. Life is in the blood and all life belongs to me!"*

God also said, *"As a symbol of my promise I will hang a rainbow in the clouds. When I see the rainbow, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth."*

## Scene 2 Dialogue: The Flood

**10. Why did God flood the earth and destroy everything? Do you think he had good reasons for doing this?**

**11. Why were Noah and his family spared? What does it mean to be “blameless?” Was Noah sinless?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *The story tells us that all humans have sinned... including Noah. Was Noah spared because he had a close relationship with God and did not try and place blame for his sins?*

**12. What did the evil, rebellion and violence of all the people in the world lead to?**

- *Death!*

**13. What did Noah’s obedience lead to?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *Being saved by God. God provided a way for him to be saved.*

**14. What do the stories we have heard so far show us about what humans are like?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *Since the fall of Adam and Eve every person has been a sinner.*

**15. Does the world and people of Noah’s day sound much different than today?**

**16. Have you ever met a person that lived their life PERFECTLY? Never did a selfish thing, ever?**

**17. From this story, how does God feel about humans?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *Disappointment and anger at our corruption.*
- *Compassion: by saving the human race and making a promise to not destroy us again.*
- *God is committed to give us the best possible life—he always provides a way for us.*

**18.  What does it mean to be fruitful? Fruitful for who? What does it look like to be fruitless?**

**19.  Is your life prioritized for maximum fruitfulness? What stands in the way? How do you invest your time, talents, money, career?**

**20.  What could you begin to do to be more fruitful in the way that God intended?**

**21. What did God say to Noah about animals and their blood?**

**22. What did God say about murder and blood and life? Why is it important?**

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *All life belongs to God and life is in the blood. It is God himself who gives life. He requires that blood (life) be given back to him when life is taken!*

### 23. What does the story teach us about God?

*You may need to guide the discussion toward...*

- *God is powerful—in control of the elements.*
- *God will never allow evil to remain in his presence.*
- *The flood is absolute confirmation that God always judges sin in all men.*
- *AND—God is the source of all grace. He saved Noah and his family and ultimately the race!*
- *Before saving them, he warned them of the coming judgment, an act of grace, just like with Cain.*
- *He promised never to destroy the earth again, even though he knew man would continue to sin.*
- *God knew what was in the heart of every man. God knows all things.*

## EXTENDING THE DIALOGUE

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### Using Media

Use of songs or artwork for further discussion...

#### **CS Lewis Quote**

*"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors... Remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you may talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and corruption such as you meet, if at all, only in a nightmare."*

#### **[Resting Slide]**

#### **Noah's Ark**

Take a look at this painting...

**24. What do you see?**

**25. What parts of the Story does it remind you of?**

**26. Put yourself in the scene, what might it have been like to be in this Story?**

### Further Application

**27.  If what we learned in this story about all humans is true, how does/should it affect your life?**

**28.  How would it affect us as a community?**

**29.  How would it affect others... our neighborhood, our city?**

## WALKING IT OUT

The Walking It Out handout is tool to help us engage the Story individually and with others during the week. This session alone is not nearly enough for someone to be saturated in the Story and begin living out the implications of the Story in everyday life with a community.

As you distribute them...

**point out a few key things from the handouts you as a leader have already found meaningful.**