

Session 1 (a&b): Where Did I Come From?

1 John 5:12: Whoever has the Son has life.

Objective: To understand how the world became broken, leading us to being born spiritually dead and searching for significance, security, and acceptance.

Food for thought: What would it take to make you really happy in life?

Creation to Return

Part 1

At the very beginning, God was there, and there was nothing else...only God. He spoke, and when he did, he created the universe and everything in it—and it was all good. Then He decided to make His special creation—people—a man and a woman. He made people to be like Him. He had a perfect relationship with them. He walked with them, talked with them, gave them responsibilities to care for the world, and took care of them—until one day, the man and woman listened to the lies of Satan and disobeyed God, and they broke their relationship with God. From that moment, everything God had made to be perfect and beautiful became broken and distorted: the relationship between God and His people, the relationship between people – and especially between men and women – and the relationship between people and nature. And all things, including people, would eventually die. The man and woman had children. Their children had children, and their children had children, until all the earth was filled with people. But, just like the first man and woman, people continued to be separated from God and live in a broken and distorted world.

Part 2

However, God had a plan. He never forgot his special creation, and He wanted his people back. Many years later, He spoke to a man named Abraham, and He told Abraham, “I am going to give you many descendants. I am going to make a great people—a nation—out of them. They will be my special people, and it’s my people through whom I will show my favor on everyone.” And, even though Abraham was a very old man, he believed God. Because of his belief, God considered Abraham to have a right/good relationship with Him. God totally accepted Abraham.

Part 3

God kept His promise to Abraham, and Abraham did have a son, and His son had sons, until God had indeed made a great people for Himself out of Abraham’s descendants. God really loved His people. He gave them their own special land, He gave them rules for living well, and He allowed them to have a king, even though He wanted to be the only one they relied on. But, even then, most of the time they were disobedient and separated from God, just like the first man and woman. Their disobedience led to fighting amongst themselves and even to other nations conquering them. Often,

God would send spokesmen (His ambassadors) to His people to show them how they could have a restored relationship with Him. One of these spokesmen was named Isaiah. Isaiah brought God's people a message of hope about a Promised King. He said, "We have all strayed away from God. We disobey him. But God says, 'I am sending you an ultimate King. When he comes, you won't recognize him as king—you'll reject him. But he will take all of your disobedience and rebellion on himself. He will be whipped and beaten. He will die because of your disobedience. But, I will give him life again. And I will give him the honour and authority of the king that he is. And, because of what he does, you will be able to have a restored relationship with me. I will accept you.'"

From that time on, they waited expectantly for this Promised King...and they waited...and they waited....

Part 4

When the time was right, God did keep His promise to His people. He sent this Promised King, Jesus, God's very own Son. Jesus proved that He was indeed the Promised King of God's people by performing many miracles, by forgiving people when they disobeyed God, and by restoring people to peace with God. Not everyone recognized who Jesus was, but some people did follow Him as their king. To His followers, Jesus said, "The true people of God are those who turn away from their disobedience and follow me." One day He told them, "You are my friends, and I love you so much that I'm willing to die to take the punishment for your disobedience. If you follow me, my Father God and I will make our home with you." Those who did not believe in Jesus were angry and threatened about the claims He made about Himself. So, they convinced the government to have Him executed. And, just as God had said, Jesus was whipped. He was beaten, and He died. But, just as God had said, Jesus was given life again!

Part 5

After Jesus had been raised to life, He showed himself to his followers, and He proved beyond a shadow of doubt that He had come back from the dead. For forty days, He taught His followers. He told them, "I will leave you soon, but when I do, I will send God's Spirit to you. And when you receive God's Spirit, you will receive power—power to tell everyone that they can become a part of God's Kingdom/people through believing in me. So, go to the whole world and tell people about me. Teach them to obey what I taught you. And, when they believe in me, baptise them. Have them undergo this symbolic washing in water to show that they have turned from their sins and have become part of God's people/Kingdom.

Part 6

One day, Jesus did leave them. He went up into the clouds right in front of their eyes. As they were watching all of this, two men appeared and asked them why they were looking up into the sky. "Jesus will come back one day the same way he left," they said. So Jesus' followers waited. Jesus did send God's Spirit, and when He did, His followers did receive power—power to tell everyone that they can become a part of God's people.

Part 7

This is what God's people do to this day. We tell everyone about Jesus. When people believe in him, they are baptised—symbolically washed in water—to show that they have turned from their sins and become one of His people through believing in Jesus. Jesus' followers gather together. They meet together to worship God, learn to be followers of Jesus, and to take care of one another's needs.

Part 8

And we wait expectantly for Jesus to return one day just as He said He would—as king. Jesus said that when He comes back, there will be a loud shout, and we, God's people, will be reunited with Him in a perfect kingdom. In God's kingdom, there will be no suffering, no tears, no pain. God will be our God, and He will make His home with His people.

Week 1

Re-tell or re-read part 1-3 of the story. Ask the following questions...

1. *What did you like about this part of the story?*
 - a. *Is there anything that particularly struck you?*
2. *What bothered you about this part of the story?*
3. *What does this story show you about God?*
 - a. *What kinds of things did God do to restore relationship?*
4. *What does this story show you about people?*
 - a. *Imagine Adam and Eve's life as it would have been as they were originally created--before they disobeyed God. How would it have been different from yours?*
 - b. *When Adam and Eve sinned, what became broken and distorted? What do you think happened to their emotions? What did all of us, as a result, lose? (We lost knowledge of God—Ephesians 4:17-19. We lost significance, security, and acceptance.)*
 - c. *What kinds of things did people try to do to restore relationship?*
 - d. *What are the clues in this story as to what needs to happen in order for relationship to be restored?*
5. *What does this mean for you and your life?*
 - a. *What does this story show you about yourself? Are any of these same things in your life are broken or distorted? Which do you particularly identify with?*

Try writing notes or drawing pictures in the first 3 parts of the storyboard handout to help you remember these parts of the story.

To Take Away

1. Read Genesis 12:1-6; 15:1-6 and Isaiah 53. These passages are parts 2-3 of this story.
2. Ask God to show you what areas of your life are not in line with His purposes for you. Ask him to help you believe that He can change them. Ask him to show you what His promises are for you. Praise Him for His purposes and promises for you!

Week 2

Review the previous session.

Can you re-tell parts 1-3 of the story? What did God show you as you prayed throughout the week?

Re-tell the story. Then retell just parts 4-8 of the story...

1. *What particularly strikes you about this part of the story?*
2. *Is there anything that you don't understand in this part of the story?*
 - a. *Anything that bothers you?*
3. *What does this story show you about Jesus?*
 - a. *We've talked about the things that mankind lost when Adam and Eve first disobeyed. What did Jesus come to do about this? What did he come to give us?*
 - b. *If Jesus came to give us life, what kind of life is it? From this story, does it seem to be only life for eternity, or is it also for now? What does this story say about our life now?*
4. *What does this story show you about people?*
 - a. *What does this story say about God's purposes for those who follow Jesus?*
5. *What does this story mean for you and your life?*
 - a. **Read together the list of things that God says about us if we are alive "in Christ."
(See Session1 Week 2 Handout)**
 - b. *Do all of these things feel true to you? If God says something about you, is it true even if it doesn't feel true?*
6. *How do you feel that people generally try to deal with their strong need to be accepted, significant, and secure? How would you explain to a non-Christian that ultimately these are found only in Christ?*

Try writing short notes or drawing pictures of parts 4-8 of the story to help you remember it.

Can you summarise the Gospel message in a few sentences? If not, try learning this "Creation to Return" story as a way to share the Good News of what Jesus has done for us and how people can respond to him.

To Take Away

1. Read the Significance, Security and Acceptance Restored in Christ (Session 1, Week 2 handout) list out loud every day. Pick one of the truths that is particularly relevant to you and spend some time reading it in its context and asking God to help you understand it more fully.
2. Have a go at learning the Creation to Return story and practice it with at least one person.

Creation to Return Storyboard

Significance, Security & Acceptance

Restored in Christ

I Am Significant

I am no longer worthless, inadequate, helpless or hopeless. In Christ I am deeply significant and special. God says:

Scripture	Truth	I believe this:		
		Never	Sometimes	Always
Matthew 5: 13, 14	I am the salt of the earth and the light of the world.			
John 15: 1, 5	I am a branch of the true vine, Jesus, a channel of His life.			
John 15: 16	I have been chosen and appointed by God to bear fruit.			
Acts 1: 8	I am a personal, Spirit-empowered witness of Christ.			
1 Corinthians 3: 16	I am a temple of God.			
2 Corinthians 5: 17-21	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.			
2 Corinthians 6: 1	I am God's fellow-worker.			
Ephesians 2: 6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms.			
Ephesians 2: 10	I may approach God with freedom and confidence.			
Philippians 4: 13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!			

I Am Secure

I am no longer guilty, unprotected, alone or abandoned. In Christ I am totally secure. God says:

Scripture	Truth	I believe this		
		Never	Sometimes	Always
Romans 8: 1,2	I am free forever from condemnation.			
Romans 8: 28	I am assured that all things work together for good.			
Romans 8: 31-34	I am free from any condemning charges against me.			

Romans 8: 35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God.
2 Corinthians 1: 21,22	I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.
Philippians 1: 6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
Colossians 3: 3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
2 Timothy 1: 7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind.
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy to help in time of need.
1 John 5: 18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I Am Accepted

I am no longer rejected, unloved or dirty. In Christ I am completely accepted. God says:

Scripture	Truth	I believe this		
		Never	Sometimes	Always
John 1: 12	I am God's child.			
John 15: 15	I am Christ's friend.			
Romans 5: 1	I have been justified.			
1 Corinthians 6: 17	I am united with the Lord and I am one spirit with Him.			
1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20	I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.			
Ephesians 1:1	I am a saint, a holy one.			
Ephesians 1: 5	I have been adopted as God's child.			
Ephesians 2: 18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.			
Colossians 1: 14	I have been redeemed and forgiven for all my sins.			
Colossians 2: 10	I am complete in Christ.			

Personal Thoughts and Reflections: