

Monday
Genesis 1:1–2:3

Nothing. Nothing at all. God made heaven and earth from nothing. It was very dark, so God made light. He called the light "day." The dark was "night." This was the first day and night! This was the first day and night!

God was busy the second day too. Water was everywhere, so God made the sky. It was pretty and blue. What would God make on the third day?

God made dry ground. He called the dry ground "land." He called the water "seas." Then God made plants for the land.

Now it was day four. God made lights for the sky. The sun would give light to the earth and make flowers grow. God also placed stars and the moon in the sky.

God made water animals and sky animals next. On day five, God made so much to enjoy.

God made more animals to live on the land. God made them all on day six. And he did more! God made people in a special way. First, God made Adam, forming him out of the dust of the ground. Then, later, God caused Adam to fall asleep. God took a rib from Adam, and from this rib, God made Eve. Adam and Eve were the first people on the earth. God put them in charge of all he made. They were happy. All the animals were friendly. God made everything very good.

God rested on day seven. The work was done! Our God is great!

God made a wonderful, beautiful world. Even though it is no longer as wonderful as it was before the coming of sin, God's creation is still awesome and amazing. God still loves everything he has made. Soon after the first sin entered the world, God promised to send a Savior to save all people and to earn forgiveness for their sins.

- **How are you special and wonderfully made? What are some unique features that God gave you?**

Heavenly Father, what a wonderful, beautiful world you have made! Be with me as I experience your creation, especially all the people around me. Thank you for your love and forgiveness in Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday
Genesis 6–8

Adam and Eve had children. Their children had children. Soon, the world was filled with people. The people were very wicked. God was very sad that he had made people. He decided to rid the world of the wicked people. But God had promised to send a Savior from the family of Adam and Eve. And there was a man named Noah. God loved Noah, and Noah loved God. God told Noah to build a big boat called an ark. God would save Noah and his family.

God brought animals into the ark. He brought two of every kind. Then Noah went into the boat. Noah's wife, their three sons, and their sons' wives also went into the boat. God closed the door of the boat. Then God sent rain. It rained and rained and rained. At last, the entire earth was covered with water. All the animals and people outside of the boat died. But the animals and people inside the boat did not die. God kept them safe.

Then God caused the wind to blow. The waters dried up. The ark came to rest on the top of a mountain. The animals and people left the ark. Noah built an altar. He worshiped and praised God. God placed a rainbow in the sky. The rainbow reminds us of God's love and promises.

When God dried the earth, Noah and the animals came out of the ark. They entered a brand-new world, a world cleaned by God with the waters of the flood. The great flood can remind us of our baptism. In baptism, God drowns our old sinful nature and calls us into a new life as people of God.

Dear God, thanks for making me new in Christ through baptism. Give me your Spirit's power so that I might see today's activities with new eyes. Amen.

Wednesday

2 Peter 1:16–21

After seeing Jesus rise up into heaven, Peter, one of Jesus' followers, wrote about the things he had heard and seen concerning Jesus. He wrote about a time when Jesus was with Peter, James, and John. Suddenly, Jesus began to become very bright and to shine. Jesus shone brightly to show that he is God. While Peter and the others were watching Jesus at this special moment, a voice from heaven spoke and said about Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This voice was the voice of God the Father. So, Jesus is God, and the Father in heaven is also God. Peter went on to write about the Spirit of God. Peter's words tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives people the words of the Bible. From other places in the Bible, we know that the Holy Spirit works through God's Word to give us faith and to keep us in the faith. So, Jesus is God, the heavenly Father is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. There are three persons in one God. We learn about all three in the Bible.

My Savior, how glad I am that I can believe every word of the Bible! Thank you for your holy Word.
Amen.

Thursday
2 Kings 5

Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Syria, had a disease called leprosy. In his household lived a young slave, a girl taken prisoner from the people of Israel. She told Naaman's wife about the prophet in her homeland who could pray to God to cure Naaman of his leprosy. And so Naaman went to see this prophet, Elisha.

When Naaman arrived, Elisha sent a messenger to tell him to go wash in the Jordan River seven times and he would be healed. The Jordan River wasn't the cleanest, and Naaman was wanting Elisha to do something miraculous or magical, so he became angry at Elisha's request. "Aren't the rivers of my homeland better rivers than these?" he raged. But Naaman's servants encouraged him to do as the prophet had said. They said, "If he had asked you to do something difficult, you would have been willing to do it. So why not do it when he asks you to do something simple?"

Naaman listened. He washed seven times in the Jordan River, and his leprosy left him. Returning to thank Elisha, Naaman said, "Now I know that there is no other God than the God of Israel."

Naaman's washing in the Jordan River reminds us of our baptism. By faith in baptism, Jesus washes away our sins, healing us of the sickness of our sins. Water connected with God's Word works wondrous things!

Dear God, thank you for the precious treasures you have given us through baptism. Help us to never forget how blessed we are to be your children. Amen.

Friday

Matthew 26:47–27:66

David's son Absalom was admired because he was handsome and had a beautiful head of hair. When Absalom traveled, he made an impressive sight, with chariots, horses, and fifty running men. Absalom liked to greet people as they came to see the king. He made himself popular by saying they would have justice if he were king. But his words were lies. Absalom did not speak out of concern for the people, but rather because he wanted to turn the hearts of the people away from his father, King David.

Absalom went to Hebron and sent spies throughout all of Israel. The spies said, "When you hear the sound of the trumpet, say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" The conspiracy became strong as Absalom's popularity among the people rose.

A messenger came to King David saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." So David and his family and servants fled from the capital city of Jerusalem. David crossed the brook in the Kidron Valley and went up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. Meanwhile, Absalom came into Jerusalem.

David organized those who were with him, making some men captains over the rest. He commanded, "Deal gently with Absalom." David's army went to battle against the army of Absalom. David's army was victorious. Absalom was trying to escape from David's men when his mule went under the thick branches of a big oak tree. Absalom's head got caught in the tree, suspending him in the air.

When David's commander, Joab, learned of this, he took three javelins and plunged them into Absalom's heart, killing him. Then Joab blew the trumpet to end the battle. When David heard that Absalom was dead, he wept and said, "O my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you."

That same forgiving love that David had for his son who betrayed him is the love that Jesus has for each of us. The difference is that Jesus did die instead of us. Jesus died for our sins, so that we can live with him – no more battles with anyone, ever.

Dear Lord, you are truth. Thank you for dying on Calvary for me so that I might be free from the power of sin. Help me to always remember that you are the only way to truth and eternal life. In your name I pray. Amen.