

Jesus > Bride, The Church

A redemptive panorama of stories from Creation to Jesus' second coming. This set is intended for use among South Asian women. It can be used as a follow-up set to the Magdalena Film, or as a stand-alone evangelistic and discipleship story set.

Creation to Church

*The following is one possible Creation to Church story. It should take you anywhere from 6-8 minutes to tell. If you cannot tell the story in less than 8 minutes, try to take some parts out of the story. The portions of the story that are in **bold print** should not be taken out of the story. We feel these are essential elements in leading someone to make a decision for Christ. When you are at a point where the person with whom you are sharing wants to make a decision to be a follower of Jesus, walk him/her back through the story, asking him/her to remember or even retell the portions that we have highlighted for you in bold print.*

At the very beginning of time, **God** was there, and there was nothing else...only God. He spoke, and when he did, he **created the universe and everything in it**. Then **he decided to make a special creation—man**. But God said that man shouldn't be alone, and so **he also created a woman** to be man's companion. Then the man and woman were united as one.

God had a perfect relationship with the first man and woman, and he was united with them. He walked with them, talked with them, and took care of them—until one day, **the man and woman disobeyed God, and they broke their relationship with him. They were separated from God**. 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, they continued to be separated from God.

However, God wanted to be united again with the people he had created and have a good relationship with them. He chose one man named Abraham. He told Abraham, "I will give you many descendants and make a huge nation for myself from them. Through them, the whole world will be blessed." **Abraham believed God, and because of his belief, God said that he had a good relationship with Abraham**. God kept his promise to Abraham, and Abraham did have a son, and his son had sons, until God had indeed made a huge people group out of Abraham's descendants. Sometimes they followed God, but most of the time they were disobedient, just like the first man and woman. They were still separated from God.

But God loved Abraham's descendants with an unfailing love. God said that he was like a loving husband who took them as his bride and gave them many beautiful gifts. However, they were like an unfaithful wife who had left her husband for other men! **He sent spokesmen** to show them that they had been unfaithful to him and would be punished for that. But he also sent them messages of hope through many spokesmen. **He told them that one day he would restore them to himself forever as his beloved bride, despite what they had done**.

One of these spokesmen was named Isaiah. He said, “We have all gone away from God and his ways. We sin. But God says, **‘I am sending you a Savior who will take all of your sins on himself.** He will be whipped and beaten. **He will die because of your sins.** In fact, he will be like a lamb that is being led to the butcher. But, I will give him life again. **And, because of him, you can be restored to unity with me,** because I am like your husband who wants to take away the shame of his unfaithful wife.” From that time on, they waited expectantly for this Promised Savior...and they waited...and they waited....

God did keep his promise to Abraham’s descendants. **He sent this Promised Savior, Jesus, God’s very own Son.** Jesus proved that he was indeed the savior by performing many miracles, by healing people, and by showing them that he could forgive their sins and give them a full life united with him forever. He even took away the shame of those who had disobeyed God, just as God said he would. Those who did not believe in Jesus became very angry that Jesus was taking away the shame from sinful people, and loving them. 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!**

Afterward, Jesus 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 about me. So, go into the whole world and tell people about me. **Teach them to obey what I taught you. And, when they believe in me, baptize them.** Have them undergo this symbolic washing in water **to show that they have become my followers. They have turned from their sins and turned to God through believing in me.**”

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 angels 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. From that moment on, the followers of Jesus waited expectantly for him to return. And **they went everywhere telling people about Jesus.** And when people believed in Jesus, they were baptized. They underwent a symbolic washing in water to show that **they had turned from their sins and turned to God through belief in Jesus.**

This is what followers of Jesus do to this day. They tell everyone about Jesus. When people believe in him, they are baptized—symbolically washed in water—to show that they have turned from their sins and turned to God through believing in Jesus. And to this day, believers in Jesus are preparing themselves for his return. Do you remember that silent lamb that was led away to the butcher? When Jesus comes back, he won’t be like a silent lamb anymore. He will be like our groom, coming back for us, his bride! We will be presented to him as his beloved, beautiful bride dressed in fine jewels and gold. When he comes for us, he will take us away to live with him forever!

Creation

Genesis 1:1-27, 2:2-3, 7-9, 15-18, 21-25, 28, 31

Based on NLT (2004)

Genesis 1:1-27

In the beginning *there was* God. *He spoke and when He did, He created the whole world and everything in it.* God *made* light and water. He *made* the dry ground and all *kinds of plants and trees.* God *made* the sun, the moon, and the stars. He *made all kinds of fish, birds, and animals.* Then, God created people, *He patterned them after Himself.*

Genesis 2:7-9, 15

God formed a man's body from the *soil* of the ground and breathed into *him and he began to live.* Then God placed the man *in a garden of fruit trees.* God *planted* all *kinds* of trees in the garden. *They were* beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit. At the center of the garden He placed two *trees*---the tree which *gave* life and the tree which *gave the understanding* of good and evil*.

Genesis 2:16-17

God told the *man*, Adam, "You may eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree which *gives the understanding* of good and evil. If you eat *this tree's* fruit, you will die."

Genesis 2:18, 21-25

God said *man shouldn't* be alone. So...God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs and made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam. "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She *has* flesh and bones like me!"...This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Adam and his wife, *Eve*, were both naked, *but neither of them was ashamed.* They had a good *relationship** with God.

Genesis 1:28, 31

God blessed* them and told them, "Multiply and be masters over the fish, the birds, and all the animals." Then God looked over all He had made, and saw that it was excellent in every way. *God created the world and everything in it in six days.*

Genesis 2:2-3

The next day, the seventh day, God stopped working. God set apart one day of the week for Himself because He had finished creating the world.

Words/Phrases to Consider

patterned them after himself

This should be translated in such a way that it doesn't necessarily mean that man looks like God. One suggestion for translating this is like the TEV (Today's English Version): 'They will be like [God] and resemble [God].'

Flesh and bones like me

This phrase refers to Adam exclaiming in joy that finally he had found someone like himself. It is a less literal rendering of the Hebraic idiom, 'flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone.'

Excellent in every way

When God saw His creation was 'excellent in every way', it implies that it was pleasing to God — He judged it suitable and fitting for its purpose.

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Blessed*

Relationship*

Evil*

Story Crafting

Many oral people find it difficult to remember the 'list' of the seven days of creation in Genesis 1. Genesis 1 is actually a hymn, but Genesis 2 is a re-telling of the creation story in a more narrative way. Genesis 1 is summarized, so more of the story is taken from the Genesis 2 account. People seem to be better able to remember the story when told this way.

The names of the rivers in Genesis 2 are left out for ease of re-telling. However, if the people group really like rivers for some reason, you may include them.

Genesis 2:3 was re-worded in order to make it easier to understand and less complicated to translate. For example, instead of saying God made the seventh day 'holy,' it is described as a day being 'set apart.'

The **tree which gives the understanding of good and evil** is described in terms of action so that the audience will understand the purpose of the tree.

Because some people thought that God slept when we say he 'rested,' we said *stopped working* instead.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Certain sections of this story are important for the development of the story set theme, including that God said that man shouldn't be alone, and that a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife in unity. It is also important to state or be sure that the audience understands that they had a good relationship with God, in order to show the break in relationship that the fall caused.

Worldview

Be sure that the word **naked** used here is appropriate. In some cultures, it is more appropriate to say 'they didn't have clothes on.'

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God is Creator; He is relational; He has the power to bless.

Church

Setting aside a 'special' day dedicated to God, which lays the foundation for church.

Prayer

God communicates with man; man and God talk with one another.

Disobedience

Genesis 3:1-24

Based on NLT (2004)

Genesis 3:1-5

Now the snake was the most *cunning* of all the *animals* God had made. *Satan** entered into the snake and he asked *Eve*, “Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?” “Of course we may eat it,” *Eve* told him. “It’s only the fruit from the tree *which gives the understanding of good and evil** that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die.” “You won’t die!” the snake *hissed*. “God knows that when you eat this fruit you will become just like *Him*, knowing everything, both good and evil.”

Genesis 3:6-7

Eve was convinced. The fruit looked so *fresh* and delicious, and it would make her so wise*! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. *Adam* ate it, too. At that moment, *something inside them changed*; they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they *put* leaves together to cover their *nakedness*.

Genesis 3:18-13

Toward evening, *Adam and Eve* heard God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. God called to *Adam*, “Where are you?” *Adam* replied, “I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.” “Who told you that you were naked?” God asked. “Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?” “Yes,” *Adam* admitted, “*but* it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it.” Then *God* asked *Eve*, “How could you do such a thing?” “The snake tricked me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

Genesis 3:14-15

So *God* said to the *snake*, “Because you have done this, *you will be punished*. You will crawl in the dust as long as you live. From now on, your *descendants** and the *descendants of the woman* will be *enemies*. *You will bite his heel, but he will crush your head.*”

Genesis 3:16-19

Then *God* said to *Eve*, “You will give *birth* to children with intense pain and *suffering*.” *God* said to *Adam*, “Because you ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse* on the ground. All your life you will struggle to *live* from it. It will grow thorns and thistles. You will sweat to produce food, until *you die...*”

Genesis 3:21-24

Then *God* said, “*Now people* know everything, both good and evil*. What if they eat the fruit from the tree that gives life? Then they will live forever!” So *God* sent *Adam* and *Eve* out of the garden and prevented them from returning to the tree that gave life.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for a full explanation of these words.

Curse*

Descendants*

Wise*

Satan*

Story Crafting

The story is easier to retell if the punishments/curses are simplified.

The idea of woman desiring man and man dominating woman is left out because it is difficult for many hearers to understand, and much controversy exists about its real meaning. For the same reasons, God's banishment of man and woman from the garden is simplified.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **good and evil**, and **naked** used in previous stories.

WORLDVIEW

Some people may worship snakes, so it's important that the snake look like the 'bad guy' in this story.

Some people groups have heard this story, but don't believe it really happened because an animal is talking. They consider this more of a fable or folktale. Almost all Bible scholars agree the snake is Satan based on references such as Revelation 12:9; 20:2; 2 Corinthians 11:3. If needed for full understanding, an explanation that the snake is Satan may be included in the story.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

He is all-knowing; He is separated from evil and sin; He opposes sin and evil; He is just; He punishes sin or disobedience; He is relational

Assurance of salvation

In this story, a foundation for man to be victorious is laid by creating enmity between man and Satan.

Devotional life

A foundation for devotional life is laid by man walking and talking with God and God walking and talking with man.

Prayer

This story illustrates God and man communicating with one another.

Abraham's Call

Genesis 12:1-7, 15:1-6

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, their relationship* with God was broken. Yet God did not forget His very special creation. Many years passed and God chose one of their descendants*, named Abraham. This is his story.*

Genesis 12:1-3

God said to *Abraham*, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and go to the land I will show you. I will make a *huge people from your descendants*. I will bless* you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 12:4-6

So *Abraham left* as God had instructed. Abraham was a very old man when he *left* his homeland. He took his wife, *Sarah* and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household and headed for the *land that God would show him*. When they arrived there, Abraham traveled through the land. *When he eventually stopped*; he set up camp beside a *great tree*.

Genesis 12:7

Then *God* appeared to *Abraham* and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." *And Abraham worshipped** God who had appeared to him.

Genesis 15:1-3

Some time later, *God* spoke to *Abraham* in a vision* and said to him, "Do not be afraid. I will protect you, and you *will receive a great reward*." But *Abraham* replied, "*O God*, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, a servant in my household will inherit all my wealth..."

Genesis 15:4-5

Then *God* said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." *God* took *Abraham* outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

Genesis 15:6

Abraham believed* *God*, and because of that, *God* considered him to be in *right relationship** with Him.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Righteousness/Right Relationship*

Belief/Trust*

Sin/Disobedience*

Worship*

Vision*

Story Crafting

God had not changed Abram's name to Abraham yet, but for the sake of simplicity 'Abraham' is used. If later it is felt that Abram's name change is important to the story set, include that story and change his name back to 'Abram' in this story.

Canaan and other locations mentioned have purposely been left out so the story will be easier to remember and retell.

This story highlights and sets up God's promise to Abraham, which will be fulfilled later in the story set. The promise is that God will make him into a great nation, and that through this nation, all people will be blessed. We've also highlighted how God sees Abraham's belief as giving him a right relationship with God.

We have replaced all references to 'Lord' in the Old Testament stories with 'God' because 'Lord' in English is a word used mostly in church or religious meetings and may not be understood by the average nonchurched person. Most instances of the word 'Lord' in the Old Testament refer to 'Jehovah (I AM),' the specific name that the Israelites were given for God through Moses. Use whatever word for God here that you are using in this story set.

We chose to substitute, in Gen 12:7, 'worshiped God' for 'built an altar' to state in a simpler way what actually happened. Including 'built an altar' would require discussion and explanation that would detract from communicating the main goal of this story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same word for **descendants, relationship, and blessed** used in previous stories.

Worldview

Abraham is a significant figure in both Biblical and Muslim worldviews. If working among Muslims, including Abraham in the story set will provide a bridge between the Biblical culture and their culture.

Since trees are worshipped in some cultures, be sure it is not implied that Abraham worshipped the tree in this story.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God makes promises; He blesses; He is relational; He will create a people for Himself; He leads, guides and directs; He reveals Himself and His will; He is worthy of being worshipped; He has the power to bless; He protects and rewards; He speaks to people; He cares about His people; He calls out individuals for His purposes.

Church

God will establish his people – This story lays the foundation for church and worship.

Devotional life is based on relationship and trust, and walking and talking with God.

Prayer

This story gives a good example of communication between God and man — the communication is relevant and personal and lays the foundation for prayer.

□ Son Promised to Sarah

Genesis 18:1-14, 21:1-2

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Many years passed. Abraham and Sarah were very old and still did not have any children, and Sarah was now past the age of having children.

Genesis 18:1-5

God appeared...to Abraham...as he sat at the entrance to his tent. This is how it happened... Abraham looked up and noticed three visitors standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground...Abraham said, "...Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. And since you've honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey." "All right," they said..

Genesis 18:6-9

So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry!...Bake some bread." Then Abraham prepared a good meal for his guests... After they ate, they asked, "Where is Sarah, your wife?"..."She's inside the tent," Abraham replied.

Genesis 18:10-14

Then God, who was one of the visitors, said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!" Sarah was listening to this conversation ...and she laughed silently to herself because she wondered how an old woman like herself could have a baby...Then God said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' Is anything too hard for God? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Genesis 21:1-2

God kept His word and did for Sarah exactly what He had promised. She became pregnant, and she had a son...in her old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Wash your feet

To wash someone's feet was an expression of honor to a guest.

Story Crafting

The three visitors can be described as God and two angels, (see Gen. 18:17-33, Gen. 19:1-26) if it helps to clarify who these visitors were.

This story is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and Sarah 25 years earlier. (In the *Abraham's Call* story.)

Intra-Story Cohesion

Sarah was introduced in a previous story, so it is important to use her name here.

Worldview

In some cultures, the practice of bowing before someone and washing their feet after a journey may not exist or may have a different meaning. In this story, Abraham was showing respect to his guests. If this meaning is not understood by the audience, then this could be simplified to say that Abraham respectfully greeted his guests.

In many cultures that we work in, greeting guests with a meal is a polite necessity. If this is the case in your culture, be sure to include this section of the story.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God keeps His promises; God visits His people personally; God knows even our thoughts; God works in everything for His plan to be accomplished.

Abraham & S

Faith Tested

Genesis 22:1-19

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

God did keep his promise to Abraham and Sarah, and Sarah did have a son in her old age. They named him Isaac, and they loved him very much.

Genesis 22:1-4

One day God tested Abraham's belief and obedience. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied, "Here I am."*

"Take your son, your only son...Isaac, whom you love so much---and go to another land...Sacrifice him there...on one of the mountains which I will show you." The next morning Abraham got up early...and took...his son Isaac...On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.*

Genesis 22:6-8

So Abraham placed the wood for the sacrifice on Isaac's shoulders, while he carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?"

"God will provide a lamb..., my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

Genesis 22:9-13

When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham prepared a place to worship and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son Isaac, and laid him...on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice to God. At that moment, the angel of God called to him..., "Abraham! Abraham!"*

"Yes," he answered. "I'm listening."

"Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld even...your only son." Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. So he took the ram and sacrificed it...in place of his son.

Genesis 22:15-18

Then the angel of God called again to Abraham..., "This is what God says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, ...I have promised that I will...bless you. I will multiply your descendants* into countless millions, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. They will conquer...their enemies, and through your descendants, all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me."*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Tested

God wanted to know if Abraham really trusted him.

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Sacrifice*

Angel/Angel of God *

Story Crafting

Much of the dialog is included in this story in order to make it more interesting.

Lamb is used instead of 'sheep' because the Hebrew word actually means a young sheep, and we want to strengthen the thread in the story set that includes a lamb going to slaughter and the wedding feast of the lamb.

Be sure that your audience understands that this is not child sacrifice but only a way that God tested Abraham's willingness to obey Him.

We used **place of worship** instead of 'altar' in order to simplify the story and avoid lengthy, distracting explanations.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words for **descendant, belief, bless, God, worship, and believe** used in previous stories.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God expects obedience from His people even if we don't understand; God provides everything that is needed; God is always faithful to His promises; God sends His angels to speak to people; Sometimes God will ask us to give or offer to Him entirely something that is very special or precious to us.

Rachel and Leah

Genesis 29:1-35

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Abraham's son Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob's sons would become the ancestors of the great nation that God had promised Abraham. This is the story of Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel.

Genesis 29:1, 13

Jacob left his family's house, and he...finally arrived in another land where his uncle lived... As soon as Laban heard that his nephew Jacob had arrived, he ran out to meet him. He greeted him kindly and brought him home...

Genesis 29:14-20

...After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, Laban said to him, "You shouldn't work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be." Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. Leah was pretty, but Rachel was really beautiful. Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you for seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife." "Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me." So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed like only a few days.

Genesis 29:21-23

Finally, the time came for him to marry her. "I have fulfilled my agreement," Jacob said to Laban. "Now give me my wife so I can marry her." So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast. But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob *instead*.

Genesis 29:25-27

But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! "What have you done to me?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?" "It's not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn," Laban replied. "But wait until the bridal week is over, then we'll give you Rachel, too—provided you promise to work another seven years for me."

Genesis 29:28-30

So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. So Jacob...loved her much more than Leah. He then stayed and worked for Laban the additional seven years.

Genesis 29:31-35

When *God* saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to have children,...*and she had four sons. She named her fourth son Judah, and said, "Now I will praise God."...*

Story Crafting

Leah was pretty, but Rachel was really beautiful. Most commentaries agree that the original meaning of the Hebrew, which says that Leah had “weak eyes,” is uncertain, but many believe that the author is trying to say that Leah is beautiful, but Rachel is more so.

Intra-story Cohesion

It is important that your audience understand that it was the unloved Leah who had Judah. This will be important later in the story set.

Worldview

Your culture may have different marriage customs, and may not practice polygamy. You may need to include an explanatory sentence like “According to the customs of the day....” or “Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, according to the marriage customs of the day....”

Jacob slept with Rachel/Leah may be inappropriate to say to your audience, so we have chosen to let the story imply this itself. You may state it explicitly if appropriate and needed for full understanding of the story.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

God does not only use those individuals considered to be ‘exceptional’ in the eyes of others; he uses ordinary people as well; He makes decisions differently than man; He calls out individuals for his purposes; God doesn’t ignore sin: we will reap what we sow; God is able to meet our needs even if others fail to meet our expectations.

Ruth

Ruth

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

There was a family with two sons. Both sons married, but later, the father and both sons died, leaving the widow alone with her daughters-in-law. The widow, Naomi, decided to go back to her native place. One daughter-in-law, Ruth, went with her.

Ruth 2:2-12

One day Ruth ...went out to gather grain behind the harvesters in order to gather food for her and Naomi...And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, a relative of Naomi's...While she was there, Boaz arrived...and greeted the harvesters...Boaz discovered that Ruth was his relative and went over and said to her, "Listen, my daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain; don't go to any other fields...See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well." Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. "What have I done to deserve such kindness?" she asked... "Yes, I know," Boaz replied. "But I also know about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband...May... the God of Abraham's descendants*, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done..."

Ruth 2:17-20

So Ruth went home and told Naomi all that had happened that day with Boaz... "May God bless* him!" Naomi told her daughter-in-law. "He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers who is responsible for taking care of us."

Ruth 3:1-13

One day Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, it's time that I found a permanent home for you, so that you will be provided for. Boaz is a close relative of ours, and he's been very kind by letting you gather grain with his young women...So, because he had the responsibility of taking care of the family, they asked Boaz to marry Ruth... Boaz agreed and exclaimed, "God bless you, my daughter!...I will redeem you to take care of you!"...

Ruth 4:1-11

Boaz went to the town gate where all the business was conducted and sat down. Boaz talked to the town elders, and said that he wanted to take Ruth as his wife... Boaz said, "This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today." Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, "We are witnesses! May God make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Abraham's descendants descended!..."

Ruth 4:13-15

So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife...she had a son. Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise God, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in this nation of Abraham's descendants..."

Words and Phrases to Consider

Redeemer in this story refers to a widow's closest family member who has the responsibility of taking care of the widow. Because this word or concept may not be familiar in your culture, you may choose to explain it in the story. If there is a similar role in your culture, you may use the term for that person.

Story Crafting

Because Bethlehem re-occurs in this story set, we have included its name in this story. If this is too much detail for your audience, you can omit the name of the town.

Under whose wings you have come to take refuge may not be understandable to some audiences. If your audience does not understand the word picture of taking refuge under a 'wing' of God, you may simply say '...under whom you have come to take refuge...', or 'who protects you.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

If your audience can understand, it may be good for them to realize that this genealogy is now being traced through Judah, the son of the un-loved Leah.

The reference to Rachel and Leah in this story connects the family line that the story set is tracing.

Use the same words for **descendants** and **bless** that you have used in previous stories.

Worldview

Your audience may have different marriage customs. You may need to include phrases like "*According to the customs of the times...*" when necessary to avoid confusion.

Phrases like '**my daughter**' should be translated into a culturally appropriate form of a respectful greeting used for someone for whom one takes responsibility.

When Ruth fell at Boaz's feet, she was responding in a culturally appropriate way to show respect and gratitude to someone in a higher position than she. If your audience would not understand her gesture, you may choose to omit the action, but say that she respectfully thanked Boaz.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

God honors those who put the needs of others ahead of their own.

Family of God/Church

Servanthood/Service

David King

1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Samuel 5:4; 7:1-28

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition

David, Ruth's grandson, became the king of Abraham's descendants*. This is how it happened.

1 Samuel 16:1-5

One day, God said to Samuel, *his spokesman*,* "... go to Bethlehem. Find a *certain* man...who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my new king...Invite *him* to *worship** me, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint* for me." So *the spokesman* did as God instructed him...and invited them...

1 Samuel 16:6-7

When they arrived, *God's spokesman* took one look at *the first son* and thought, "Surely this is the *one God wants as king!*" But God said to *him*, "...I have rejected him. *I do not* make decisions the way you do! People judge by outward appearance, but *God* looks at a person's thoughts and intentions."

1 Samuel 16:10-13

...All seven of *the* sons were presented to *God's spokesman*. But *the spokesman* said..."God has not chosen any of these." Then *he* asked, "Are these all the sons you have?"

1 Samuel 16:10-13 (continued)

"There is still the youngest," *the father* replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep." *When this son was brought in*, God told *his spokesman*, "This is the one *I choose*." So as David stood there among his brothers, *the spokesman* anointed *his head with oil*. And the Spirit of God* came on David...

2 Samuel 5:4; 7:1-16

Many years passed and David did become the new king. God had brought peace to *his land*...*One day*, David summoned Nathan, *another of God's spokesmen*...*God told Nathan to say to David*, "...I chose you to lead my people...when you were just a shepherd boy, tending your sheep out in the pasture...I have destroyed all your enemies. Now I will make *you* famous throughout the earth!...*I will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings!* ... *One of your descendants will rule and*...If he sins,* I will use other nations to punish him. But my *love is unfailing*...Your...kingdom will continue for all time..."

2 Samuel 7:18-25, 28

When David heard this message from God, he praised God. He believed* God, saying, "O God, do as you have promised...For you are God...Your words are truth..."

Words/Phrases to Consider

Spirit of God*

You can translate this term directly as 'God's Spirit.' The specific meaning here is that David was possessed suddenly and fully by God's Spirit. In other words, God 'qualified him to be governor of his people, by infusing such graces as wisdom, prudence, counsel, courage, liberality, and magnanimity' (Adam Clarke's commentary). The Hebrew ruach [spirit] can have the physical meanings 'wind' or 'breath.' It can also mean 'power' or 'authority' that God gives to someone to do extraordinary things. (For a more complete treatment of 'God's Spirit,' please see the Glossary.)

Please see the glossary for further information on these terms:

Spokesman*

Anoint*

Sin/Disobedience*

Story Crafting

We left out some names for ease of remembering and retelling, but if you find that it is too difficult to say 'God's spokesman' throughout this story, you may include Samuel's name.

We simplified the reason for Samuel going to Bethlehem as 'to worship' in order for the story to be easier to remember and retell, and to avoid detracting from the main plotline.

We simplified the section of the story in which all seven of the sons were presented to Samuel. If it is helpful to include this portion as a storytelling device, i.e. your audience really likes repetition and hearing that each son, in turn, was rejected, then you can include that section in your story.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words for **belief**, **sin/disobedience**, **worship**, and **descendants** that you have been using.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Keeps his promises; worthy of worship; reveals himself and his will; talks to people; knows the thoughts and intentions of people; makes decisions differently than man; his Spirit comes upon people; calls out individuals for his purposes; his love is unailing

Church

Household of worship; idea of God's eternal kingdom

Assurance of Salvation

God's kingdom is eternal

Devotional Life

Walking and talking with God; worship in the home

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11:1-18, 22-27

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

David, Ruth's grandson, became the king of Abraham's descendants, and God blessed* him with a powerful kingdom.*

2 Samuel 11:1-5

One time, in the spring of the year when kings go to war, David sent his army to fight but he stayed behind. Late one afternoon, he got up after a nap and went for a stroll on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a beautiful woman taking a bath. He sent someone to find out who she was, and was told, "She is Bathsheba, the wife of one of your most honest and committed soldiers." Then David sent for her. When she came to the palace, he slept with her and then she returned home. Later, when Bathsheba discovered she was pregnant, she sent a message to David to let him know, and there was no doubt that the baby was his.

2 Samuel 11:6-13

So David sent word to the commander of his army to send her husband home. When he arrived, David asked her husband how the war was going. Then David told him, "Go on home and relax," but he didn't go home. He stayed that night at the palace entrance with the king's other servants. When David heard he had not gone home, he asked, "Why didn't you go home last night after being away for so long?" He replied, "The army is sleeping out in the fields. How could I go home and relax?" Then David invited him to dinner the next night and got him drunk. But even then he couldn't get the soldier to go home to his wife. Again he slept at the palace entrance.

2 Samuel 11:14-17

The next morning David wrote a letter to the commander of his army and gave it to Bathsheba's husband to deliver. The letter instructed the commander, "Place this soldier on the front lines where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed." So the commander did as he was told. Bathsheba's husband was killed along with several other soldiers.

2 Samuel 11:18, 22-25

The commander of the army sent a messenger to David with a battle report. The messenger said that Bathsheba's husband had been killed along with others. "Well, tell the commander not to be discouraged," David said. "People are killed in battle! Fight harder next time!"

2 Samuel 11:26-27

When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. When the period of mourning was over, David brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. Later she gave birth to a son. But God was very displeased with what David had done.

StoryCrafting

We took out the name of Uriah the Hittite for ease of storytelling. Uriah was one of David's mighty men known as The Thirty, so we chose to refer to him as one of David's most trusted soldiers. David's sin corrupts even the relationship he had with Uriah.

We chose not to refer to the ark of the covenant when Uriah responds to David because it is an unknown concept that would require a great deal of explanation that could confuse the audience.

'and there was no doubt that the baby was his'

This phrase is added to the story, based on the text's explanation: 'She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period.' The text includes this information to prove that the baby must have been David's---it wasn't her husband's baby.

Intra-story cohesion

Use the same words for **Abraham's descendants** and **bless** that you have used in previous stories.

Worldview

he slept with her

Many languages have different expressions for sexual relationships. Use an appropriate expression that is not offensive to the audience.

spring

Not all cultures have seasons, nor would they equate spring with the time kings go off to war. You may want to rephrase this to say something like, 'It was the time of year when kings normally went off to war...'

period of mourning

Some cultures may or may not have this period: if not, you could just say 'after that;' if so, you could use the name for the culture's period of mourning if it's comparable to this.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God is displeased with sin; Avoiding God-given responsibilities can create vulnerability to other sins; God expects faithfulness & loyalty in our relationships with him and with others.

Nathan's Story

2 Samuel 12:1-18, 24-25

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Because God was displeased with what David had done,

2 Samuel 12:1-4

He sent his spokesman Nathan to tell David this story: "There were two men in a certain town. One was rich and one was poor. The rich man owned many sheep and cattle. The poor man owned nothing but one little lamb. He raised and took care of it as if it were one of his own children... One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his own flock or herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for his guest."*

2 Samuel 12:5-6

David was furious. He said, "Any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole."

2 Samuel 12:7-12

Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man!... God says, 'I anointed* you king...I gave you *an entire kingdom*. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more. Why, then, have you *disobeyed me* and done this horrible deed? *You murdered a man and stole his wife. Because you have treated God with contempt,...from this time on, violence will always be in your family...What you did secretly will happen to you in the open.'*"

2 Samuel 12:13-14

Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against God." Nathan replied, "Yes, but God has forgiven* you, and you won't die for this sin. But because of what you have done, your child will die."*

2 Samuel 12:15-18

After Nathan returned to his home, Bathsheba's baby became very sick. David begged God to heal the child...But seven days later the baby died.

2 Samuel 12:24-25

Then David comforted Bathsheba...and slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon, and God loved him very much.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Kingdom

The domain or area over which a king rules or reigns.

Please see the glossary for information on the following term:

Forgive*

Story Crafting

Because you have treated God with contempt

To make clearer what the acts of disobedience against God were, make it explicit by saying something like 'because you have disobeyed me by murdering and committing adultery.'

disobeyed me

Some people find it difficult to address the concept of disobedience to God when the actions of disobedience have not been addressed in a Moses story in which the Law has been given. If you find that you need to make clearer what the acts of disobedience against God were in this story, you could make it explicit by saying something like 'because you have disobeyed me by murdering and committing adultery.'

We have left out certain details about what David did during the time the baby was sick (praying and fasting) to tighten the main plotline of the story and to avoid detracting from our goals in telling this story.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **anoint, disobeyed, sin,** and **spokesman** used in previous stories.

Worldview

Some cultures don't think God forgave David because he still allowed the baby to die. Some people are confused that God would allow an innocent baby to die for David's sin, rather than David being punished himself. It should be clear in your story that God did indeed forgive David.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God is displeased with sin and punishes it; He uses His spokesmen to confront sin; He uses stories; He provides; He forgives sin; He keeps His promises.

Prayer

Though not in this story, this incidence led to David's prayer of repentance found in Psalm 51

Hosea

Hosea 1:2-10; 2:1-2, 7-8, 14-23; 3:1-2

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition:

The descendants of Abraham continued to grow as a nation even after King David and King Solomon, but they often disobeyed God and betrayed him by following other gods. Many kings turned the people away from God. So God gave a message through his spokesman* Hosea...*

Hosea 1:2-9

When God first began speaking to Abraham's descendants through Hosea, he said to him, "Go and marry a prostitute...So Hosea married Gomer,...and she became pregnant and gave Hosea...children...And God said to Hosea, "Name your daughter...'Not loved.'"

...Gomer again became pregnant and gave birth to a...son. And God said, "Name him...'Not my people'..."

Hosea 3:1-2

Afterwards, Hosea's wife left him for someone else,...and God said to Hosea, "Go and take her back and love her as your wife again, even though she commits adultery with another man. So even though she was in slavery, Hosea bought her back for the price of a slave. Then he said to her, "You must live in my house...and stop your prostitution..."

Hosea 2:2, 1:2, 1:6, 9

Then God said through Hosea, "Abraham descendants' nation is just like Gomer, for she is no longer my wife, and I am no longer her husband....Abraham's descendants have acted like a prostitute by turning against God and worshipping other gods."

Gomer's children are also like this nation. Gomer named her daughter ...'Not loved'—to show that God will no longer show love to the people of Israel or forgive* them...She named her second son...'Not my people'—to show that the nation of Abraham's descendants is not God's people, and he is not their God.

Hosea 2:1, 7-8

God said, "I will punish this nation...Then she will think, 'I might as well return to my husband, for I was better off with him than I am now.' She doesn't realize it was I who gave her everything she has—all her food; I even gave her silver and gold. But she gave all my gifts to other gods."

Hosea 3:1

Then he told Hosea, "Go and love your wife again, even though she commits adultery with another lover. This showed that God still loved his nation, and he said..."

Hosea 1:10, 2:14-23

"... I will win her back once again...When that day comes," God said to his nation, "you will call me 'my husband' instead of 'my master.'...I will make you my wife forever, showing you...unfailing love and how to have a good relationship* with me. I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me..." "In that day, I will answer," God said... "At that time...I will show love to those I called 'Not loved.' And to those I called 'Not my people,' I will say, 'Now you are my people.' And they will reply, 'You are our God!'"

Story Crafting

Because of the complexity of this story, it has been simplified for ease of re-telling and for understanding. Some implicit information has been made explicit in order for the audience to understand the allegory that Hosea acted out in front of Israel. The story has been told, then repeated with explicit information included, just as in the Scripture. The repetition may be useful to an oral audience who may need to hear this unusual story more than once.

Only two of Gomer's three children are mentioned here because of the complexity of the allegorical name of the first child.

...how to have a good relationship with me has been used in place of 'righteousness and justice.'

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same terms for **descendants, relationship, forgive,** and **spokesman** as in the previous stories.

Worldview

This story may not be appropriate for mixed audiences. Be sure that when discussing adultery, it is done in an appropriate and culturally sensitive way.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

God loves his people and is faithful to them despite their disobedience; God pursues his people; God is compassionate.

Promise

Isaiah 53

Based on NLT (1996) and NIV

Transition

Even after these warnings, the kings of Abraham's descendants continued to disobey God and led the people to disobey God, yet God continued to send spokesmen* to reveal himself to his people. One of these spokesmen was named Isaiah. This is the message of hope that Isaiah brought to the people. A Savior* would come to free them, in more ways than one.*

Isaiah 53:2-3

...There will be nothing beautiful or majestic about the Promised Savior's appearance... We will turn our backs on him and look the other way... He will be despised, and we won't care.

Isaiah 53:4-5

...we will think his troubles are a punishment from God for his own sins! But he will be... crushed for our sins. He will be beaten, and we will have peace... whipped, and we will be healed!*

Isaiah 53:6

All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's path to follow our own. Yet God will lay on him the guilt and sins of us all.

Isaiah 53:7

He will be... treated harshly, yet... never say a word. He will be led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he will not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53:11 (partly from NIV)

After his suffering... he will see... life again, and he will... be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, the Promised Savior will make it possible for many to be counted as having right relationship with God, for he will take on all their sins.*

Isaiah 53:12

I [God] will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death...

Transition

And because of what he did to give us a right relationship with God, God says to us...

Isaiah 54:4-5

"Don't be afraid; you will no longer live in shame... You will no longer remember the shame of your youth and the sorrows of widowhood. For your Creator will be your husband; the God of Heaven's Armies is his name! He will save you from the punishment for your disobedience..."*

Example Crafted Story (transcribed from a told story)

After King David, God's people continued to sin and disobey God. But God did not forget his people. And he sent a spokesman,* Isaiah, to give them a message of hope. He told them: God is going to send us a Savior.* Some will hate him and treat him badly. He'll suffer. He's going to carry our burdens and our sorrow... He will be whipped and beaten to bring us peace. We're kind of like sheep. You know how sheep are. They wander off the path and stray away, and we wander off of God's path. We sin and disobey God. But, God is putting all of our sins onto the Savior. In fact, he's like a lamb that is being led to the butcher. He's not going to say anything. And he'll be punished and killed for our sins. But, the amazing thing is that he'll see life again. And because of this many people will have restored relationship* with God, like a loving husband with his wife. That is the message that Isaiah gave to the people, and from that time on the people waited expectantly for the Promised Savior to come.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

See the glossary for a full explanation of the following terms:

Savior/Promised Savior*

Heaven*

Story Crafting

Commentaries agree that this passage is referring to a future event. Prophetic past tense is used often in translations, but refers to a future event. We've changed the tense of the verbs to future to reflect more accurately the meaning and to simplify the story for our audience.

Promised Savior

We have chosen to use **Promised Savior** instead of 'servant' here to make our term for Jesus' redemptive role consistent throughout the story set. (See Simeon's speech in the Birth story.) Commentaries agree that this 'servant' refers to the 'Messiah to come,' so you may use whatever term speaks most clearly to your people group; but it is best to keep this term consistent throughout this core story set.

(See also Glossary entry for 'Savior.')

led like a lamb to the slaughter

Some people tell us that this line is confusing, having come directly after the description of people being like sheep. If it seems confusing, you can take out this line and say, 'He will be led to die,' or you can remove the analogy of us being like sheep who have wandered off the path. You could just say, 'We have wandered off of God's path—we have sinned.'

In Isaiah 54:5, Isaiah calls God Israel's 'redeemer.' We have unpacked that term to describe it as the one who saves from the punishment for disobedience.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words you have been using throughout the story set for **descendants, disobey/disobedience, sin, relationship,** and **spokesman.**

Choose the same term to refer to God's people/the Israelites/ Jews throughout the story set. We have chosen to use the term **Abraham's descendants** throughout the story set. Many people/language groups might equate terms like 'Israel' and 'Israelites' with the modern-day country, which is not very popular in much of the world. **Descendants of Abraham** is actually a more meaningful rendering of this term, reminds the audience of Abraham's story, and highlights the family relationship in this story set.

Worldview

Some cultures are extremely offended by references to violence. While we can't change the fact that Jesus was killed in a cruel way and we should never play that down, we can keep cultural preferences in mind as we choose which words to use in a story.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

Punishes disobedience; reveals himself; uses his spokesmen; promises a Savior; restores relationship and forgives; provides hope, a means of salvation and peace; takes away sin; conquers death

Assurance of salvation

God has a plan for us to be saved from our sins and experience a relationship with him through the Promised Savior

The Unfaithful Wife

Ezekiel 16:4-18, 22, 53, 60, 63

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

God called Abraham's descendants his "wife." They waited for the Promised Savior*, but in the meantime they continued to disobey God and worship* other gods. God was angry with them and allowed other nations to conquer them and send them into exile. God gave this message to his people through one of his spokesmen* while he was in exile.*

Ezekiel 16:4-8

On the day you were born,...No one had the slightest interest in you; no one pitied you or cared for you. On the day you were born, you were unwanted, dumped in a field and left to die. But I came by and saw you there, helplessly kicking about in your own blood. As you lay there, I said, 'Live!' And I helped you to thrive like a plant in the field. You grew up and became a beautiful jewel...When you became old enough,...I...made you my wife. I made a covenant* with you...and you became mine.

Ezekiel 16:9-14

"Then I ...gave you expensive clothing of fine linen and silk...I gave you lovely jewelry, bracelets, beautiful necklaces, a ring for your nose, earrings for your ears, and a lovely crown for your head. And so you wore beautiful gold and silver... You looked like a queen...! I dressed you in my splendor and perfected your beauty...

Ezekiel 16:15-18, 22

"But you forgot that I was the one who gave you your fame and beauty...So you gave yourself as a prostitute to every man who came along... You used the lovely things I gave you to make shrines for idols*...Unbelievable! How could such a thing ever happen? You took the very jewels and gold and silver jewelry I had given you and made statues of men and worshiped them. This is adultery against me! You used the beautifully embroidered clothes I gave you to dress your idols. Then you used my special oil and my incense to worship them...In all your years of adultery and horrible sin*, you have not once remembered the days long ago when you lay naked in a field, kicking about in your own blood.

Transition (Ezekiel 16:23-52)

Because of what you have done, you have been conquered by your enemies...

Ezekiel 16:53, 60, 63

"But someday I will restore...you...I will remember the covenant I made with you when you were young, and I will establish a...covenant with you that will last forever...I will forgive* you of all that you have done. I, the Almighty God, have spoken!"

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Idols*

Covenant*

Story Crafting

Much of this story has been simplified and summarized to make it easier to retell.

We have purposely included the descriptions of the jewels and gifts given to the woman because they are similar to women's treasured gifts in South Asian culture. The descriptions in the story may be familiar to the audience.

In this story, the woman is the nation of Abraham's descendants, and God is the groom. If your audience does not understand that allusion, you may make it explicit.

Intra-story cohesion

Use the same terms for **Abraham's descendants, Promised Savior, worship, spokesmen, sin,** and **forgive** that you used in previous stories.

Worldview

Because of the references to prostitution, this story may not be appropriate for mixed audiences.

South Asian brides often receive gifts of silk, gold, silver, and precious jewels. We have included the description of the gifts here so that the story will sound familiar. Be aware of your audience's marriage customs, and be sure to include the gifts in this story that will be familiar to your audience.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Punishes disobedience, e.g. when we make up and/or worship other gods; God uses his spokesmen; God restores relationship and forgives; He provides hope; God feels betrayed by us when we obey or trust in anything other than him: it's spiritual adultery; God provides for all of our needs for belonging and being loved

Assurance of Salvation

God has a plan to restore us to relationship with him, forgiving us of our sins against him

Transition/ Genealogy

**(This story can be told as a separate story,
or as a transition before telling the next
story)**

Based on the NLT (2004)

As the people waited for the Promised Savior, they retold the stories of their ancestors over and over.*

They remembered Adam, the first man, disobeyed God and broke man's relationship with God.*

They remembered God chose Abraham to be the father of a special nation set apart just for himself, and that through Abraham's descendants (themselves), the whole world would be blessed.**

They remembered Abraham's son Jacob married Rachel and Leah. These two women became the mothers of a great nation just as God had promised.

They remembered one of Jacob's descendants married a foreigner, Ruth, and she became the grandmother of the nation's greatest king, David. God promised David that one of his descendants would be king forever.

However, they continually disobeyed God in shameful ways, just like an unfaithful wife who commits adultery. God constantly reminded them that he was like their faithful husband who would love them no matter what. In fact, he had a plan to save them and take away their shame forever.

Story Crafting

If you find that your audience needs to hear the stories summarized like this in order to connect the women's stories, you may use this as a separate story. You may include any part of the previous stories that you feel is useful in order to give them a good review, but remember to keep the story short and easy to retell. The goal of this story is to help the audience see how God continually acts as a faithful husband both to individuals and to the nation as a whole.

You may choose to use this story as a transition to the Birth story, rather than as a separate story.

Because this story lists the events as they happened, you may choose to use a memory device such as the repetition of "They remembered..." to help the story flow easily.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words for **Promised Savior, descendants, bless,** and **relationship** as you have been using throughout the story set.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

God wants to create a people for himself & bless them, but he is just and punishes sin or disobedience. However, God promises to send a savior to forgive & restore them; God used women of faith to bear & raise children whose descendant would eventually be this promised savior; Even though his people sometimes sin, God's plan is to bless their lives like a husband who loves his wife no matter what.

An Angel Visits Mary and Joseph

**Matthew 1:19-21, 24-25; Luke 1:26-30, 34-39,
46-50, 56**

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

After many years, God finally sent the Promised Savior. This is his story.*

Luke 1:26-32

...God sent *an* angel*...to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant* of King David. *The angel* appeared to her and said, "Greetings...! *God* is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "*because God has decided to bless* you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High God*...*"

Luke 1:34-35, 37-40

Mary asked the angel, "But how can *I have a baby?* I am a virgin." The angel replied, "*God's Spirit* will come on you...For nothing is impossible with God.*" Mary responded, "I am *God's* servant, and I am willing to accept whatever He wants. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her. A few days later, Mary went to visit her cousin...who lived in a different town.

Luke 1:41-50, 56

When Mary saw her cousin, they rejoiced together. Then Mary said, "Oh, how I praise God. How I rejoice in God my Savior! For He took notice of His...servant..., and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For God...has done great things for me. His mercy goes on from generation to generation, to all who fear Him."...*

Matthew 1:19-21

Joseph, her fiancé, discovered that Mary was pregnant...but he did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, he fell asleep, and an angel from God appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph..." the angel said, "do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary...The child inside her was conceived by God's Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."*

Matthew 1:24-25

When Joseph woke up, he did *what* the angel... commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he did not have sexual relations with her until after her son was born...

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Son of God*

Mercy*

Story Crafting

The name of the angel has been taken out in order to simplify the story.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **God's Spirit, angel, bless, Promised Savior, sin,** and **descendant** used in previous stories.

Be sure to include that Joseph was a descendant of David so that your audience can eventually understand that Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to David.

Worldview

The use of the word 'virgin' means 'before they lived together as man and wife.' It also implies 'before they had sexual relations.' Use whatever description in the language clearly implies that Mary had not been with a man. Make sure to say this in an appropriate way that your audience can retell. To understand Joseph's dilemma it is important to know how a culture views engagement. If crafting for an audience that does not have binding engagements, add some cultural information to show how serious engagement was in biblical culture.

PRINCIPLES

Nature and character of God

God keeps His promises; His Spirit is active; He speaks and reveals His will; He assures His children; He speaks in dreams; He uses spokesmen; He sends a Savior.

Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:21-22, 25, 28, 30-40

Based on NLT(2004)

Transition

A few months later, a son was born to Mary in Bethlehem.

Luke 2:21-22, 25, 28

Eight days after his birth,...He was named Jesus, the name given Him by the angel...His parents took Him to Jerusalem, the special city where they worshiped* God, to present Him to God in their place of worship*. When they got there, they met an old man who had been waiting for the Promised Savior* to come and save* his people. When he saw Jesus, he took the child in his arms and praised God...*

Luke 2:30-32

"...I have seen the Savior you have given to all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations..."

Luke 2:33-35

Joseph and Mary were amazed at what was being said about Jesus. Then the old man blessed them, and he said to Mary..., "This child will be rejected by many, and it will be their undoing. But He will be the greatest joy to many others...And you will suffer."*

Luke 2:39-40

...Jesus' parents returned home. There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God was pleased with him.*

Words and Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Place of Worship*

Wisdom*

Story Crafting

We chose to include the name of Bethlehem to strengthen the connection to David.

city where they worshipped God

This city was named 'Jerusalem' and it will occur several times in the story set several times.

place of worship is used instead of 'Temple'.

The dedication of Jesus in the temple is used to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecy from the Promise story. Only the dedication section of the story is used so the sacrificial system of the temple would not have to be explained in the story set.

We have replaced 'God's favor was on him' with the simpler phrase ***God was pleased with him.***

'A sword will pierce your own soul' has been replaced by ***You will suffer*** for clarity.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **Promised Savior, angel, Savior, save, worship** and **blessed** used in previous stories.

Worldview

You may choose to include a phrase ***according to their custom*** when talking about taking Jesus to the place of worship to present him to God, if your audience does not have a similar custom.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God keeps His promise; His Spirit is active; He speaks and reveals His will; He assures His children; He sends a Savior.

Church

Going to the place of worship; worship; consecrating children.

Devotion

Worship

Jesus' Baptism

Luke 3:1-3, 10-16, 21-22;

Matthew 3:7-9, 13-15

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Jesus grew to be a young man. God sent a spokesman named John ahead of him to prepare the way for the people to receive the Promised Savior*, Jesus.*

Luke 3:1-2

...After some time, a message from God came to a man named John...who was living in the wilderness.

Luke 3:3

...John went from place to place...telling people that they should be baptized to show that they had turned from their sins* and turned to God to be forgiven*.*

Matthew 3:7-9

Some religious leaders came to hear John, and he said, "You...snakes! Who warned you to flee from God's coming wrath? Prove by the way you live that you have...turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, because we are descendants of Abraham*.' That means nothing... God can change these stones into descendants of Abraham."*

Luke 3:10-14

The crowds asked, "What should we do?" John replied, "If you have two coats, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry." Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?" "Show your honesty," he replied. "Make sure you collect no more taxes than the government requires you to." "What should we do?" asked some soldiers. John replied, "Don't extort money, and don't accuse people of things you know they didn't do. And be content with your pay."

Luke 3:15-16

Everyone was expecting the *Promised Savior* to come soon, and they were eager to know if John was Him. John answered their questions by saying, "I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I am not even worthy to be His slave...He will baptize you with *God's Spirit** and with fire."

Luke 3:21a

One day when the crowds were being baptized,

Matthew 3:13-15

Jesus himself came to be baptized by John *even though Jesus had never sinned*. But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?" But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.

Luke 3:21b-22

Afterwards, as Jesus was praying, the heavens* opened, and *God's Spirit...* descended on him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my...son. *I love you and I am very pleased with you.*"

Words/Phrases to Consider

turned from their sins and turned to God to be forgiven

This is the NLT's way of saying 'repentance.' It is a good picture of what actually happens when we repent, and is preferred instead of using one term for 'repent.'

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Baptism*

Religious Leaders*

Story Crafting

descendants of Abraham

Please note that 'descendants of Abraham' is the meaning of the NLT text 'children of Abraham.' This phrase also strengthens the intra-story cohesion of using 'descendants of Abraham' for 'God's people' throughout the story set.

with fire

This phrase is included in the Matthew and Luke accounts, but not in the Mark account. Commentators have differing opinions as to what 'with fire' refers to. If using 'with fire' is too confusing for the audience, it can be omitted.

even though Jesus had never sinned

Because Jesus never sinned, this phrase was included to avoid confusion. It is supported by 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Voice from Heaven

This is readily accepted as being God's voice itself. It is acceptable to use 'God's voice' if needed to avoid confusion.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **spokesman, sin, Promised Savior, forgive, descendants of Abraham, heaven, and God's Spirit** used in previous stories.

Worldview

Keep in mind that in many cultures and religions, people often ceremonially wash to remove sins. You may need to specify that this is a once for all ceremony. If necessary, a term for 'symbolic washing' may be used.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God sends his Spirit; uses spokesmen; acknowledges Jesus as his Son; keeps his promises; forgives sin; judges sin; speaks and reveals his intentions and will

Church

Baptism; God's people are not necessarily Abraham's descendants

Devotional life

Example of Jesus praying

Sharing the Gospel

John told people to be baptized, turn from sin, turn to God

Prayer

As Jesus was praying, the Spirit of God descended on Him in the form of a dove

Woman at the Well

John 4:4-19, 25-30, 42

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

After this, Jesus chose twelve men to be his closest followers. They traveled throughout the area and He proclaimed the message of God's Kingdom* wherever they went. Many men and women started following Him.*

John 4:4-8

Jesus had to go through *another country* on his journey. Eventually, he came to a *certain village*...A well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well...Soon *one of the foreign women* came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." He was alone at the time because his *closest followers* had gone into the village to buy some food.

John 4:9-15

The woman was surprised, *because descendants of Abraham** refused to have anything to do with *her people*. She said to Jesus, "You are a *descendant of Abraham*, and *descendants of Abraham hate my people*. Why are you asking me for a drink?" Jesus replied, "...*People* soon become thirsty again *after drinking this water*. But...the water I give *them takes away thirst altogether*. It becomes *like a spring inside them*, giving them eternal life/*real life which never ends**.

"Please sir," the woman said, "give me *some of that water*. Then I won't have to come here to *haul water*."

John 4:16-19

"Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— *but* you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!" "Sir," the woman said, "you must be... *from God*."

John 4:25-30

...Then Jesus told her, "I Am the *Promised Savior**!" Just then his *closest followers* came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, *especially one of these foreigners*...The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the *Promised Savior?*" So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

John 4:42

Then the people said to the woman, "Now we believe*, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Closest followers*

Eternal life/real life that never ends*

Kingdom of God*

Story Crafting

Springs continue to produce water--never-ending--like eternal life. You may need to clarify, as we did in this story, that eternal life is real life that never ends.

The conversation between Jesus and the woman is difficult to reproduce and remember. Some of the repetition is simplified and parts of the conversation that are not directly related to the reasons for having this story in the story set have been taken out. John 4:20-24, stated below, may be inserted unless it is too confusing for the audience. **“Tell me, where is the proper place to worship God?” asked the woman. Jesus replied, “It doesn’t matter where you worship. By the power of God’s Spirit people will worship God as he really is, offering him the true worship he wants.”**

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **descendant of Abraham, worship, God’s Spirit, Savior, believe,** and **Promised Savior** used in previous stories.

Worldview

Samaritans are not fully descendants of Abraham. The descendants of Abraham hated the Samaritans. In order to explain the hatred without introducing a new and potentially confusing term (Samaritan), you can describe the situation, as the woman does in this story.

Jesus took the initiative to cross the barriers of descendants of Abraham/Samaritan and male/female relationships to speak to this woman. Be sure the audience understands that Jesus acted appropriately and respectfully towards this woman, and that no inappropriate behavior occurred. Use respectful terms appropriate to the target culture, such as the woman calling Jesus ‘sir’. Use a term in the language that is respectful and gives a positive impression of Jesus. If stating that Jesus was alone with the woman at the beginning of the story could cause the hearer to immediately think badly of Jesus, omit that sentence. It will prevent giving a bad impression of Jesus before the audience has an opportunity to hear the conversation between Jesus and the woman.

It may be necessary to say the Samaritans (***hated foreigners***) were also looking forward to the arrival of the Promised Savior.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God asks specific things of people; He wants people to know Him; He tells people the truth even if they don’t understand it; He confronts people in a loving way; He gives them invitations to receive what He has for them; He helps people avoid legalism and brings them into a true relationship with God; He confronts our sin; He helps people find out how to know Him.

Sharing the Gospel

When the woman found Truth, she wanted to share with the whole town; It is good for new believers to tell all the people in their community about their faith. They do not need to wait until they are trained.

Sinful Woman

Forgiven

John 8:1-11

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Jesus traveled to Jerusalem, the city where the descendants of Abraham worshipped* God. During the day, he would teach in the place of worship*.*

John 8:2-6

One day, as he was teaching, a crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. As he was speaking, the religious leaders brought a woman they had caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. Our religious law says to execute her by stoning. What do you say?" They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus didn't answer right away.*

John 8:7

They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, stone her. But let those who have never sinned throw the first stone!"*

John 8:9-11

When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. Jesus stood up again and said to her, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

"No, Master," she said.*

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

Words/Phrases to Consider

The reference to 'Lord' has been changed to **Master*** in this story.

Story Crafting

The religious leaders were trying to prove that Jesus was teaching people to disobey the Law.

The religious leaders refer to the 'Law of Moses,' but because we do not mention Moses in this story set, we have simplified the phrase to 'our religious laws.'

Note that they did not bring the man who was involved in the act. The Law requires that both persons should be stoned.

We want the audience to understand that Jesus forgives people and takes away their shame rather than condemns them. In order to avoid distraction from this point, we do not include Jesus writing in the sand.

The phrase 'execute her by stoning' is included so an audience not familiar with stoning will realize that it is meant as a form of execution.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **descendants of Abraham, place of worship, Jerusalem, worship, religious leaders, sin, and Master** used in previous stories.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

While religion condemns people, God wants to save them; God treats women and men equally.

Woman Washes Jesus' Feet

Luke 7:36-50

Based on NLT (2004)

Luke 7:36-38

One of the *religious leaders** asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful...jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping *in gratitude*. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them *to show her respect*.

Luke 7:39

When the *religious leader* who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were *God's spokesman*,* he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner*!"...

Luke 7:44-46

Then *Jesus* turned to the woman and said to *the religious leader*, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You didn't greet me *with the appropriate courtesy*, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You neglected the courtesy of...oil to *place on* my head, but she has *put rare perfume on my feet*."

Luke 7:47-50

"I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven*, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

The men at the table said among themselves, "What kind of person is this, that he goes around forgiving sins?"

But Jesus...turned to the woman and said, "God has saved you from the punishment for your sins because you have believed* in me. Go in peace."

Story Crafting

The men were asking themselves what kind of person Jesus was because they believed God himself was the only one with the authority to forgive sins.

We have omitted the story Jesus told to the religious leaders about the two men who owed money because we wanted to shorten the story and make it more re-tellable. You may include that portion of the story if you choose.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words for **religious leaders, spokesman, sin, forgive,** and **belief** as in previous stories.

Worldview

Weeping *in gratitude* and putting **perfume on them to show her respect** were added to show the reasons for her actions. Some cultures may not understand what she was doing, and these actions may have a negative connotations unless we show the true reasons for them.

Feet were considered very dirty in biblical culture, so it should be understood by your audience that the woman was humbling herself.

Washing feet, anointing heads with oil, and greeting with a kiss were all forms of courteous greeting in these times. Jesus is showing the contrast between what the woman did to greet him and what the religious leader did not do. If your audience will not understand anointing heads with oil or greeting with a kiss, you may choose to omit the specifics of what she did.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Jesus can transform women & men from being caught in slavery to sin into beautiful followers of himself.

Devotional Life

Our expression of love, devotion & gratefulness to Jesus should be uninhibited & extravagant

Assurance of Salvation

Faith in Christ's promise of forgiveness assures us of our standing with him.

Mary and Martha

Luke 10:38-42

Based on NLT (2004)

Luke 10:38-42

One day as Jesus and his closest followers were traveling towards Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at Jesus' feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Master*, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."*

But Jesus said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! Mary has discovered the one thing worth being concerned about, and it will not be taken away from her."

Words/Phrases to Consider

References to 'Lord' in this story have been changed to *master*.

Story Crafting

My dear Martha is a term of friendship. Use an appropriate title in your language.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words for **Master** and **closest followers** that you have been using throughout the story set.

Worldview

It may be inappropriate in your culture for a woman to invite a man into her home. If that's the case, you may include extra information supported from Scripture which shows that this household includes Lazarus, and that they were special friends of Jesus.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Jesus highly values our time of personal interaction with him; Busyness in service can rob us of intimacy in our relationship with Jesus

Devotional Life

We must prioritize the time we spend listening to the Word of God

Prayer

Prayer must include listening to Jesus speak to us and not be exclusively making requests of him

Bleeding Woman

Mark 5:24-34

Based on NLT (1996)

Mark 5:24

One time, Jesus was with a crowd of people.

Mark 5:25-26

And there was a woman in the crowd who had *been bleeding* for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors through the years and had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she was worse.

Mark 5:27-29

She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched the fringe of his robe...She thought to herself, "If I can just touch his clothing, I will be healed." Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel that she had been healed!

Mark 5:30

Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked "Who touched my clothes?"

Mark 5:31

His *closest followers** said to him, "All this crowd is pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'"

Mark 5:32-34

But he kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her came and fell at his feet and told him what she had done. And he said to her, "Daughter, your *belief** has made you well. Go in peace. You have been healed."

Story Crafting

This story is also found in Matthew 9:19-22 and Luke 8:42b-48. The Mark version is very similar to the Luke version, and the Matthew story is much briefer. You may combine details from various Gospel accounts, but for purposes of pointing your reading listeners back to Scripture, it is sometimes easier to tell a story from one single passage.

The scene with the woman being healed is set in the middle of the story about Jairus's daughter. You may combine the two stories, but for ease of telling, it's better to keep the story brief. Because Bleeding Woman is often used as a story to initiate spiritual conversations, it's better to keep it simple.

Robe

If your listeners do not understand this clothing item, or if it would be odd for a man to be wearing a 'robe,' you may choose to say 'garment,' or 'item of clothing.'

Realized that healing power had gone out of him

Be sure that your listeners do not think that Jesus' power had somehow been reduced because some had 'gone out of him.'

Daughter

This is a term of endearment and tenderness used with a woman. Use whatever word in your language conveys this idea. Some languages have used terms like 'my little woman' and 'old lady.'

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words for **belief**, and **closest followers** that you have been using throughout the story set.

Worldview

This woman had a menstrual bleeding problem. Try to make this clear without being inappropriate, especially if you have a mixed audience.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Jesus can help us in our place of greatest vulnerability and need; We cannot please Jesus unless we sincerely believe that he can truly help us.

Prayer

Jesus expects us to come to him in faith; then he can and will help us

Wedding

Banquet

Matthew 22:1-14

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Jesus told people that God was coming to rule, and he continued to teach them about what it would be like when he came.

Matthew 22:1-3

...He said, “*God’s kingdom** can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come!

Matthew 22:4-6

“So he sent other servants to tell them, ‘The feast has been prepared...everything is ready. Come to the banquet!’ But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them.

Matthew 22:7-10

“The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town. And he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren’t worthy of the honor. Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.’ So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests.

Matthew 22:11-14

“But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn’t wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?’ But the man had no reply. Then the king said to his aides, ‘*Tie up* his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and *much suffering*. For many are called, but few are chosen.’”

Words/Phrases to Consider

God's Kingdom*

We often describe “the Kingdom of God/heaven” as the time that God comes to rule, or in terms of our relationship with him. If your audience does not understand how God comes to rule, you can say “Our relationship with God can be illustrated by...”

Story Crafting

This story can easily be told as it is written, but be sure to use easy words and sentence structure used in every day conversation.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words you have been using for **God's kingdom** throughout the story set.

Worldview

You may need to research the wedding customs of your culture. Your audience may not understand the concept of having correct wedding clothes.

Friend is an address of respect given to someone. Use a title that is appropriate in your culture.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

God invites many people to receive his offer of salvation through Christ (his mercy), however, the sad truth is that many refuse this offer and are themselves then rejected by God (his holiness); Acceptance into heaven by God is not automatic; we can only approach him in the way which he has prescribed (i.e. through repentance from sin and exclusive faith in Christ); We must respond to God when and how he expects us to; otherwise, we can only expect him to ultimately reject us.

Conspiracy and

Last Supper

Luke 22:1-6, 14-15, 19-23;

John 13:3-5, 12-17; Matthew 26:30

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

The religious leaders of the day were growing uneasy because Jesus made claims like, “I and the Father*/God are one; He who sees me has seen the Father/God.” They were also jealous because many people believed* in him and were praising him. They came together to plan how to put him to death.*

Luke 22:1-6

A major religious festival was drawing near. The head religious leaders were actively plotting Jesus’ murder, but they were afraid of the people’s reaction. Then Satan entered into Judas..., who was one of the twelve closest followers*, and he went to the religious leaders...to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted that he was ready to help them, and promised him a reward. So he...began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him quietly when the crowds weren’t around.*

Luke 22:14-15

...Jesus and His twelve closest followers sat down together at the table to celebrate the meal for the religious festival. Jesus said, “I have looked forward to eating this...meal with you before my suffering begins.”

John 13:3-5, 12-17

Jesus knew God had given him authority over everything...He got up from the table, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then He began to wash His closest followers’ feet and to wipe them with the towel He had around Him. After washing their feet, He put on his robe again and sat down and asked, “Do you understand what I was doing? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Master,’ and you are right, because it is true...Since I, your Master and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do for each other what I have done for you. It’s true that a servant is not greater than the master...You know these things—now do them!”*

Luke 22:19-23

Jesus also took some bread, thanked God for it,... and gave it to His closest followers to eat. He said, “This bread represents My body,...given for you. Do this to remember Me.” After supper He took a cup of wine and said, “This wine is a symbol of God’s new promise to save you—an agreement sealed with the blood I will shed for you.”*

Matthew 26:30

Then they sang a song of praise and went out to an olive grove on a hill just outside of the city.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following term:

Father*

Covenant/Promise*

Story Crafting

a servant is not greater than the master

The meaning is that Jesus' followers cannot consider themselves too important to act as servants, because Jesus himself became a servant. They also cannot expect better treatment from the world than Jesus received.

Bread

The audience may not understand the term 'bread.' Another generic word for bread such as 'roti' or 'naan' may be used.

Represents/Symbol

Some Bible scholars agree that Jesus was referring to the bread and wine as symbols or representations of his body and blood. Jesus used similar figures of speech when He made statements such as, "I am the door" and "I am the bread of life."

Song of praise

This was most likely a song sung as part of the Passover meal known as the Hallel, a song of praise to God. A common way of translating this term is 'song of thanks' or 'song of praise to God.'

save

If your audience does not understand from what God is saving us, you might need to make the new promise more explicit by saying something like, 'to save you from your sins,' 'to forgive your sins,' etc.

an agreement sealed with the blood I will shed for you

Your audience may or may not be familiar with promises/covenants sealed in blood. If they are not, you may change this phrase to something like 'an agreement made possible by my death/by my allowing people to kill me.'

We have included the scene of Jesus washing his disciples' feet because it seems very important in Asian cultures to highlight the idea of servant leadership, which is demonstrated well in many cultures by the word picture of washing feet. Many people have told us in testing that this is the most important part of the story.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **closest followers, Satan, Master, religious leaders, belief,** and **save** used in previous stories.

Worldview

In cultures where the mention of wine is highly offensive or may cause people to lose respect for Jesus, say 'cup' or 'cup of liquid.'

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

He has provided a new covenant or promise; has a plan

Church

Servanthood/service; Lord's Supper instituted; worship

Prayer

Jesus thanked God for the elements of the Last Supper

Jesus' Trial

Luke 22:39; 23:1-5, 13-24

Matthew 26:45-67

Based on NLT (1996)

Luke 22:39; Matthew 26:36

Then, accompanied by his closest followers, Jesus said, "Sit here while I go on ahead to pray*."*

Matthew 26:45-56

A little later, he returned to his closest followers and said, "...Look, the time has come. ...my betrayer is here!" And...Judas, one of his twelve closest followers, arrived with a mob that was armed with swords and clubs. ...They grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ...and all his closest followers deserted him and fled.

Matthew 26:57-67

They led Jesus to the home of...the head religious leader, where the teachers of religious law and other leaders had gathered. ...Inside, they were trying to find witnesses who would lie about Jesus, so they could put him to death....*

Then the head religious leader stood up and said to Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges?..." But Jesus remained silent. Then the head religious leader said to him, "I demand in the name of the living God that you tell us whether you are the Promised Savior, the Son of God." Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say..." Then the head religious leader tore his clothing to show his horror, shouting, "...Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard him dishonor God with his words. ..." Then they began to spit in Jesus' face and beat him with their fists.*

Luke 23:1-5

Then those at the religious meeting took Jesus to Pilate, the...governor. They began to state their case, "This man has been leading our people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the...government and by claiming he is the Promised Savior, a king." So Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of these people?" Jesus replied, "You have said it." Pilate turned to the religious leaders* and to the crowd and said, "I find nothing wrong with this man!" Then they became insistent. "But he is causing riots by his teaching wherever he goes...!"*

Luke 23:13-16

Then Pilate called together the religious leaders, along with the people, and he announced his verdict. "You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find Him innocent...Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty...I will have him whipped, and then I will release him."

Luke 23:21, 22

But they kept shouting, "Kill him! Kill him!" For the third time he demanded, "Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. I will have him whipped, and then I will release him."

Luke 23:23, 24

But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be killed, and their voices prevailed. So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded.

Story Crafting

Jesus being silent when charged, being *whipped*, and being given an unjust trial are all fulfillments of prophecy from Isaiah 53.

The governor asks Jesus '**Are you *these people's King?***' We have not developed a strong kingship theme in this story set, but we have included God's promise to David that his dynasty would continue forever.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **closest followers, pray, son of God, religious leaders** and **Promised Savior** used in previous stories.

Some of the elements of this story are important to include, such as Jesus being whipped, so that the audience can connect this with the Isaiah 53 story.

Worldview

The religious leaders did not have the authority to execute a death penalty, so they had to persuade the Roman governor to do it. If it is confusing to the audience why they went to the governor, make this explicit in the story.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God's word/promises fulfilled; Jesus is sinless; Jesus did nothing wrong; Jesus willingly subjected himself to the will of the people.

Sharing the gospel

Jesus wasn't sentenced to death for His own sins, but for ours.

Jesus' Death

Luke 23:26-28, 31-35, 39-46, 50-56

Based on NLT (2004)

Luke 23:26-27

As they led Jesus away, a man...from *another town* happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers *took* him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd *walked* behind, including many grief-stricken women.

Luke 23:28, 31

...Jesus...said to them, "*Dear women, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children...If God delivers me up to such sufferings because I am made a sacrifice* for sin*, what will he do with the sinners themselves?*"

Luke 23:32-35

Two...criminals were led out to be executed with Jesus. *They were taken to a place called The Skull. There they drove nails through his hands and feet and nailed him on two planks of wood. He was raised up—one criminal on his right, one criminal on his left.* Jesus said, "Father* God, forgive* those who are killing me for they don't know what they are doing." The soldiers *threw dice to see who would win his clothes.* The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. "He saved* others," they said, "let him save himself if he is really God's *Promised Savior**."

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals hanging beside Him scoffed, "So you're the *Promised Savior*, are you? Prove it by saving yourself and us too while you're at it!" But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come *back with power to rule.*"...Jesus replied, "I assure you, *when today is over, you will be with Me in paradise**."

Luke 23:44, 46

By this time it was noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock...Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I *give My spirit** into Your hands!"...With those words He *died.*

Luke 23: 50-53

There was a good *religious leader** who did not agree with what the others had done...He went to the governor and asked for Jesus' body...He took the body down from the *planks of wood* and wrapped it in a sheet of...cloth and laid it in a... tomb* that had been carved out of rock.

Luke 23: 54-56

This was done late on Friday afternoon...As his body was taken away, the women *who were his followers** went and saw the tomb where his body was placed...*A huge stone was placed in front of the entrance of the tomb.* Then they went home and prepared spices...to *put on his body for burial, according to their customs. Their religious day of rest had begun, so they were required by their religious laws to wait until it was over before they could go back to the tomb.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Paradise*

'Paradise' refers to the place where the righteous dead go. It can be translated or described in several ways:

- 1) 'the very good place called paradise'
- 2) 'place of well-being'
- 3) 'place of happiness/of happy people'

Some religious groups already have a term for 'paradise,' but it carries a different meaning than the biblical term.

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Spirit*

Tomb*

Story Crafting

This story shows the criminal's response to Jesus as he accepted Jesus as God's Promised Savior/Messiah.

back with power to rule

This is an acceptable rendering of 'come into your kingdom.'

The Luke account of this story is used because it highlights the fulfillments of the prophecies in this story set.

Although not mentioned in the Luke account, we've included that a huge stone was rolled in front of the tomb so that the subsequent story would make more sense to the audience.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **Father, sacrifice, sin, forgive, save, followers, religious leaders, followers, and Promised Savior** used in previous stories.

Worldview

If the audience does not understand 'cross', describe it as something like 'planks of wood' or 'a cross made of two planks of wood'.

according to their custom

We included this phrase in the account of the women going to the tomb because many cultures do not prepare dead bodies for burial in this manner, and do not normally allow women to see dead bodies.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God is Father; God's forgiveness can extend to anyone (who repents & puts faith in Christ).

Assurance of Salvation

Jesus said, 'I assure you, you will be with me.'

Prayer

Jesus talked to the Father during His execution.

Jesus' Resurrection

Luke 24:1-7; John 20:11-18

Based on NLT (2004)

Luke 24:1-4

Very early *in the...morning a couple of days after Jesus' death* the women went to the tomb* *to prepare Jesus' body according to their customs.* They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So they went in, but they didn't find *his* body...As they stood there puzzled, two men in *dazzling robes* suddenly appeared to them...

Luke 24:5-7

The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking *in a tomb* for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He has risen from the dead! Remember when he told you..., that *he* must be betrayed...and *executed*, and that he would rise again on the third day."

Luke 24:8-12

Then they remembered that *Jesus* had said this. So they rushed back from the tomb to tell His *closest followers** and everyone else what had happened. It was Mary Magdalene...and several other women who told *His closest followers* what had happened,...but they didn't believe* it. *One of them* ran to the tomb to look...He *looked* in and saw the empty *cloth* wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

John 20:11-18

Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked *into the tomb.* She saw two...angels*..."Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my *Master**," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him." She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize Him.

"Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener *and said*, "Sir,... if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

"Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "*Teacher!*"...

"Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet *returned* to the Father*. But go, find my brothers and tell them *that is where I am going.*" Mary Magdalene found *his closest followers* and told them, "I have seen the *Master!*" Then she gave them his message.

Story Crafting

If your audience does not understand that the two men in dazzling robes are angels, you can make it explicit in the story.

Be sure that the audience understands that Jesus was dead but is now alive.

'Lord' has been changed to **master*** in this story.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **tomb, Master, closest followers, believe, angel, and Father** used in previous stories.

Worldview

according to their customs

This phrase is included in the account of the women going to the tomb because many cultures do not prepare dead bodies for burial.

Brothers is a term used for fellow believers. Here Jesus was referring to his closest followers. If **brothers** is an inappropriate word in your language, or is not understood as Jesus' followers, you may make it explicit that he is referring to his followers here.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

Everything Jesus told his closest followers came true; Jesus was tender in his dealings with the women; Jesus instructs his followers to tell others his message; Jesus is no longer dead but alive.

After Resurrection

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:3-5, 8-14

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

After Jesus was raised from the dead, he appeared to his followers many times. He gave them important instructions about what to do.*

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came to his followers and said, "I have been given all authority in heaven* and on earth... Go and make followers of everyone you meet, baptize* them...and teach them to obey all I have commanded you. Remember, I am always with you.

Acts 1:3-5

During the forty days after he was killed and raised from the dead, Jesus appeared to his closest followers...and proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive...Once when he was eating a meal with them, he told them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father* (God) sends you the gift he promised...In just a few days you will receive God's Spirit*."

Acts 1:8

"...You will receive power when God's Spirit* comes into you, and you will...tell people about me everywhere- here, throughout the surrounding countryside, in the next city, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:9-11

It was not long after Jesus said this that he was taken up into heaven. While his followers were watching, he disappeared into a cloud. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white robed men suddenly stood there among them. They said, "...Why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Acts 1:12-14

The followers of Jesus walked back to the city where they worshipped and ...went to the...house where they were staying. There, they all met together continually for prayer, along with Jesus' mother, several other women, and Jesus' brothers.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for full information on the following terms:

prayer*

heaven*

Story Crafting

You may find that it is more readily understood to state explicitly that the men dressed in white are angels. This has exegetical backing (Lk 24:23), and it may avoid confusion that some have had in cultures where wearing white is the traditional dress of mourners.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **Father, God's Spirit, heaven, baptize, followers, and worship** used in previous stories.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God was faithful to His Word and sent the Holy Spirit to them; power comes from God; Jesus defied the power of gravity.

Sharing the Gospel

Take this message to all people; get power from God.

God's Spirit

Acts 1:15-16, 18, 20-26; 2:1-12

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

The followers of Jesus stayed in Jerusalem to await God's Spirit*, just as He had instructed.*

Acts 1:15-16

While they were waiting, on a day when about 120 followers were present, Peter stood up and said, "Brothers,...God's Word had to be fulfilled concerning Judas...This was predicted long ago by God's Spirit..."*

Acts 1:18

"We know that he died soon after he betrayed Jesus."

Acts 1:20-22

Peter continued, "It is written in God's Word...that someone else should take his place of leadership. So now we must choose a replacement for him. It must be someone who has been with us all the time that we were with Jesus—from the time he was baptized..., until the day He was taken from us to be with God..."*

Acts 1:24-26

Then they all prayed for the right man to be chosen...Matthias was chosen and became one of the Twelve, the group of Jesus' closest followers who had now become the leaders of those who followed Jesus.

Acts 2:1

Later, on the day of an important religious festival, after Jesus was raised from the dead, His followers were meeting together in one place.

Acts 2:2-4

Suddenly, there was a sound...like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and sat on each of them. And everyone present was filled with God's Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as God's Spirit gave them this ability.

Acts 2:5-12

Abraham's descendants from all over the world were in the city for the festival. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers*...They said, "These are local people and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born about the wonderful things God has done!" They stood there amazed and confused. "What can this mean?" they asked each other.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for full information about the following terms:

God's Word*

Believers*

Story Crafting

important religious festival'

This is another instance in which we have simplified a term in the story for a non-Jewish audience. Here, ***important religious festival*** is substituted for 'Pentecost.'

We did not include the casting of lots to choose Judas' replacement because we felt it may be confusing. However, some people have found it a helpful teaching point to show that, before they received God's Spirit, the Twelve had to cast lots to determine God's will. Afterward, we see no other instance of believers casting lots; they simply prayed.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **followers, God's Spirit, closest followers, baptize, and Abraham's descendants** used in previous stories.

PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God is Spirit; God has a plan; God endorses Jesus who is the Master and Promised Savior.

Church

Believers gather together in one place; they are Spirit-filled.

Devotional life

Spirit-filled.

Peter's Sermon

Acts 2:14-16, 22-24, 33-47

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 2:7-13)

Although the crowd was amazed that the believers were speaking in the languages of the lands where they were born, others mocked them and said, "They're drunk!"*

Acts 2:14-17, 22-24, 33, 36-37

Then Peter (one of the closest followers) stepped forward with the eleven other closest followers and shouted to the crowd, "...Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn't true! It's much too early for that. People don't get drunk by nine o'clock in the morning. No, what you see this morning was told by God's spokesmen* centuries ago, that God would pour out his Spirit on all people.*

...Listen! God proved that he sent Jesus...by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. But you...murdered him. However, God...raised him back to life again.... Now he sits at the place of highest honor in heaven*, at God's right hand. And God, as he had promised, gave him God's Spirit* to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. So let it be clearly known...that God has made this Jesus whom you killed to be both Master* and Promised Savior*!"*

Peter's words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the others, "Brothers, what should we do?"

Acts 2:38-39, 41-42

Peter replied, "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized* in the name of Jesus the Promised Savior/Promised One for the forgiveness* of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of God's Spirit. This promise is to you and to your children, and even to those who are not descendants of Abraham*...."*

Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church*—about three thousand in all. They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to Jesus' closest followers' teaching and fellowship*...*

Acts 2:44-47

And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had.... They worshiped together...met in homes to share the meal Jesus had told them to remember him by (Lord's Supper)*...all the while praising God.... And each day God added to their group those who were being saved.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

name of Jesus

In the 'name of Jesus' is a way of speaking about the power and authority of Jesus himself, rather than just his name. Alternate expressions are 'by the power of,' 'by the authority of,' or 'because Jesus has given me the power,' or perhaps 'because Jesus has the power.' In some languages this phrase should be more specifically qualified so that it reads, 'because Jesus has the power to heal you,...'

Please see the Glossary for information on the following term:

Miracles, Wonders, and Signs*

Church*

Lord's Supper*

Story Crafting

Much of Peter's sermon has been omitted because we have found it is difficult for people to remember all of it. We have included the parts of the sermon that relate directly to previous stories or to the story line. We also wanted to ensure that we highlighted Peter's response to the people when they asked him, '...what should we do?'

God proved that he sent Jesus...

This is the way that the CEV renders, 'God publicly endorsed Jesus...'

pour out upon us

If this idiom is not understood, you may say something like, '...gave him God's Spirit to give to us.'

those who are not descendants of Abraham

'Gentiles' is a term not familiar to many, so we are using 'those who are not descendants of Abraham' to refer to those outside the Jewish population.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Continue using the same words or phrases you have been using in this story set for **believers, closest followers/the Twelve, heaven, God's Spirit, baptize, Lord's Supper, church, spokesman, master, Promised Savior, forgive, descendants of Abraham, believe, fellowship, and worship.**

Use the same term for **brothers** you used in *God's Spirit*. Be sure the term you choose refers to close friends and not blood relatives.

Worldview

'God's right hand'

Some cultures may not understand that 'God's right hand' refers to a place of honor. You may choose simply to omit this phrase from the story if it is confusing.

PRINCIPLES

Rapid reproduction

Bold response to persecution

Rapid spread of the gospel

Healthy churches

Meeting in houses

Worship

Lord's Supper

Baptism

Seven Men

Chosen to Serve

Acts 6:1-7

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 6:1-2

...The believers* (*in Jesus*) rapidly multiplied. *But*, there were rumblings of discontent. *The believers* who spoke *the Greek language* complained against those who spoke *the Hebrew language*. *They said* that their widows were being *overlooked* in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve* called a meeting of all the believers.

Acts 6:2-4

“We *Twelve* should spend our time *speaking* the *message from God about Jesus*, not *running* a food program,” they said. “Now look around among yourselves...and *choose* seven men who are well respected and are full of *God’s Spirit** and *wisdom**. We will put them in charge of this business. Then we can spend our time in prayer and...*telling* the *message from God about Jesus*.”

Acts 6:5-6

This idea pleased the whole group...they chose... Stephen. *Stephen believed** *great things about God* and was *filled with God’s Spirit*. *They also chose* Philip, and *five other men*, (*most of whom spoke Greek*). These seven were presented to *the Twelve*, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on (*the heads of each of*) them.

Acts 6:7

God’s message was *spoken* in ever-widening circles. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the *religious leaders** *believed also*.

Words/Phrases to Consider

full of God's Spirit and wisdom

'Full of,' or 'filled with,' refers to the control of someone or something over a person. Another way to phrase the statement in this story could be: 'whom the Spirit of God controls completely and who are very wise.'

laid their hands on...them

The act of laying on of hands (on a person's head) came from the Jewish community. It symbolized not only the giving of responsibility, but, what is more important, the imparting of strength and the community's blessing. To clarify, you may add 'on the heads of each' to show where the hands were placed. That action indicated that the Twelve were appointing the men to do this work and that God would enable them to do it. If 'laying on of hands' is too confusing for your audience, you might consider using a phrase which shows that they were officially 'sent out,' 'dedicated,' or 'appointed' by the leaders for this specific task.

Please see the glossary for full information on the following term:

The Twelve*

Story Crafting

...The believers...rapidly multiplied

'More and more people believed in Jesus' would be one way to simplify this phrase.

rumblings of discontent

Always look for ways to simplify idiomatic phrases. Here you could say, 'All was not well... people were complaining.'

Message from God

'Word of God' is a figure of speech that might not be understood if translated literally into another language, so we have simplified the phrase and kept its meaning by saying 'message from God.'

believed great things about God

Instead of using a 'Christian' phrase like 'full of faith' to describe Stephen, we have reworded it to describe in simple terms what 'faith' is: believing great things about God.

Stephen and Philip

In order to make this story easier to retell, the list of men who were selected is omitted. Stephen and Philip are named because Philip appears again in a later story, and Stephen was described as being a man full of God's spirit.

(most of whom spoke Greek)

This is implied information, based on the names of the men chosen, that would have been known to a reader of that day.

Speaking is used instead of 'preaching' in order to avoid churchy words.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, God's Spirit, belief/believe, wisdom, and religious leaders.**

Express **filled with God's Spirit** in the same way that you have been.

Worldview

Greek language...Hebrew language

Some listeners think that Jesus and people of the early church all spoke English! This is one place to show that Christianity is not just an American import!

laid their hands on...them

If laying hands on someone's head is offensive in the culture, you may simply describe the purpose for this action or use a term in the language that conveys the concept of the purpose for this ritual.

PRINCIPLES

Local lay leadership
Recognizable structure
Rapid spread of the gospel
Serving the needy within the Church

African

Acts 8:26-39

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 8:1-25)

After Stephen was killed, those who believed* in Jesus went everywhere telling people the wonderful news about Jesus. God's Spirit* gave some of these believers* specific instructions about where to go. One of these believers was named Philip...

Acts 8:26

...An angel* from God said to him, "Go south down the desert road that begins at Jerusalem...."

Acts 8:27-28

So he did, and he met the treasurer of an African nation...who was now returning to his homeland after worshiping* in Jerusalem. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the spokesman* Isaiah.

Acts 8:29-32

God's Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage." Philip ran over and heard the man reading...so he asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The man replied, "How can I, when there is no one to instruct me?" And he begged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. *This is what he was reading:*

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth."

Acts 8:34-35

The African man asked Philip, "Was the spokesman talking about himself or someone else?" So Philip began with this same message from God's spokesman and then used many other spokesmen and messages to tell him the Good News about Jesus.

Acts 8:36-40

As they rode along, they came to some water, and the African man said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized*?" "You can," Philip answered, "if you truly believe...." And the African man replied, "I believe that Jesus...is the Son of God*!" The African man ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, God's Spirit took Philip away to another town...Afterwards, the African man...went on his way rejoicing.

Words/Phrases to Consider

carriage

A carriage also could be referred to as a 'wagon' or some vehicle pulled by horses or oxen. Someone was probably leading the wagon, and probably there was room for at least one other person to sit since the African man asked Philip to sit with him.

Story Crafting

This story was chosen because of its beautiful connection to the Isaiah 53 story and its model of a response to Jesus followed by immediate obedience of baptism.

African

We have chosen to simplify the term 'Ethiopian eunuch' to 'African' for ease of remembering and retelling, and because many of the hearers of these stories will not have heard of the country of Ethiopia. If the audience recognizes Ethiopia as a present-day country, you can include the country name; if not, you could substitute 'a country in Africa' or 'another country.'

'[Philip told] him the Good News about Jesus' You may want to ask during the discussion time, 'What do you think was the Good News about Jesus that Philip shared?'

"You can," Philip answered, "if you truly believe..." And the African man replied, "I believe that Jesus... is the Son of God!"

We have chosen to include v. 37 from the NLT 2004. "You can," Philip answered, "if you believe with all your heart." And the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It does include information the other verses in the text seem to imply. You may choose to leave this portion out of the story, or you may choose to treat this verse as implicit information, in which case you may want to render this part of the story as: 'Philip told the African he could be baptized if he truly believed. The man said that he did believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so....'

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **belief/believe, God's Spirit, believers, angel, Jerusalem, worship(ing), spokesman and baptize(d)**.

This story works best when the audience has heard the Isaiah 53 story (*Promise*) so that they understand the reference to Isaiah. If your audience has not heard the Isaiah 53 story, you may want to avoid the name 'Isaiah' and omit the exact quotation from Isaiah so you do not confuse your audience.

We have included Acts 8:37 to connect with the other stories which emphasize the need for belief in Jesus in order to become his follower.

Worldview

If your audience is not familiar with sheep or the butchering and shearing of them, you may need to make these statements more general, such as: 'He was killed just like an animal, and he didn't say a word.'

PRINCIPLES

Abundant gospel sowing
Scriptural authority
Immediate baptism
The guidance of God's Spirit

Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:12-17, 21-30, 34-35, 40; 17:1

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition

Before Jesus went to heaven, he had promised his followers they would have power to share about Him throughout all the world. And that's what they did. This is the story of the travels of two men who led many others to follow Jesus.*

Acts 16:12-15

Paul and Silas went to the city of Philippi. On the day of worship, they went a short distance outside the city to a riverbank, where they thought people would be meeting for prayer. They sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. One of them was Lydia..., a merchant of expensive...cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to them, God opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She was baptized* along with other members of her household, and she asked Paul and Silas to be her guests. "If you agree that I am a true believer* in Jesus," she said, "come and stay at my home." And...they agreed.*

Acts 16:16-21

One day as Paul and Silas were going down to the place of prayer, they met a slave girl who was possessed by an evil spirit. She was a fortune-teller who earned a lot of money for her masters. She followed Paul..., shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved." This went on day after day until Paul got so tired of it that he turned and said to the evil spirit within her, "I command you, in the name of Jesus, to come out..." And instantly it left her. Her masters' hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. "The whole city is in an uproar because of these men!" they shouted to the city officials. "They are teaching the people to do things that are against our customs."*

Acts 16:22-28

A mob quickly formed...Paul and Silas were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. So he put them into the inner dungeon and chained them. Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing...to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!"

Acts 16:29-34

The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in...Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." And they shared God's message about Jesus with him and with all who lived in his household...Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. The jailer fed them at his house and they all rejoiced because they...believed in God.*

Acts 16:35, 40; 17:1

The next morning the city officials released Paul and Silas. When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left to go to another town.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Opened her heart

This is an English figure of speech that may not be understood in all languages. This phrase means that God made her willing/able to understand and accept/ believe what was being said by Paul about Jesus.

Possessed

In some cultures, spirit possession is a good thing and is actively sought. If this is true in the culture in which you work, you will need to make sure the audience understands that this was an evil spirit.

Believe in Jesus

To make this phrase clearer you may use a statement such as 'believe that Jesus will save you.'

Most High God

This refers to the position of God, that is, 'the highest God' (indirectly a reference to 'the God in heaven') or 'the God who is higher than all other gods,' that is to say, 'the most important God.' Here the reference would certainly seem to be to 'God who is greater than all others.'

stocks

If your culture does not have an understanding of 'stocks,' you may substitute 'chains' or say that they were locked up so they could not escape.

Please see the glossary for more information about the following term:

Evil Spirit*

Story Crafting

This Scripture passage includes information about Paul and his Roman citizenship. It's interesting, but can make the story too lengthy, so we have omitted it from this story.

Sirs

This is a polite term of address for men. Use whatever term is most appropriate in your language.

Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

The jailer asked how he could be saved, probably both for physical escape and moral and spiritual change. If your language's word for 'saved' implies both physical and spiritual salvation, it's even better. If the word could imply only physical salvation, you can amplify how to be saved to something like, '...to be saved so that God will not punish me for my sins.'

baptized

You may amplify the reason they were baptized ('to show that they had turned from their sins and turned to God) to reinforce the summarized passage and the teachings you have already had on baptism.

household

The term 'household' in reference to the jailer probably refers to his family.

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for **followers, believers, church, baptize, name of Jesus, worship, pray, believe, heaven, and saved** used in previous stories.

Be sure to use the same terminology for **name of Jesus** as you have in previous stories.

If you have found that you need to expound upon from what people are being saved, be sure you are consistently using this in each reference to **save/saved/saving**.

PRINCIPLES

Church

Met in homes; baptism; encouraged and strengthened believers; rapid reproduction; family based conversion.

Devotional life.

Prayer and singing

Sharing the Gospel

Man of peace; Look for where God is at work; Spirit gives power to share; signs and wonders.

Assurance of salvation

Believe and you will be saved.

Jesus' Bride, the Believers

Ephesians 5:25-32

Based on NLT (2004)

Paul continued to travel, sharing the Good News about Jesus everywhere he went. One of the cities he visited was Ephesus. As a result of his message, many people left their idols to follow Jesus only. However, some idol-makers became angry with Paul because no one was buying their idols anymore. They started riots and treated Paul badly. Paul left Ephesus, but he continued to relate to the believers in the Church in Ephesus. Later, Paul wrote a letter to all the churches in the area. In his letter, he talked about how a believer* should consider their relationship with Jesus in the same way they consider their marriage...*

Eph 5:25-32

*Jesus loves the believers---the church---just as a husband should love his wife. He gave up his life for her to make her *set apart for him* and clean... without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as *Jesus, the Promised Savior**, cares for the church. And we are members of his body.*

As we know from God's story, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." This is a great symbol of the way Jesus and the church are one.

Story Crafting

We have summarized the story of Paul in Ephesus from Acts 19:8-20:1 as a transition to help the audience understand why Paul would write a letter to this church about this subject.

Ephesians 5:25-33 focuses on Jesus' relationship with the church, so we have selected this portion of Ephesians 5 to highlight his relationship as our groom.

This is a great symbol of the way Jesus and the church are one. The text uses a word translated 'mystery' in this passage. Rather than referring to something we can not understand, 'mystery' refers to the hidden meaning in the Genesis passage to which this sentence refers. The unity of Jesus and the church is the great truth that is alluded to in the coming together of man and woman as one in marriage. Therefore, human marriage is a symbol for Jesus and his believers becoming one. We have simplified this phrase to ensure proper translation and understanding by the audience.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words for **idols, church, relationship, believers,** and **Promised Savior** as you have used in previous stories.

This story shows the fulfillment of God's plan for man and woman from the creation story in the reminder that a man leaves his parents and the man and woman are united as one.

When you tell this story, you may choose to refer to **God's story**, as we did, rather than "Scriptures," so that the audience will connect this to the story they have already heard.

Worldview

Although your audience may not, in practice, have the same ideas of marriage, and even if your audience feels that this description of a husband is not practical or possible, you can point them back to previous stories where they've been given examples of husbands loving their wives and God loving his people.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Jesus' love for us is sacrificial (gave his life for us); Jesus' love is practical (cares for us by meeting our needs); Jesus' love is purposeful (seeks to help us overcome sin and become holy); Jesus desires for us to respond to his love by fully submitting ourselves to him.

Wedding Feast of the Lamb

Revelation 7:9-10, 19:6-8, 21:1-6, 22:17

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

As the number of believers grew, so did the church*. As the church grew, persecution against the believers became more and more intense. The believers began waiting for the time when Jesus would come back, just as he had promised. Many of the closest followers* of Jesus were killed or executed, and some of them were exiled to far away places. One of these followers of Jesus, named John, was exiled to a deserted island. As he was living on this island, God gave John a beautiful vision*, and in it a message of hope for believers everywhere. This was a vision of the end of this world, when Jesus will return.*

Revelation 7:9-10

In this vision John saw a huge crowd of people, from every language group, every ethnic group, and every country in the world. They were standing in front of Jesus, who is the lamb of God. They were all praising God together and shouting, "We were saved from our suffering through God and through Jesus, the lamb!"

Revelation 19:6-8

Later in the vision, he heard another shout, "Praise God Almighty! Give him honor! It's time for the wedding feast of his son Jesus, the lamb that died for his bride." His bride, the church, was ready for the feast. She was wearing the finest bridal cloth.

Revelation 21:1-6

Later, John saw that heaven and earth were gone, and that God had created a new heaven and a new earth. He saw a new and beautiful city, made from pure gold and precious stones. This is the city where the bride of Jesus will live. John heard a voice say, "Look, God's home is now among his people, he will live with them, they will be his people, and he will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. No one will ever die again, or be sad again, or cry again, or hurt again. All these things are gone forever." God said, "I am making everything new. My preparations are finished. I begin all things and bring all things to an end."*

Revelation 22:17

Then, the bride of Jesus, the church, said, "Come! Come, whoever hears us; whoever is thirsty, come and drink from the water of life."

Story Crafting

Revelation is a complicated book, and often difficult for people to understand. We have crafted this story for you to make it easier to tell. We have chosen the portions of the book that are relevant to our theme of Jesus' bride, the church, in order to bring the stories in the set to a cohesive ending.

Commentators agree that the new Jerusalem, which is dressed like a bride in Revelation 21:2, is the home of the bride of Jesus, the people of the church.

I begin all things and bring all things to an end is the way that we have rendered "I am the beginning and the end."

Intra-story Cohesion

Be sure that you use the same words for **believers, church, closest followers, heaven, and vision** that you used in the previous stories.

This story will only be understood completely if your audience has heard and learned the Isaiah 53 (Promise) story, where the lamb is introduced.

Worldview

Because every culture has different appropriate bridal clothing, we have described the white linen in general terms as the ***finest bridal cloth***.

PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

God has a wonderful future prepared for those who have repented and put faith exclusively in his Son, Jesus.

This future will include oneness and relational intimacy with God forever; God is seeking Christ-followers from every community and culture on earth; Whatever suffering believers endure in this life will be inconsequential compared to their incredible future forever in heaven.

Assurance of Salvation

God will fulfill his promise to Christ-followers: eternal joy, bliss & intimacy with himself

Glossary

Key Words to Consider as You Tell the Stories

These key words open up insights and understanding into Scripture. If they paint a wrong impression in the hearer's mind, they may color a person's entire understanding of the Good News. This glossary is by no means comprehensive, but it attempts to define the meaning of some key words in the biblical sense, in hopes of helping you as you consider the best ways to translate them. In many cases we've included suggestions on how you can translate the word or describe it in a meaningful way to your audience. After each entry is a list of stories in this manual in which the key word is found.

Angel

If you have a Bible translation, your best option would be to use the word in the translation, unless no one outside the church understands it. If you don't have a Bible translation, your challenge is to find a word that accurately conveys the meaning of the original. An 'angel' is a supernatural, spiritual being who is a messenger from God. Angels appear to humans in human form, they are inferior to Jesus, and they often come with a specific message or to do a specific task. If there is no word in the language for 'angel' that a non-believer would understand, you could translate this as 'messenger of/from God,' 'envoy of God,' or perhaps 'ambassador of God.' Be aware, though, that 'prophet' also conveys those meanings. You might need to add 'spirit (messenger from God)' to this description.

Found in: *Abraham's Faith Tested, An Angel Visits Mary and Joseph, Birth of Jesus, Jesus' Resurrection, African*

Anoint

Anointing in the Old Testament signified an act of God in which someone received divine favor or appointment to a special place, service, or function in the purpose of God (especially for kingship).

Anointing often was associated with God's Spirit being given. In *David King*, the act was done by a man appointed by God to do it. He filled his horn (a ram's horn) with oil and poured the oil on David's head. If the people in your area have a similar ceremony (with an appropriate word to go along with it) to appoint someone to a special task, you could use the phrase 'anointed his head (with oil).' If they don't, you could say something like, 'He poured oil on his head to appoint him/show him as the next king.'

Found in: *David King, Nathan's Story*

Baptism, Baptize

This word is an important term in the Bible and needs to be thought through carefully before attempting to translate. If you have a Bible translation, you may choose to use what the translation uses. If the translation uses the borrowed term (as we also borrow the term from the Greek *baptizo*), but no one understands it, you might want to consider explaining the term. If you are working with long-term believers, you need to see with what term they feel most comfortable. If you need to find a term for some reason, a careful study of the meaning of the concept of 'baptism' is needed. The Greek word means to 'put inside or under water,' or 'to wash in a spiritual sense.' John's baptism was done when a person wanted to stop sinning and obey God so God would forgive his sin. In baptism in the church, a person also makes a public demonstration of his commitment to Jesus and his union with him. Some ideas for translating this term include:

- 1) to wash someone in water to make him ceremonially clean;
- 2) to wash someone with water as part of their initiation into the religious community;
- 3) 'bath,' with a qualification such as 'bath of enlightenment' (Tamil) or 'bath of dedication;'
- 4) using the word for a custom in the culture that refers to ceremonial washing to make something ritually clean;
- 5) using the borrowed term with an appositional 'unpacking of meaning,' i.e. 'he was baptized,' he was ceremonially washed.'

Keep in mind that in many cultures and religions, people ceremonially wash often to remove sins. You may need to specify that this is a once for all ceremony.

Found in: *Jesus' Baptism, After Resurrection, God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, African, Philippian Jailer*

Belief/Believe/Trust/Faith

This describes man's response to God's promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting one's faith/confidence in God.

Found in: *Abraham's Call, Abraham's Faith Tested, David King, Woman at the Well, Woman Washes Jesus' Feet, Bleeding Woman, Conspiracy and Last Supper, Jesus' Resurrection, Peter's Sermon, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, African, Philippian Jailer*

Believers

After Pentecost, the people who followed Jesus were also called 'believers.' We've used that term in the story set to refer to Jesus' followers after Pentecost and to emphasize the fact that people became followers of Jesus through belief in him.

Found in: *God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, African, Philippian Jailer, Jesus' Bride, the Believers, Wedding Feast of the Lamb*

Bless, Blessed, Blessing

This refers to when God helps, does good to, or favors someone or something. It includes the connotation that God is pleased with them (i.e. has a good relationship with them). In the *Creation* and *Abraham* stories, the specific blessing includes God giving them the ability to reproduce and multiply. Try to avoid using a word related to luck or games of chance.

Found in: *Creation, Abraham's Call, Abraham's Faith Tested, Ruth, David and Bathsheba, Transition/Genealogy, An Angel Visits Mary and Joseph, Birth of Jesus*

Church

In the New Testament, the word never actually refers to a building but to a group of people who believe in Jesus. In the New Testament, 'church' may refer either to a group of believers who live in one place or to the wider community of the whole church of Jesus. If the word 'church' in the language conveys something different than the New Testament definition, you might choose to explain the term in a phrase instead of using the word 'church.' You could say something like 'gathering of believers' or 'the group of believers,' or even in some instances 'all those believing in Christ.'

Found in: *Peter's Sermon, Philippian Jailer, Jesus' Bride, the Believers, Wedding Feast of the Lamb*

Closest Followers/The Twelve (see Followers)

Please see the note under 'Followers' for a full discussion of these terms.

Covenant

This word refers to a promise or standing contract between two parties, usually given by a stronger person to a weaker person. In the Old and New Testaments, this contract was much more binding than present day promises.

Found in: *The Unfaithful Wife*

Curse

This word in the text actually means punishment or judgment and means that something unpleasant is going to happen to that person. Although many languages have a way to pronounce a curse on someone or something, be sure that the word you choose does not have any magical connotations.

Found in: *Disobedience*

Descendants

Different languages have different words for 'descendants.' Some say 'children,' 'generations,' or 'members of the family;' but ensure that whatever word is used can mean descendants far into the future, and not just the immediate children and grandchildren.

Found in: *Disobedience, Abraham's Call, Abraham's Faith Tested, Ruth, David King, David and Bathsheba, Hosea, Promise, The Unfaithful Wife, Transition/Genealogy, An Angel Visits Mary and Martha, Jesus' Baptism, Woman at the Well, Sinful Woman Forgiven, God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon*

Disciple (see Followers)

Disobedience (see Sin)

Eternal Life

'Eternal life' in the New Testament has two aspects:

- 1) life that never ends;
- 2) a quality of life beginning when someone allows God to rule his life.

Some options for conveying the two-fold meaning of this phrase include

- 1) 'real life that never ends;'
- 2) 'new life that never ends.'

Or if your language does not have a noun for 'life'

- 3) 'really live unendingly because of him;'
- 4) 'he will cause such people to never come to the end of real living.'

Found in: *Woman at the Well*

Evil

Evil, in the Old Testament, refers to activities, conditions, or attitudes that is contrary to God's will, and has to do with rejection of God. Both 'peace' and 'good' are given as opposites to 'evil.'

Found in: *Creation, Disobedience*

Evil Spirit

'Evil spirit' refers to spiritual beings who serve Satan as his agents, being under his authority. These spiritual beings have power to oppress a human being and even take control of him. We know from the Bible that evil spirits were created by God and chose to disobey him. It seems that many South Asian languages do not have a term that can express that adequately. (Their 'evil spirit' may refer to a dead person's spirit that 'haunts' people.) Try to choose a word that refers to an independent spirit being that is evil and opposed to God. If there is one, you can also use a neutral word for an independent spirit being and add a qualification like 'spirit from Satan,' or 'bad/evil spirit.' Be aware that extra explanation might be necessary during the discussion time.

Found in: *Philippian Jailer*

Father

You may need to make it clear that "Father" refers to God, as some cultures may not find it easy to make that connection.

Found in: *Conspiracy and Last Supper, Jesus' Death, Jesus' Resurrection, After Resurrection*

Followers (also Closest Followers/The Twelve)

If the language has an understood term for the devoted followers of a guru, you may use that term here. We've designated the twelve disciples as 'closest followers' and the other disciples simply as 'followers.' You will want to differentiate between the two groups in the same way, as well.

Found in: *Woman at the Well, Bleeding Woman, Conspiracy and Last Supper, Jesus' Trial, Jesus' Death, Jesus' Resurrection, After Resurrection, God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, Philippian Jailer, Wedding Feast of the Lamb*

Forgive, Forgiveness

Some languages do not have an adequate word for 'forgive.' If that is the case, understanding what 'forgiveness' means is imperative to translating it correctly. Forgiveness involves two people, one of whom has done something wrong to the other and offended him. The one who was offended sets aside his rights and does not punish the other as he deserves. If the other accepts the forgiveness, the relationship between the two is restored and the guilt is removed.

Found in: *Nathan's Story, The Unfaithful Wife, Jesus' Baptism, Woman Washes Jesus' Feet, Jesus' Death, Peter's Sermon*

God's Spirit (see Holy Spirit)

God's Word (see Scripture)

Heaven

Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. When it refers to the place where God lives, it is also the ultimate destination of believers. Because it is linked so closely to the place where God is, one can replace 'I have sinned against heaven' with 'I have sinned against God,' or 'the kingdom of heaven' with 'the kingdom of God.' If your language does not have an adequate word for 'heaven,' or if the hearers do not understand adequately the concept of heaven at this stage, you can replace it with 'the place where God lives.'

Found in: *Promise, Jesus' Baptism, After Resurrection, Peter's Sermon, Wedding Feast of the Lamb*

Holy Spirit

DAVID KING STORY: You can translate this term directly as ‘God’s Spirit.’ The meaning here specifically is that David was suddenly and fully possessed by God’s Spirit. In other words, God ‘qualified him to be governor of his people, by infusing such graces as wisdom, prudence, counsel, courage, liberality, and magnanimity’ (Adam Clarke’s commentary).

The Hebrew *ruach* [spirit] can have the physical meanings ‘wind’ or ‘breath.’ It also can mean ‘power’ or ‘authority’ that God gives to someone to do extraordinary things.

NEW TESTAMENT: The concept of ‘holy’ refers to people or things that belong to God, are consecrated to him, or are like him. Often, however, Scripture translations use ‘God’s Spirit’ because many languages do not have a word for ‘holy’ that adequately expresses the concept. Since ‘holy’ in many South Asian languages is either a church-y term that non-believers can’t understand or a term with unwanted connotations, we encourage you to use the same term for ‘God’s Spirit’ that you used in the *David King* story.

Found in: *David King, An Angel Visits Mary and Joseph, Jesus’ Baptism, Woman at the Well, After Resurrection, God’s Spirit, Peter’s Sermon, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, African*

Idol

This is an image made by human hands that is worshiped as a god rather than the one true Creator God.

Found in: *The Unfaithful Wife, Jesus’ Bride, the Believers*

Kingdom of God

The ‘Kingdom of God’ refers to the activity of God’s ruling, but it especially refers to the relationship between God and his people.

Found in: *Woman at the Well, Wedding Banquet*

Lord (see Master)

Lord’s Supper

This reference to eating together probably included both simply fellowshiping, i.e. eating together and sharing in the Lord’s Supper, i.e. the bread and wine that Jesus asked them to share in remembrance

of him. You could say something like: ‘...devoted themselves to Jesus’ followers’ teaching and fellowship, and eating and drinking together to remember what Jesus had done for them, just as Jesus told them to do.’ OR ‘...and remembering what Jesus had done for them, eating and drinking together.’

Found in: *Peter’s Sermon*

Master

The original ‘Lord’ has the connotation here of ‘master,’ ‘supreme head,’ or ‘owner.’ At a surface level, this is a title for a respected man, such as ‘sir.’ Any of these is an acceptable rendering.

Found in: *Sinful Woman Forgiven, Mary and Martha, Conspiracy and Last Supper, Jesus’ Resurrection, Peter’s Sermon*

Miracles, Wonders, and Signs (also Miracles)

These words refer to powerful deeds or happenings that evokes awe or something that points to a truth beyond itself. Basically, all three words refer to similar things. Perhaps all three words were used to show that Jesus did many miracles of different types.

Found in: *Peter’s Sermon*

Paradise

‘Paradise’ refers to the place where the righteous dead go. It can be translated or described in several ways:

- 1) ‘the very good place called paradise;’
- 2) ‘place of well-being;’
- 3) ‘place of happiness/of happy people’

Found in: *Jesus’ Death*

Place of Worship

The temple was the unique Jewish place of worship. If the word for ‘temple’ in your language refers only to a specific religion’s place of worship, you may choose to change the word to something more general like ‘place of worship.’ Even the word ‘temple’ in English has such religious connotations that few people truly understand what it means.

Found in: *Birth of Jesus, Sinful Woman Forgiven*

Prayer

In this setting (Acts 1), “prayer” refers to communicating with God. Be sure that the word you use here does not refer to only ritualistic communication, but something more personal. Found in: *After Resurrection, Philippian Jailer*

Promised One (see Savior/Promised Savior/Promised One)

Promised Savior (see Savior/Promised Savior/Promised One)

Prophet (see Spokesman)

Relationship

Some languages may not have one term for ‘relationship,’ or the term has unwanted connotations. Some languages express the idea in terms of action. TEV translates Genesis 15:6 as ‘Abram put his trust in the LORD, and because of this the LORD was pleased with him and accepted him.’ Therefore, ‘right relationship’ with God refers to a man’s state of trusting God and God accepting him into communion with himself. Found in: *Creation, Abraham’s Call, Hosea, Promise, Transition/Genealogy, Jesus’ Bride, the Believers*

Religious Leaders

Both Pharisees and Sadducees were Jewish religious parties at that time. Many scribes and priests were members of one of these sects. If possible, it is best to keep these sect names as generic as possible—‘religious leaders.’ If you use a term for ‘religious leaders’ used in a major religion here, be sure that those names do not refer ONLY to a member of that specific religion. Found in: *Jesus’ Baptism, Sinful Woman Forgiven, Woman Washes Jesus’ Feet, Conspiracy and Last Supper, Jesus’ Trial, Jesus’ Death, Seven Men Chosen to Serve*

Righteousness/Right Relationship

The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on relationship between God and man, or between man and man. ‘Righteousness’ refers to holiness. The CEV (Contemporary English Version) translates this concept in Isaiah 53:11 in

the following way:

*...he will take the punishment
for the sins of others,
so that many of them
will no longer be guilty.*

In other words, ‘righteousness’ takes away guilt. Found in: *Abraham’s Call*

Sacrifice

A sacrifice is something offered to God (as a peace offering, thanksgiving, purification, atonement), whether a blood sacrifice which entails killing and burning an animal, or a non-blood sacrifice (incense, grain, etc). Animal sacrifice was a common practice in the Old Testament. The worshipper would kill and burn an animal as a gift to God to show that he was fully dedicated to God, and the killing of the animal would atone for his sins.

Found in: *Abraham’s Faith Tested, Jesus’ Death*

Satan

This name refers to the spiritual being, whom God created and who is the leader of the evil spiritual beings who decided to rebel against God. You may need to qualify the name ‘Satan’ with ‘leader of the evil spirits’ if ‘Satan’ is unknown to your audience. Found in: *Disobedience, Conspiracy and Last Supper*

Savior/Promised Savior/Promised One

‘Savior,’ as used in the New Testament, means ‘one who saves from spiritual and eternal danger.’ Often, the wholeness of man includes both physical and spiritual aspects which are difficult to distinguish, but the actual term ‘savior’ in the New Testament is used only for Jesus as a spiritual deliverer. ‘Promised Savior’ is also the word we’ve chosen to use for the English version of the stories as the term to describe who Jesus is—the Messiah, the Christ, the Promised Savior. We’ve chosen, for the audience’s first exposure to the gospel, to use a consistent term for Jesus’ role in God’s redemptive plan throughout the story set. Later, it could be helpful to introduce other terms that have similar meanings (such as ‘Christ,’ ‘Messiah,’ ‘Promised King,’ ‘Anointed One,’ etc.).

The terms ‘Christ’ and ‘Messiah’ have the same meaning, namely, ‘the person who is anointed (i.e. appointed) by God for a special purpose.’ Anointing with oil was the symbol of being appointed and set apart by God for a position of authority and

responsibility, especially for kingship, or as a High Priest (*Key Biblical Terms in the New Testament*). Many aspects of Jesus' roles and character are implied in the term 'Anointed One,' including his kingship over all the nations, his role as God's representative, his role as the means of bringing about God's victory over his enemies, and finally, as the one appointed to accomplish redemption for God's people. We are told in translation resources that as we search for a way to translate 'Messiah,' or 'Christ,' we should search for a term that includes the concepts of one who is specially appointed by God, and one who is savior or king. The term 'Promised Savior' seems to be the title which best fits how we've set up Jesus' entry into the world (see *Promise* story). Jesus' kingship and anointing have been introduced through the stories themselves, rather than giving him the title 'King' or 'Anointed One' at this point in the audience's experience with the Gospel.

Some languages do not have an appropriate personal noun that expresses the idea of savior, and it needs to be translated 'the one who saves,' or 'the saving person.'

Found in: *Promise, The Unfaithful Wife, Transition/ Genealogy, An Angel Visits Mary and Martha, Birth of Jesus, Jesus' Baptism, Woman at the Well, Jesus' Trial, Jesus' Death, Peter's Sermon, Jesus' Bride, the Believers*

Scripture (God's Word)

This word used in the New Testament refers to the Jewish holy writings, most often what we now consider the entire Old Testament. These writings were considered to have authority. You may use any generic term in your language for a set of holy writings which have authority. If you must qualify which holy writings, you could say something like 'the holy writings of Abraham's descendants.'

Found in: *God's Spirit*

Sin/Disobedience

Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act (i.e. alms, ritual prayer, following religious dietary rules, etc.), or that the term is so religious that it does not convey meaning to the average person anymore. If necessary, you can use 'disobedience.'

Found in: *Abraham's Call, David King, Nathan's Story, Promise, The Unfaithful Wife, An Angel Visits Mary and Joseph, Jesus' Baptism, Woman Washes Jesus' Feet, Jesus' Death*

Son of God

The phrase 'Son of God' refers to the special relationship between God and Jesus. It needs to be understood that he was not the result of a physical union of God with woman.

Found in: *An Angel Visits Mary and Joseph, Jesus' Trial*

Spirit of God (see Holy Spirit)

Spirit

'Spirit' refers to the 'soul,' or 'life,' and it is the center of the inner life of man—his feelings and emotions.

Found in: *Jesus' Death*

Spokesman

Choose a term for 'prophet' that adequately describes the prophet's function. A prophet:

1. receives a call from God;
2. takes God's message to men because he had been given it by God himself;
3. has as his only priority bringing the Word of God to men.

We chose 'spokesman' because, in English, it can convey these three meanings but doesn't carry the unwanted connotation of a fortune-teller. If you use a religious term, be sure that it has meaning that the average hearer will understand. If you find that it is too difficult to keep saying 'God's spokesman' throughout the story *David King*, you may include Samuel's name. However, if it is too confusing or difficult for people to remember Samuel's name, then you may choose to simply say 'God's spokesman.'

Found in: *David King, Nathan's Story, Hosea, Promise, The Unfaithful Wife, Jesus' Baptism, Woman Washes Jesus' Feet, Peter's Sermon, African*

Temple (see Place of Worship)

Tomb

If the term 'tomb' is difficult for your audience, it can be described as a 'hole or cave in which to place dead people.'

Found in: *Jesus' Death, Jesus' Resurrection*

The Twelve (see Followers)

Trust (see Belief)

Vision

Visions refer to a supernatural experience in which a divine revelation is given to a person when they are awake, whereas 'dreams' are what God causes people to see when they are asleep. If your language only has one word for 'vision' and 'dream,' you may want to specify whether the person was awake or asleep when they received the message from God.

Found in: *Abraham's Call, Wedding Feast of the Lamb*

Wisdom/Wise

The biblical concept of wisdom includes the ideas of 'thinking things that are true and doing things that are good.' Only God can cause someone to be wise. In fact, it is implied in the New Testament that when someone has wisdom, he has insight into the will of God.

Found in: *Disobedience, Seven Men Chosen to Serve*

Worship

Worship's foundation is the idea of 'service,' shown through showing awe and wonder to God (*IVP New Bible Dictionary*). Patriarchs thought this worship could take place anywhere God had revealed himself.

The Old Testament sets up a complicated sacrificial system in the Temple. Jesus made it clear that this sacrificial system of worship was no longer necessary, and that our worship was based on our love for God. Different cultures and languages have different words for worship, some of which refer only to certain ceremonies or rituals one must do. In every story in this story set

where 'worship' is used, it implies more than just performing rituals; it includes the heart of love, awe and wonder of the worshiper for God. Be sure that the word or combination of words you choose for worship includes this idea.

Found in: *Abraham's Call, Abraham's Faith Tested, David King, The Unfaithful Wife, Birth of Jesus, Woman at the Well, Sinful Woman Forgiven, After Resurrection, Peter's Sermon, African*

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