



# **God's big story in Advent**

## **A resource for families**

## God's big story in Advent

Thank you for picking this up! Please do use it as suits you and your family best. We've suggested three stories a week for the first four weeks of Advent, then a final two for the few days leading up to Christmas Day itself. Some of the passages are long so do feel free to substitute a storybook version or shorten the reading. (You can find the passages in any Bible, or at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) where you can also find audio versions). You may have time to do everything, or just dip in and out as you want. Our prayer is simply that this helps you discover more about God's big story this Advent and connect with him through it.

There are six really helpful things we want to do when we read the Bible, and we've included all of them in this reading plan.

### 1. Understand the context

Where does this fit into the Bible? What's happened before this passage?

### 2. Acknowledge the 'whats?' and the 'wows!'

It's normal to have surprises, questions or even doubts when we read the Bible. We've called these the 'whats' and the 'wows'. The 'whats' are things that you don't understand or make you question. The 'wows' are things that surprise you or make you stop and think. We can help our kids discover what to do when they come across a 'what' or a 'wow'.

### 3. See who God is in the story

As we read the Bible it helps us to build up a picture of who God is and what he does – his nature and his character. By reflecting on the passage and what else we know about God, we can begin to spot who he is in every part of the Bible.

### 4. See how this bit fits into God's big story

The Bible is hundreds of small stories and also one big story of how:



God made the world and everything in it, out of his great love.



People chose to walk away from his love so things went wrong.



God sent Jesus to make a way back to him.



God gives us his Spirit so we can join with him in bringing his love to the whole world.



One day, everything will be back as God intended it to be – forever.

We can help kids understand how each story fits into the big story.

### 5. Reflect on the story

God speaks to all of us individually through the Bible. We want to help kids understand it well and think about what they've read so they can hear God's voice through it.

### 6. Connect with God

Because God made us individually, we will all connect with him differently. Sometimes we'll read the Bible and instantly want to chat to God about it. Some people like journalling or worshipping; others may want to go for a walk to reflect quietly with God. Other times we may just close the Bible and go about our normal day. There's no one right way to connect with God or one right time.

# **Advent reading plan**

## **Week 1**

**Our readings this week are:**

**God's love overflows**

Genesis 1:1–27, 31

**Sin creeps into the garden**

Genesis 3:1–24

**God reveals his rescue plan**

Genesis 12:1–4 and Matthew 1:1–16

**The Lord created the heavens.**

**He is God.**

**He formed the earth and made it.**

**He set it firmly in place.**

**He didn't create it to be empty.**

**Instead, he formed it for people to**

**live on.**

**He says, "I am the Lord.**

**There is no other Lord."**

**Isaiah 45:18 (NIRV)**

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# God's love overflows

## Genesis 1:1–27, 31

### Where does this fit in?

This is the very first story in the Bible, but it's not the very first thing ever.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- Why do you think God wanted this story in the Bible?
- What did you notice about God in this story?
- What do you think is the most important part of this story? Why?
- What's one thing you'd always like to remember from this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

God loves it when we connect with him! Some days you'll do that as you read the Bible, some days you might just go about your day knowing that God is with you. Other times you might want to choose to do something to help you connect with God.

Here are some ideas we had to share our words, ideas and hearts with God:

- Sit quietly for a moment and see what God does.
- Chat to him about the story you read. If you have any questions, ask him and see if you catch his answer.
- Write down your ideas or thoughts, write a poem or draw a picture for God.
- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.



# Sin creeps into the garden

## Genesis 3:1–24

### Where does this fit in?

This story is the second in the Bible. Adam and Eve are living in the good garden, but even good things can be broken. Because God loved Adam and Eve he gave them choices, and this is what happened next.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you think God was feeling during this story?
- Does this story remind you of any others in the Bible?
- If you had to tell someone this story in just one sentence, what would you say?
- What's one thing you'd always like to remember from this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

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- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.

# God reveals his rescue plan

## Genesis 12:1–4 and Matthew 1:1–16

### Where does this fit in?

When Adam and Eve left the garden, sin spread everywhere. God hated that and made a rescue plan. A few thousand years later, this is how he told a man called Abram that he was part of that plan.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you notice about God in this story?
- Why do you think God wanted this story in the Bible?
- What name would you give God in this story?
- What's one thing you'd always like to remember from this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



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- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.

# **Advent reading plan**

## **Week 2**

**Our readings this week are:**

**God remembers his promise**

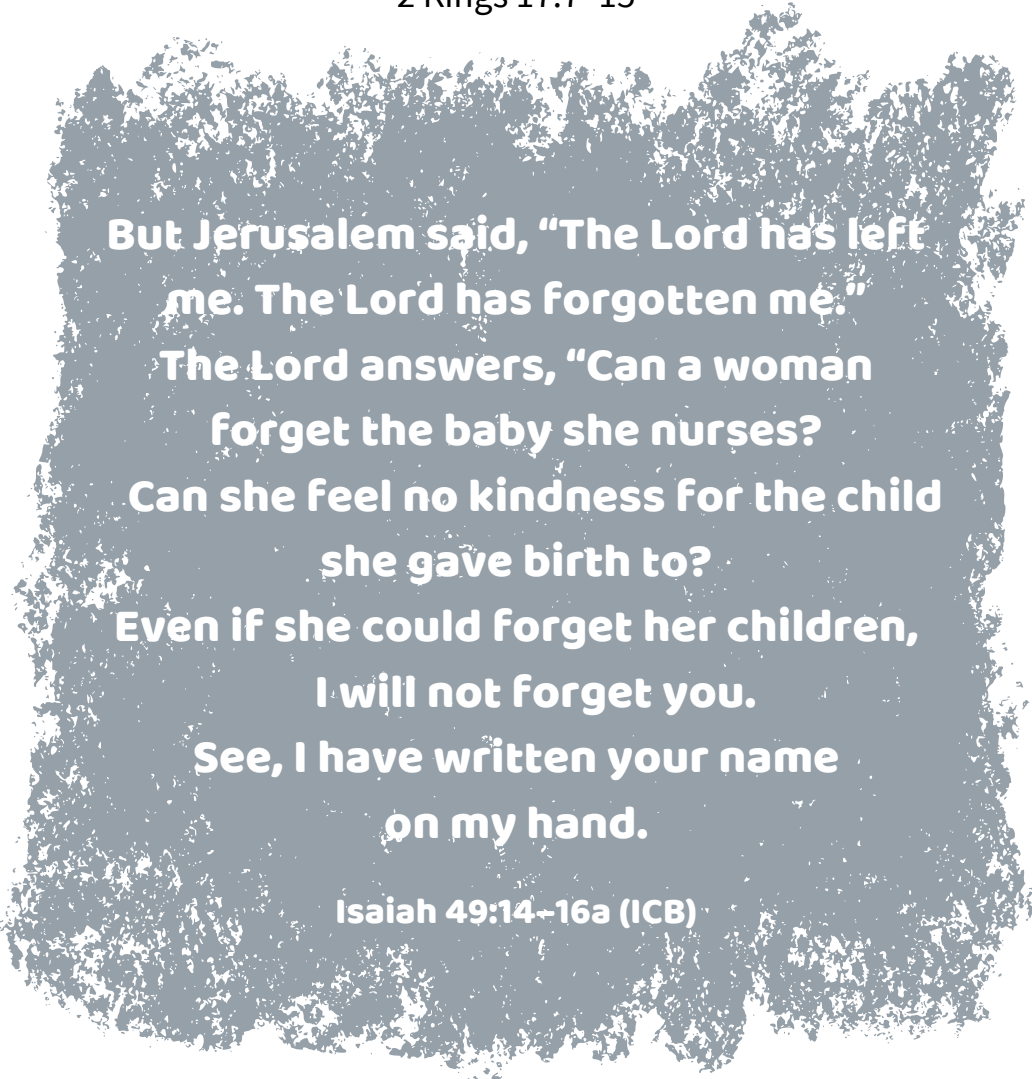
Exodus 2:23—3:10

**God promises a forever king**

2 Samuel 7:1–14

**God's people keep on disobeying him**

2 Kings 17:7–15



**But Jerusalem said, “The Lord has left  
me. The Lord has forgotten me.”  
The Lord answers, “Can a woman  
forget the baby she nurses?  
Can she feel no kindness for the child  
she gave birth to?  
Even if she could forget her children,  
I will not forget you.  
See, I have written your name  
on my hand.**

**Isaiah 49:14–16a (ICB)**

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# God remembers his promise

## Exodus 2:23—3:10

### Where does this fit in?

Hundreds of years have passed. Because of Joseph, God's people are in Egypt, where they are being treated badly. God hears their cries for help and remembers his promise to Abram.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What name would you give God in this story?
- Has God ever been like this for you?
- Does this story remind you of any other stories in the Bible?
- What do you think is the most important part of this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

God loves it when we connect with him! Some days you'll do that as you read the Bible, some days you might just go about your day knowing that God is with you. Other times you might want to choose to do something to help you connect with God.

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- Write down your ideas or thoughts, write a poem or draw a picture for God.
- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.

# God promises a forever king

## 2 Samuel 7:1–14

### Where does this fit in?

God's people now live in their own land, and have their own kings. God tells King David that one of his descendants will be a new sort of king, God's forever king and his son, who will reign forever.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you notice about God in this story?
- Why do you think God wanted this story in the Bible?
- If you had to tell someone what this story is about in just one sentence, what would you say?
- What name would you give God in this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

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- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.

# God's people keep on disobeying him

## 2 Kings 17:7–15

### Where does this fit in?

Over the next few hundred years, despite everything God had done for them, God's people kept on walking away from him. This passage comes just after a description of how their enemy Assyria had invaded Israel. This passage explains what the people had done and what God said to them.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you notice about God in this story?
- What do you think God might have been feeling in this story?
- Does this story remind you of any others in the Bible?
- What's one thing you'd always like to remember from this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

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# **Advent reading plan**

## **Week 3**

**Our readings this week are:**

**God's patience runs out**


2 Chronicles 36:7–20

**God promises hope and a future**

Jeremiah 29:10–14, 31:31–33

**The promised king arrives**

Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7 and Luke 2:1–14



**The Lord says,  
“Forget what happened before.  
Do not think about the past.  
Look at the new thing I am going  
to do.  
It is already happening.  
Don’t you see it?**

**Isaiah 43:18–19a (ICB)**

# God's patience runs out

## 2 Chronicles 36:7–20

### Where does this fit in?

The Bible tells us that God is patient, but also that he keeps his word. This story happens about 150 years after the last one. Because his people in Judah simply refused to take notice of him, God allowed them to be punished too.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What name would you give God in this story?
- Why do you think God wanted this story in the Bible?
- If you had to tell someone this story in just one sentence, what would you say?
- If you were in this story, who might you be?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

God loves it when we connect with him! Some days you'll do that as you read the Bible, some days you might just go about your day knowing that God is with you. Other times you might want to choose to do something to help you connect with God.

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- Write down your ideas or thoughts, write a poem or draw a picture for God.
- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.



# God promises hope and a future

## Jeremiah 29:10–14, 31:31–33

### Where does this fit in?

God didn't leave his people in exile in other countries. He always wants the best for us and will help us find that. So he sent them this message.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you notice about God in this story?
- Has God ever spoken to you like this?
- What do you think is the most important part of the story?
- What do you think God might have been doing in this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

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- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.

# The promised king arrives

## Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7 and Luke 2:1–14

### Where does this fit in?

Although God had brought the people back, that wasn't the end of the rescue plan. He knew they needed a different sort of rescue. He reminded people of his promise to send a new king hundreds of years before that king arrived.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What name would you give God in this story?
- Why do you think God wanted these stories in the Bible?
- If you were in this story, who would you be?
- What's one thing you'd always like to remember from this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



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# **Advent reading plan**

## **Week 4**

**Our readings this week are:**

**Jesus is good news**

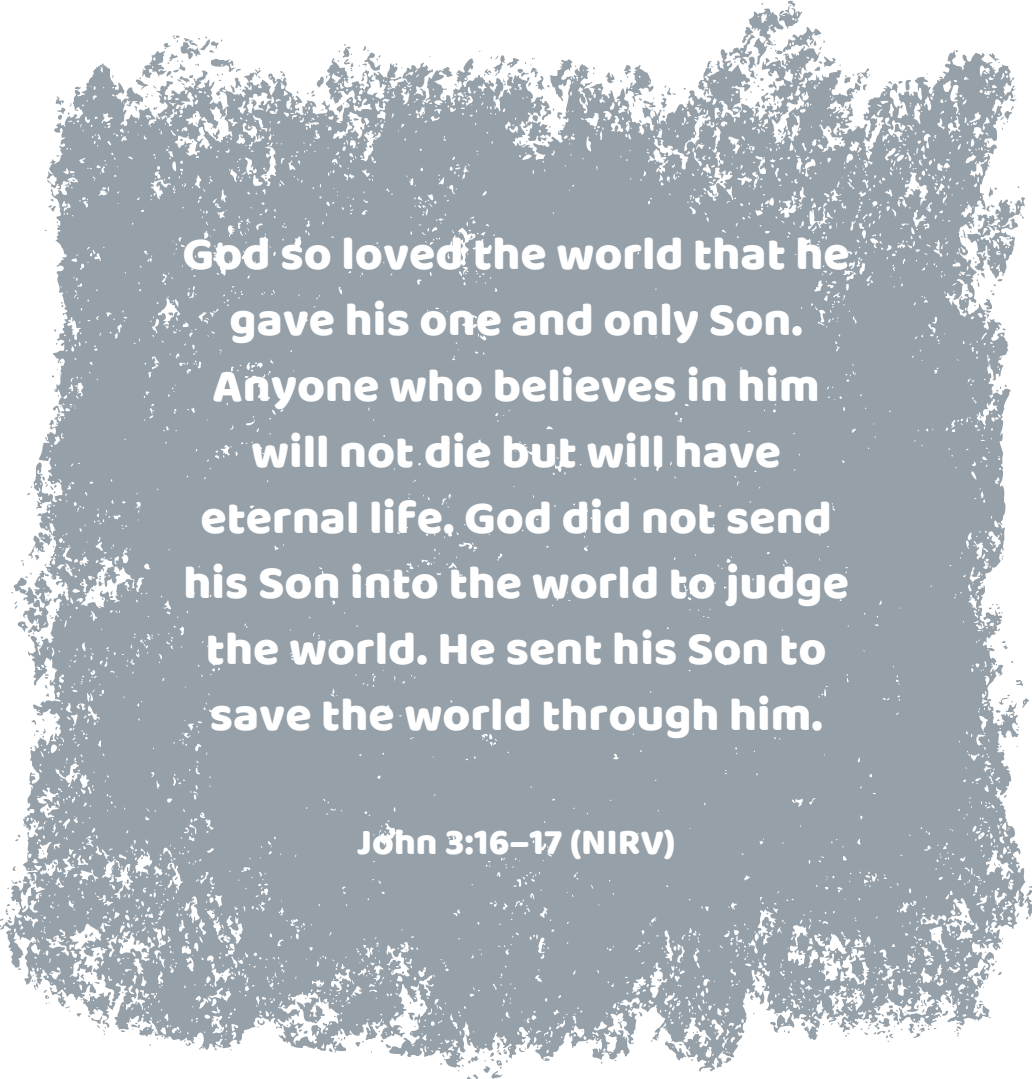
Luke 4:14–21

**Jesus dies**

Mark 15:1, 16–20, 25–39

**Death is defeated**

Matthew 28:1–10 and Hebrews 2:10–11, 14–15



**God so loved the world that he  
gave his one and only Son.  
Anyone who believes in him  
will not die but will have  
eternal life. God did not send  
his Son into the world to judge  
the world. He sent his Son to  
save the world through him.**

**John 3:16–17 (NIRV)**

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# Jesus is good news

## Luke 4:14–21

### Where does this fit in?

As Jesus grew up, hardly anyone realised he was the king God has promised. After he was baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus began to tell and show people what being God's new king was really about.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you think God was doing or feeling during this story?
- Does this story remind you of any others in the Bible?
- Why do you think God wanted this story in the Bible?
- What's one thing you'd always like to remember from this story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

God loves it when we connect with him! Some days you'll do that as you read the Bible, some days you might just go about your day knowing that God is with you. Other times you might want to choose to do something to help you connect with God.

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- Write down your ideas or thoughts, write a poem or draw a picture for God.
- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.

# Jesus dies

## Mark 15:1, 16–20, 25–39

### Where does this fit in?

Although Jesus was God's good news for people, there were powerful people who didn't like what he said and did. One Thursday evening, they arrested him. This is part of what happened next.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you notice about God in this story?
- If you had to tell someone this story in just one sentence, what would you say?
- If you were in the story, who would you be?
- What do you think is the most important part of the story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



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- Write down your ideas or thoughts, write a poem or draw a picture for God.
- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.

# Death is defeated

## Matthew 28:1–10 and Hebrews 2:10–11, 14–15

### Where does this fit in?

While Jesus' friends were overwhelmed with grief, God was busy. No one realised it, but Jesus' death was part of the rescue plan. Three days after he died, two of Jesus' friends decided to visit his grave.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you think God was feeling or thinking during this story?
- What's one thing you'd always like to remember from this story?
- What name would you give God in this story?
- What do you think is the most important part of the story?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

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# **Advent reading plan**

## **Week 5**

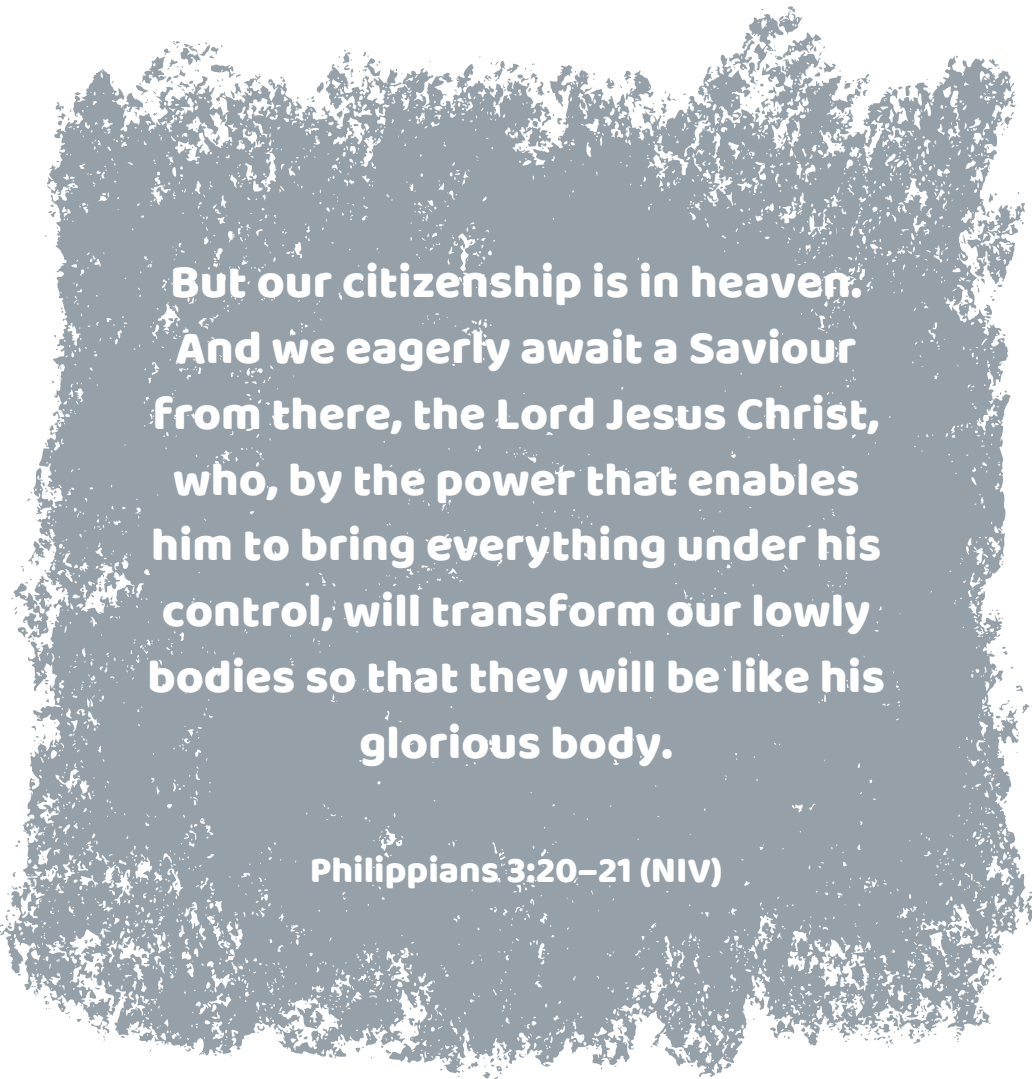
**Our readings this week are:**

**God gives us his Spirit**

John 14:16–17, Acts 2:1–18

**Back to how God meant it to be**

Revelation 21:1–7, Revelation 7:9–10,  
1 Corinthians 2:9



**But our citizenship is in heaven.  
And we eagerly await a Saviour  
from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,  
who, by the power that enables  
him to bring everything under his  
control, will transform our lowly  
bodies so that they will be like his  
glorious body.**

**Philippians 3:20–21 (NIV)**

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# God gives us his Spirit

## John 14:16–17, Acts 2:1–18

### Where does this fit in?

Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, everything was different! God sent his friends the Holy Spirit to give them power to stick close to him, and to help him let everyone know about him.

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you notice about God in this story?
- Why do you think God wanted this story in the Bible?
- If you were in this story, who would you be?
- Has God ever been like this for you?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

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- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.



# Back to how God meant it to be

## Revelation 21:1–7 and 7:9–10, 1 Corinthians 2:9

### Where does this fit in?

God gave a man called John a dream about what heaven is like, and this reading includes some of what John wrote, together with an amazing promise for all of us who love and follow God. This is how the rescue story, the big story of God and us ends – except that it will never end. How wonderful!

### Were there any 'whats'?

Was there anything you didn't understand or didn't like? Write it down. Who or what could help you understand it?

### Were there any 'wows'?

Did any words or ideas surprise you or make you think?

### Chewing it over

Your brain might already be thinking about all sorts of things because of what you have read. Here are some questions we had:

- What do you think God is doing or feeling in this story?
- Why do you think God wanted this story in the Bible?
- What would you like to always remember from this story?
- If you had to tell someone this story in just one sentence, what would you say?

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

### God's big story

Where does this story fit into God's big story?



### Connecting with God

God loves it when we connect with him! Some days you'll do that as you read the Bible, some days you might just go about your day knowing that God is with you. Other times you might want to choose to do something to help you connect with God.

Here are some ideas we had to share our words, ideas and hearts with God:

- Sit quietly for a moment and see what God does.
- Chat to him about the story you read. If you have any questions, ask him and see if you catch his answer.
- Write down your ideas or thoughts, write a poem or draw a picture for God.
- Go for a walk with God or dance around the room with him.
- What would you like to do? Everyone is different and everyone connects with God differently.