

REDEMPTION

THE BEST IS YET TO COME



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REDEMPTION: THE BEST IS YET TO COME
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INTRODUCTION

✦ VBS for Teens, Adults, or Both! ✦

How can your VBS boost its outreach to unchurched adults? Let teens and adults enjoy the fun too!

A student and adult Bible study introduces unsaved VBS family members to the Savior and makes them feel welcome in the church's fellowship. It helps saved family members of VBS kids grow in Christ and all church members to get involved in VBS.

As the Bible study progresses, class members should begin to feel like friends!

TIPS

- Invite friends and neighbors. If your church keeps track of visitors for children's awards, adults and teens could count as visitors.
- Make this Bible study a friendly time to explore God's Word. Have refreshments available and help newcomers feel welcome.
- Take extra care to avoid embarrassing anyone who is new to church. Avoid questions that will divide the class into "knowledgeable" and "ignorant" students.
- Have Bibles on hand for those who don't bring one. Involve everyone who wants to read Scripture without pressuring anyone to read.



- Help all members of the class, whether adults or teens, see how they can apply God's Word to the problems they face in everyday life.
- Keep going after VBS! Before VBS ends, make plans to get together for lunch, ice cream, or a similar outing. Be intentional about reaching out and helping visitors make friends from your church.

NEW FORMAT OPTIONS

This book provides material for at least two options for the group's structure.

OPTION 1: Offer separate classes for youth and adults. An advantage of this approach is the ability to speak to each group's unique problems. Simply choose from activities that are designated for each group in the book.

OPTION 2: Combine youth and adults. Advantages of this approach are plugging teens into the life of the church, giving them the opportunity to learn from adults' experience, and giving adults the opportunity to learn from teens' trend awareness. Include at least one activity per day that the whole class will enjoy.

Consider using this Bible study before VBS as a tool for preparing the hearts of VBS workers, whether teen helpers or adult staff members.

INTRODUCTION TO JUNKYARD REDEMPTION

Take a look at today's headlines and you'll have no doubt we live in a messed-up world! God didn't create our world this way. He made it perfect, "very good" (Genesis 1:31). He did not create pain.

But sin broke God's perfect creation—and now creation is like a junkyard, full of piles of debris and broken hearts. Nothing works as originally intended in God's perfect creation plan.

But thanks to the promises of God, we also know this world isn't the end. God promised to provide us with a Redeemer to save us from our sin and restore us to a close relationship with God. And the best is yet to come—He promised to restore the entire world and universe!

Because of Christ, we can face life in the warm glow of eternity. Through God's redemption plan, we can experience new life today, and someday we'll enjoy God's presence forever on a new earth that is better than ever before!

Together, let's discover how God is remaking things brand-new and how to be part of this coming world—where we'll have no more tears or heartaches ever again.

The lessons trace the arc of God's redemption plan throughout the Bible.

- **Lesson 1:** "A Promise to Restore" answers the question "What went wrong with our world?" When sin broke God's perfect world, God promised to fix it.
- **Lesson 2:** "A God of His Word" answers the question "Who can I trust to fix our world?" We can always trust God's promises, even when He seems to be taking a long time.
- **Lesson 3:** "A King Is Coming" answers the question "Who should rule my life?" God sets those who trust in Jesus free from sin to serve Him.
- **Lesson 4:** "The King God Promised" answers the question "What is the price to fix my brokenness?" Jesus paid the redemption price we could never afford.
- **Lesson 5:** "The World God Promised" answers the question "When will God fix our world for good?" God wants us to live with a sure hope of a perfect future.



A PROMISE TO RESTORE

Genesis 1:31–2:1; 2:15–17; 3:1–24

♦ Warm-up ♦

*TIP: IF YOU'RE COMBINING ADULTS AND TEENS,
CHOOSE THE ACTIVITY THAT BETTER FITS YOUR CLASS.*

*BEFORE EACH CLASS, BE SURE EXTRA BIBLES ARE ON HAND
IN CASE ANY STUDY MEMBERS DON'T HAVE A BIBLE WITH THEM.*

ADULT ACTIVITY: WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

MATERIALS

- A noticeably broken object (such as a tool or electronic device; try to find something with a funny or crazy reason for breaking).

We'll be talking a lot about broken things, so I brought something broken.

ACTIVITY: Show the item and explain how amazing it was when it worked, but don't say how it broke. If desired, pass the item around. Next, ask for guesses on the backstory—i.e., how the item broke. After a minute or two, tell the real backstory.

DISCUSS: All we have to do is go down the street and look around, and we'll notice broken things like relationships, possessions, and health. Sometimes people wonder what happened and why. Today we'll see the true backstory from the Bible of what happened to the world.

STUDENT ACTIVITY: TWO TRUTHS—JUST ONE LIE

ACTIVITY: Play "Two Truths and a Lie" to help students get to know each other. Each student takes a turn sharing three things about him- or her-



self. Two should be true, while one should be false. The rest of the class must figure out which is which.

DISCUSS: This game is a fun way to get to know one another. Today we're going to talk about a lie that was the opposite of fun. Because of that lie, our entire world became broken.

◆ Workshop ◆

What do the Colosseum, Machu Picchu, and the *Titanic* have in common? All three are the sites of well-known ruins. The Colosseum is an ancient stadium heavily damaged by earthquakes and time. Machu Picchu is a remote, overgrown Incan city high in the mountains. And the *Titanic* is an iconic shipwreck submerged about 12,500 feet below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean.

◆ **ASK: What emotions or thoughts come to mind when you hear the names Colosseum, Machu Picchu, and *Titanic*?**

Each of these locations is a ruin, a relic of a better time and place, a shadow of its former self. For example, imagine sailing on the *Titanic* when it was new and pristine! Now it lies broken, silent, and decayed. But these are only representatives of the greatest ruin of all time—the world itself.

GOD'S PERFECT CREATION

God's Word, the Bible, is very clear about the origin of our world. Genesis 1:31–2:1 tells us that God made the world and everything in it.

What doesn't always get as much attention as the world's origin is what it was like when it was created. Our world was *out* of this world in beauty and goodness when God first made it!

◆ **READ: Genesis 1:31.**

*TIP: INVOLVE EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO READ,
VARYING WHO READS EACH TIME.*

To say that everything God made was very good means every single thing God made was completely wonderful and everything worked properly. Not one thing had problems. No diseases stunted plant growth or caused pain in humans or animals.

This perfect goodness was true of everything in the natural world, especially relationships. Animals were always affectionate toward other animals and humans. Adam and Eve never dreamed of saying a hurtful thing to each other. And most important, Adam and Eve had a perfect relationship with God. They enjoyed spending time with Him.

God allowed Adam and Eve nearly complete access to food from the trees of the Garden of Eden. To grasp this today, how would you feel if a grocery store manager gave you permission to walk through the aisles and take any items at any time for free? That would be amazing!

That's precisely what God did for mankind. He created a wonderful and perfect world and then offered all of it to people at *no cost*.

God made people to live in a perfect world, freely enjoying its many blessings, especially the blessing of close relationships with one another and with God. Notice how good God was to humans when He said to Adam:

♦ **READ: Genesis 2:16.**

This shows us how kind and generous God is. But God did make one exception that Adam and Eve needed to observe.

♦ **READ: Genesis 2:17.**

By giving this stipulation, God provided a way for people to trust in Him as God. Would they obey His instruction? Would they trust that His way is best, or would they doubt or question His goodness and wisdom?

SIN'S TRAGIC EFFECTS

Genesis 3:1–24 answers these questions for us. It tells how Adam and Eve failed to trust God by choosing to eat from the very tree that God had placed off-limits. From that moment onward, the moment mankind broke trust with God, the world became broken.

In Genesis 3, we see some effects of this brokenness.

1. Adam and Eve's close relationship with God was broken; they hid from Him (3:8).
2. Their relationship with each other was broken; Adam blamed Eve (3:12).
3. Humanity's relationship with the world was broken. Work, child-birth, and marriage became difficult and painful (3:16–19).
4. The earth itself was broken, as thorns and weeds grew for the first time (3:17, 18).

And this, as we know, was only a small sample of all the things that began to go wrong. But the worst effect was spiritual death. Adam and Eve became sinners, and so did all people who would come after them except one.

◆ **READ: Romans 5:12.**

A word is used in this verse that appears often in the Bible to describe the brokenness of sin: death. When the word *death* is used in this way, it means “separation.”

Even while alive physically, people apart from God are dead relationally with the Life-Giver. They are dead to what is truly good in His estimation. And death includes, of course, the one thing we usually think of: our lives coming to an end.

This tragic, painful reality is a result of sin entering the world. But the effects of sin are far-ranging and far-reaching.

◆ **ASK: Think about this question, but don't say the answer out loud. Where do you see the effects of this broken world on your relationships or responsibilities right now?**

GOD'S HINT ABOUT REDEMPTION

If you were a trillionaire, would you be interested in using some of your wealth to restore the Colosseum, Machu Picchu, the *Titanic*, or all three to



their original condition? Imagine watching an event in the fully restored Colosseum or offering luxurious cruises on the *Titanic*!

But even with unlimited money, would this be possible? Probably not, because some things money cannot buy and technology cannot reproduce.

That's why we have junkyards. A junkyard is like a graveyard for broken, rusted, worn-out stuff. When things go bad, we usually just throw them away and move on.

But that's not how God works. Because He is good, He chooses to redeem, rescue, and restore what sin has broken and we have broken.

God had a plan to do this from the very start. Even as He explained to Adam and Eve the sad consequences for their sin, He also began to reveal His plan to restore what sin had broken.

✦ **READ: Genesis 3:15.**

God explained to Satan that though he had persuaded people to sin, they would not permanently remain on his side. A special person would come into conflict with Satan. In this conflict, Satan would cause serious damage ("bruise" this person's heel), but in return, this person would crush Satan, sin, and death once and for all ("bruise" the serpent's head).

This promise is the first sneak peek into God's plan to restore people and creation from the brokenness that sin had caused.

This restoration plan is where true hope comes from. Chances are, you're familiar with restoration of one kind or another. We're surrounded by interest in restoring old things. People like to reupholster old furniture, restore old homes, upcycle old clothes, and restore old cars.

Human interests like these point to an awareness in all of us that restoration is a good and desirable thing. Unfortunately, we are totally incapable of restoring our world to its original, sinless state and—most significantly—we can't restore ourselves. Thankfully, however, we know that God can and does want to do this for us.

You probably know who the person is that God promised in Genesis 3:15. Jesus Christ would crush Satan and restore our world and our close rela-



tionship with God. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, He won decisive victory over sin and death.

God rescues from sin and spiritual death anyone who trusts in Jesus alone as Savior. We'll talk more about this amazing plan of restoration in future lessons.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for creating the world and for making it very good. Thank You for creating people—for creating us—to enjoy Your many blessings and, most of all, to have a close relationship with You. We realize that we're a lot like Adam and Eve. We have broken trust with You and sinned by disobeying Your commands. Please help us to understand more about God's plan through Jesus to restore, redeem, and rescue me from my sin.

◆ Workout: Adults ◆

- 1. How does reflecting on the brokenness caused by Adam and Eve's wrong choice deepen your appreciation for God's original gift of a perfect, "very good" world?**
- 2. How do the events of Genesis 3 at the beginning of history encourage you to choose to trust in God's wisdom despite conflicting challenges or doubts?**

3. Why is trusting in God's wisdom sometimes hard?

4. How does God's promise in Genesis 3:15 to defeat sin and death through a Savior encourage you to pray or act with hope?

✦ **Memorize: Romans 5:12.**

✦ **Workout: Students** ✦

1. What's an area of brokenness you see with friends, at school, or online, and how might trusting God's way make a difference in those situations?

2. God gave Adam and Eve access to everything in the Garden except one tree. Have you ever been given a rule, such as when your parent sets a boundary, but you don't understand the reason? How does this event in Genesis 3 help your thinking about trusting God when you don't fully understand His rules?

✦ **Memorize: Romans 5:12.**

◆ Student Activities ◆

OPTION 1: PROMISE PRAYER CARDS

DESCRIPTION: On index cards, teens will write something broken in their lives and a prayer asking God for His help in that area.

MATERIALS

- Index cards; markers.

ACTIVITY: Give each teen an index card and markers. Ask them to write or draw something broken in their lives or world (e.g., a worry, a hurt, a struggle) on one side. On the other, have them write a short prayer inspired by Genesis 3:15, asking God to bring restoration through Jesus. Teens can keep their cards private or share them with the group or a partner in the group. Allow 5–7 minutes to create the cards, then 5 minutes for optional sharing and group prayer.

DISCUSS: How did writing your prayer make you feel about God's promise? Why is it comforting to know Jesus can restore what we can't? Keep your card to help you remember to trust God in that situation.

OPTION 2: RESTORATION STORY CHAIN

DESCRIPTION: Teens will collaborate as a group to create a story about restoration and draw the connections to God's promise to restore the world and us.

BEFORE CLASS: Plan 10–12 minutes for the story.

ACTIVITY: Sit in a circle and create a group story about restoration. Start with a prompt such as "Once there was a broken [object, place, or relationship] that seemed unfixable . . ." Each teen adds one sentence, building toward how it will be restored (they can include Jesus, hope, or a creative fix). The leader can gently guide the story if it stalls.

DISCUSS: What made the restoration in your story meaningful? How does it remind you of God's promise to restore the world and us? Highlight Jesus as the ultimate restorer.



✦ Optional: Closing Game ✦

VOLLEYBALL

MATERIALS

- Volleyball and net (or another game with a net).

GAME: Play volleyball or another game with a net (e.g., badminton, giant volleyball).

DISCUSS: God always keeps His promises. Like the volleyball goes back and forth, history and our lives go back and forth, but God's promises never fail. He promised to fix our broken world—and He will.