

55. Forever



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Revelation 21:1-8, 22:1-9

The end of the Bible promises that God's people will be with him forever.

(This session also includes a recap of One Big Story.)



AIMS

To help the children reflect on the end of God's story.

To recap the whole of One Big Story and help them reflect on what they have learned.

God gave John a vision showing him how the story will end and that there will be a new beginning: God's people will be with him forever and there will be no more death, sadness or pain.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passage for this session and reflect:

- How does knowing the end of the story bring you comfort or hope?
- What have been the main things that have struck you about God's story as you have gone through One Big Story with your group?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Favourite Games

Let the children play their favourite game(s) from One Big Story if they voted for them in the previous session. If not, you could pick a game that they seemed to particularly enjoy or choose one of the options below.

▶ Story Cubes

You will need: either the *Story Cubes* game (available from Amazon etc.), your own *DIY story cubes* (free download available here: <https://www.funkidslive.com/summer-challenge/free-printable->

[story-cubes-download-play/](#)), or a phone with the *Story Dice* app (free on Android or Apple)

Let the children take turns to roll the dice to reveal a selection of symbols. Their task is to create a short story based around the symbols shown. It only needs to be a few sentences long and it can be as serious or silly as they like. You could either let one child make up the whole story or let them take turns to add to the story, incorporating a new symbol each time.

▶ Consequences Game

You will need: pens and paper

Each player starts with a piece of paper. The players each write a word or phrase as the first step in a story and then fold the paper to hide what they have written before passing it to the next player.

The steps are as follows,

(continued overleaf)

where the words in brackets should be replaced by the chosen words or phrase:

(boy's name)

met (girl's name)

in/at/on (where they met)

He said (what he said)

She said (what she said)

He (what he did)

She (what she did)

The consequence was (what happened).

When the players have completed all eight steps the pieces of paper are unfolded in turn and the players read out the completed, usually funny, stories.

You could make the point that in the game you had stories with many authors and the stories that were produced were funny, but didn't make much sense.

The Bible is different. It was written by many authors – around 40 – and it was written over several hundred years, so many of the authors had never met each other, but, as you've hopefully seen through One Big Story, this story does make sense. It all ties together because although many different humans wrote it, Christians believe it was inspired by God.



▶ One Big Story Recap

You will need: cards printed from additional document: One Big Story Recap Cards

Before the children arrive, cut out the cards from the second page of the document. Set aside the final card, which gives the end of the story of the Bible, and hide the others around the

room. These cards refer to what has been covered in the second year of One Big Story.

Get the children to hunt for the cards and then to try to sort them into the correct order to tell the story.

If you have a larger group, you could hide multiple sets of the cards, printed on different colours of paper or marked with different symbols. Then you could divide the children into small groups and see which group is first to find the cards and sort them into order.

Once they have sorted the cards into order, lay out the cards from the first page of the document (these cover the content of the first year of One Big Story – you may have used them before in Session 27 or 28) so that the children can see an overview of the whole thing.

▶ The End Of One Big Story

You will need: Bible

Today we come to the end of One Big Story. We have gone all the way through the Bible from beginning to end. We haven't covered everything, but we have covered the main storyline, and hopefully it has helped you understand more about what is in the Bible and how it fits together.

Now we're going to look at the final part of the story.

The last book of the Bible is called Revelation and it tells us about a vision that God gave to one of Jesus' disciples, John. This was when John was a very old man so it was several years after Jesus had ascended into heaven.

In the vision, God showed John lots of things that would happen in the future and he showed what the future will be like for God's people.

Read Revelation 21:3-4 and ask the children what they think

about it.

Most of us like a story with a happy ending, and, for God's people it will be the ultimate happy ending that goes on forever.

In fact, it's really more like a new beginning. God showed John that everything will be restored and made new – that Jesus will be King over everything, evil will be completely destroyed and God's people will be with him forever. The book of Revelation talks about a new heaven and a new earth which are not spoiled by sin, but where everything is restored to perfection as God intended it to be.

Add the final card to your Bible timeline to complete the story.

(Leaders' note: be aware that children may ask about what happens to those who don't believe in Jesus and be prepared for this. It is wise to avoid getting caught up in too much detail, or in giving answers about individual people (if asked, for example, is my Granny in heaven?), but to say that those who have chosen to be part of God's people will still be God's people, and that God wants everyone to be with him forever (2 Peter 3:9) but that some people choose to reject him.)

▶ God's Story Video

You will need: equipment to play video

Show this five-minute video, which gives an overview of the whole story of the Bible: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebrbdbXzMrg>



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

You will need: large sheets of paper, pens or pencils, post-it notes (optional)

In advance, prepare four large sheets of paper by writing a phrase in the middle of each one:

The main thing I've learned is...

A highlight of One Big Story was...

A question I still have is...

Something I want to say to God is...

Encourage the children to think back over One Big Story and to reflect on what they have learned, what was a highlight for them, any questions they have, and what they would like to say to God.

Depending on your group, you may want to ask them to share some answers aloud or you may just want to get them to write down their responses.

If you have a small group, you could get the children to write their responses directly on each sheet. If you have a larger group, you could give them post-it notes to write their responses on and then get them to stick them onto the sheets of paper when they have finished.

▶ Prayer

If you used the reflection activity above, take a look at the responses on the final sheet - "Something I want to say to God is...". You could give the children the option to read their prayers aloud or you could lead them in prayer, incorporating some of their responses.