

God creates the world.

Genesis 1:1—2:25

In the beginning, before anything was anything, God made the heavens and the earth. He just said, "Let there be light," and there was light! Then God made the sky and the land and the oceans. God made the plants and the sun, moon and stars. He liked what He made. It was very good!

Then God said, "Let the sky be filled with birds that fly." And it was. He said, "Let the waters be filled with all sorts of creatures." Then there were fish, dolphins, jellyfish, and many other creatures in the water. Next, God made every kind of animal. When God saw all the creatures that He made, He said that they were very good.

Then God did something even more special! He took some dirt and formed it into a man. Then God breathed into the man and he became alive. Next, God made a woman. They were the first people—people like you and me. They were named Adam and Eve. God loved Adam and Eve. Everything God made was very good.

Jesus loves the children.

Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17

One day Jesus was teaching His friends and other people about God. They were listening carefully to what Jesus was saying. Just then, a group of people came to see Jesus.

Jesus and His friends looked at these people and saw that it was children and their parents. The children and their mothers and fathers were so excited to see Jesus.

But when they came near to Jesus, His friends thought that Jesus was too busy to talk to the children. Jesus' friends said, "Don't bring those children here!" The children and their parents were sad to hear those words. They started to walk away.

But wait! Jesus said, "Let the children come to Me! I want to see them!" Jesus was not too busy to see the children! Jesus loved them!

Right away, the children ran to Jesus. They crowded close to Him. Some even climbed up on His lap. Jesus put His arms around them. What a happy day! The children knew Jesus loved them!

Jesus tells about the good shepherd.

John 10:7-18

Jesus told about a shepherd who took good care of his sheep. Each day he took them to a good place to eat green plants. He found cool water for them to drink. He scared away all the wolves that tried to sneak up on the sheep while they were eating. He knew the name of each sheep. The sheep knew the shepherd's voice, too. They would not come when a stranger called them.

When nighttime came, the shepherd led his sheep to a sheepfold made of rock walls. There was only one doorway. The shepherd counted his sheep as they walked in. When each sheep was inside, the shepherd would lie down to sleep right across the doorway! That way, no robber or wolf could get

into the fold and hurt the sheep. The shepherd protected his sheep.

Jesus told the people listening to the story that they were like sheep! And Jesus said He was like the good shepherd.

Jesus said, "I am the One who protects the sheep. My sheep will be safe because I am their shepherd. I have come so that My sheep might have the best kind of life there is!"

"I am the Good Shepherd," Jesus said. "I give My own life for My sheep." Jesus meant that He loves people so much that He was going to die on the cross to pay for the wrong things we do.

John baptizes Jesus.

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22; John 1:29-34

One day Jesus went to see John the Baptist. John was preaching and baptizing people in the Jordan River. John told people to turn away from doing bad things because the Savior of the world was coming.

Jesus asked John to baptize Him. John knew that Jesus was the Savior of the world. John said, "I am not even good enough to tie your shoes. Why do you ask me to baptize you? You ought to baptize me!" Jesus said that it was right for John to baptize Him.

So John and Jesus waded out into the river. After John baptized Jesus, a dove flew down and landed on Jesus to show that God was with Him. A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son. I am pleased with Him."

Jesus' friends learn to pray.

Matthew 6:5-13; Mark 1:35-37; Luke 11:1-4

One evening, Jesus stayed at a house with some of His friends. When morning came, Jesus' friends heard the sound of voices outside the house. Many people had come to see Jesus.

Jesus' friends looked for Jesus. They looked inside and outside the house for Him. But they did not find Jesus anywhere! So they walked down the road to look for Him. When Jesus' friends came to a quiet place, they saw Jesus. He was all alone, praying. He was talking to God, His Father in heaven.

Jesus' friends knew that Jesus liked to pray. Many times His friends had seen Jesus praying. And now they saw that Jesus would even get up early in the morning to pray!

Soon after, Jesus' friends asked Him to teach them to pray. Jesus told them to talk to God just as they would talk to a father who loves them very

much. Jesus said to ask God the Father for what they needed each day. Jesus said to ask God to forgive them for the wrong things they did, and to forgive other people for wrong things they did to them, too. Jesus also said to ask God to help them do right things.

"When you pray," Jesus said, "pray like this:

'Our Father who is in heaven, holy is Your name.

We want You to be our King.

Give us what we need today.

Forgive the wrong things we do.

We forgive everyone who has done wrong to us.

Please protect us. Help us to do right.

You are the King. You can do anything.

Amen.' "

Jesus tells the story of the lost sheep.

Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:3-7

Jesus told a story about a shepherd who had 100 sheep.

"This shepherd loved his sheep and took good care of them. The shepherd carried a long stick called a staff. If a sheep would start to walk too far away, the shepherd tapped the sheep with his staff, so it would come back. Sometimes the shepherd used the staff to help a sheep get up after it had fallen.

"Every day, the shepherd counted his sheep as he let them out of the fold. He counted all 100 sheep and made sure they were there. Then he led his sheep out to the hillsides so that they could eat green grass. The sheep drank cool water, too. The shepherd made sure the sheep had enough to eat and drink.

"One day, the shepherd counted his sheep, but he only counted 99! One of the sheep was gone! The shepherd hurried off to find his lost sheep. He looked all over! Then the shepherd heard a little 'Baaa!' He heard it again and looked some more. 'BAAAA!' Then he saw the lost sheep.

"The shepherd reached down and gently lifted the sheep up from where it was stuck. The shepherd laid the sheep across his shoulders. He carried the sheep back to where the other sheep were. The good shepherd was very glad he had found his lost sheep! And the sheep was glad to be back with the good shepherd who always loved and cared for it.

"God loves us like that," Jesus said. "He is glad when we accept His love and obey Him."