

# Outline and Teaching Guide to Sunday Software's Awesome Bible Stories

This program is being made available free-of-charge by Sunday Software to the supporting members of Rotation.org for use in their Sunday Schools and congregation's homes. Additional teaching materials and tech helps are available at [sundaysoftware.com](http://sundaysoftware.com)

## Technical Notes

1. Ignore the old "licensing" language found in the installer. Sunday Software is giving permission to the supporting members and their congregational families to install this program on as many PCs in the church and member homes as needed.
2. Make this program fill more of your screen by adjusting the "Display Scale" option to 125% to 150% in your Windows Display options. For "how to" see the "Adjusting Display Size" PDF that came with the download.
3. Make sure you have the latest version of Quicktime for Windows (7.7.9) installed on your computer to run Awesome software's videos and animation.

## Age Range:

Most of this program's content is easily usable by Kindergarteners through Sixth Grade. Having said that, we designed it with the expectation that an adult would be present to enhance and explain content even further. Younger children will need to be guided through some text-only content.

## Brief Overview:

Each of the six stories in Awesome Bible Stories presents the scripture, provides insights, includes discussion questions, and engages with fun activities. Some have quizzes and others have special life application reflection activities. Story presentations "pause" throughout the storytelling for students and teacher to talk. Thus, each story can be used as the lesson plan if a teacher or parent accompanies the student(s), encouraging them to pause, and pointing out key content. Awesome Bible Stories content is best used as part of a multi-week set of lessons about each important story with different weeks using different teaching methods and materials.

## Navigation

At the bottom of every screen --- The **Orange "Main Menu"** button takes you back to the Main Menu of the program. The **Green "Go Back"** button takes you to the menu for the story you are in. Creation, Jacob, Esther are longer and have more content. The four Old Testament stories feature "Gabby" your onscreen guide. He offers comments and hosts certain activities.

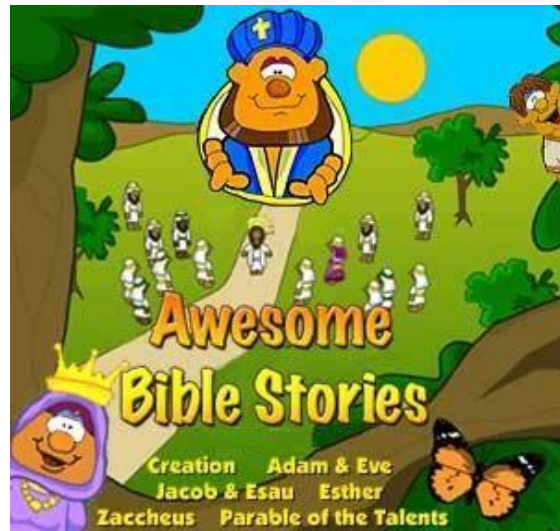
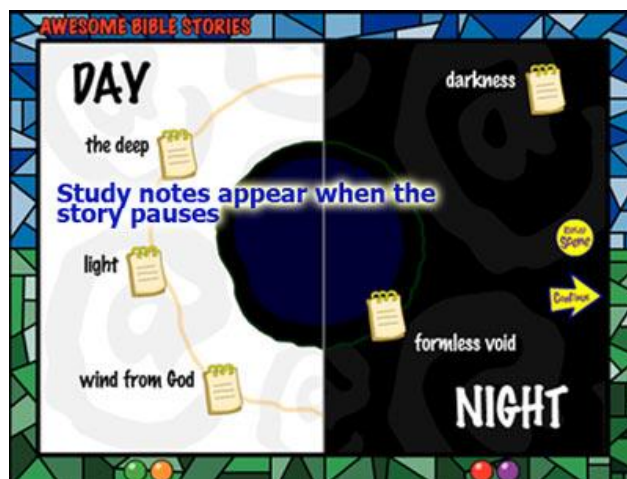


## The Creation Story - Genesis 1

### Menu Choices:

- Play the Story
- Play the Days (game)
- Creation Power Poem (for reflection)
- Creation Quiz

**Students see & hear the story**, understand its strange and powerful vocabulary, and express the meaning of the story by using its newly learned words and concepts in an interactive poem. Truly, Genesis 1 has some of the most amazing words and majestic phrases in all of scripture. Onscreen scripture notes



explain the words to children. The presentation emphasizes power and majesty and goodness of God on display in Creation. Narrated study notes appear after each Day of Creation is presented – focusing on some of the unique words and phrases in the scripture.

**The Creation Quiz** reinforces central concepts and order of the days (scripture).

**The Creation Power Poem** is an activity that gets students to identify what they think are the key words (*concepts*) of the story –and has them creatively recombine them into their own Creation Poem for “Gabby” to speak to the entire class. Encourage them to create several possible poems. Stop, listen and discuss each. There’s a set of “suggested uses” for the Power Poem that pops up when you first use it.

The **Days of Creation puzzle page** is for fun –but learning the structure of the days will help them organize and remember content and meaning.

## **Adam & Eve – Genesis 2**

### **Menu Choices:**

- Play the Story
- Narrated-Animated Study Notes
- Gabby Talker Reflection
- Activity
- Adam and Eve Apples Game --*“You can run but you cannot hide from God”*



The challenge of teaching the Adam & Eve story is that in the Bible it is rather long and conceptually complex for children. We’ve condensed it a bit and made the language much more kid-friendly. The study notes, in particular, encourage students to consider how human beings SHOULD react when they realize they’ve done wrong. Adam and Eve are not presented as “historical” persons, but rather as representative humans.

**Narrated Study Notes** appear on the main menu of Adam & Eve. Consider ahead of time which ones you want students to hear and discuss. Several of them pose questions which can be answered out loud, or perhaps answered on a notecard and brought to a discussion table.

**The Gabby Talker activity** is about “how to apologize” and has several suggested uses (click the instructions button in the activity). Recommendations: Work on offering an apology to God. Or... have the students create a conversation between computers, one taking Adam’s point of view, one taking God’s, etc. Younger children can hear the words by rolling over them before clicking to select them.

### **The Adam and Eve Game**

This game can be found on the study note titled “Hiding from God!” Comments appear between the levels of the game. There’s also a menu button on the main Adam and Eve men to access the game without playing the game. But that’s no fun.

**AWESOME BIBLE STORIES**

## Hiding from God!

What are the ways people try to **hide** their sins from **God**?

- You could decide obeying God is not important to you.
- You could pretend that your sins are not that bad.
- You could say, “well, everyone does it.”
- You could fail to pray about them.
- You might ask for forgiveness without changing your ways.

Everyone sins. Everyone needs to talk to God about their sins. Everyone can be forgiven for their sins, and helped by God to be a better human being. God did not make us perfect. God made us to need his love, help, and understanding.

**Follow up:**

- Come up with a skit or prayer about hiding sins and talking to God about them.

Back to Game Title

Previous

There is an error in some versions of Awesome Bible Stories in the study note on the main Adam and Eve page. When you click the lower left "target" icon, it reads "Is This Story for You" -but unfortunately it does not play that study note! ...it repeats another note.

Here is the correct study note that it SHOULD have played:



## **Jacob & Esau -Genesis 25:19-28, Chapters 27, 29, 32, and Genesis 33:1-20**

### **Menu Choices:**

Play the Story  
Midnight Wrestling  
Game Gabby Talker

One of our main goals in this story is simply to tell this very l-o-n-g episodic story to children in a concise and memorable fashion. Thus, we've broken the story into four episodes which you can access from the story's main menu:

1. Jacob and Esau are Born, Esau sells his birthright
2. Jacob, Laban, Rachel and Leah
3. Jacob wrestles with the angel
4. Jacob reconciles with Esau

**Play the Jacob Story:** This is the second longest story in Awesome Bible Stories. Its drama involves trickery and reconciliation (not unlike Adam & Eve's story in this CD and so many others in the Bible). **Study Questions** appear at various locations in the story. One slick way of using this story is to go straight through it the first time without pausing for any study notes, -- then, go through it again stopping at KEY study notes (which you've previously identified). Afterwards, try your hand at Gabby Talker and finish up in the Midnight Wrestling Game. In the Jacob –

**Gabby Talker** reflection activity, students are encouraged to practice **creating the dialog of reconciliation** from the point of view of Jacob, or Esau, or God.

**Midnight Wrestling Game:** Tucked away in the Jacob story is the episode of Jacob wrestling with the angel, --who turns out to be God, --who then changes Jacob's name to Israel. The wrestling game we've created for this story is a fun way to remember this important episode. **Questions about the story appear in-between rounds.** If you miss a few questions the game ends! Teachers might note that this wrestling match preceding Jacob & Esau's may have humbled Jacob's approach to Esau. How does Jacob's wrestling match change him? There are additional comments/questions found after the Wrestling Game finishes.



Jacob's story spans eight chapters of scripture so we had to leave some episode out. We did not include "Jacob's Ladder" or the extended scenes with Laban and the household gods. When you read the story of Jacob all by itself, it appears to be a story about reconciliation within a family. But in the larger context of Genesis, you could also say that it is a story about how God is working through imperfect people (like us) to raise up a people dedicated to sharing God's message.

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## **The Story of Esther**

### **Menu Choices:**

- Play the Story Esther
- Esther Quiz
- Purim Video
- Haman vs Mordecai game



Esther's story is so large and has so many plot twists that our main goal and challenge was simply retelling it at a brisk pace to Christian children unfamiliar with it. Its comical nature is very much in keeping with the Jewish tradition of celebrating Esther's story with humor. This celebration is known as the Festival of Purim,

The Esther story begins with a brief introduction about the time period. In order to keep the story manageable, we only mention Queen Vashti, though she is certainly a virtuous woman. There are some other details in the Bible's story of Esther which we left out for the sake of clarity and length. Reading through the book with older children would be a large but not impossible task.

The **Purim video clip** shows how one modern Jewish congregation celebrates this story, and includes some follow up comments and questions for further discussion. After learning the story, throw a Purim party!

The **Esther Quiz** helps cement the story line and character motivations into memory.

The **Mordecai vs Haman "Connect Four"** –like game is designed for fun, but also to help them remember how Mordecai and Haman tried to outwit each other –one for good, one for evil purposes. Assign one student to be Mordecai and place his markers, then pass the mouse to another student who places the Haman markers into the game board.

**What is Esther all about?** It's about standing up for your faith and the safety of others. It's about protecting innocent people. It's about the right to worship God in your own way. It's about the importance of maintaining your values, even when you find yourself in a far off land. It's about seizing the opportunity to do good when it comes your way. It's about using your power and influence for Godly purposes. It's about influencing others to do the right thing.

Do some memory verse work on Esther 4:14's wonderful life-applying verse. ***"Perhaps you have come to such a royal position - for just such a time as this."*** (Check your church's preferred Bible translation). Think about other ways to say this and what it might say to you, such as, "perhaps you have come to be a soccer player for such a time as this." One of the study notes in the Esther story ask: What positions of influence does a student hold and how could they use it for Godly purposes.

## Who is Gabby?

Gabby is short for "Gabriel." He's the onscreen animated narrator seen in the four Old Testament stories. Not only does he narrate the stories, he also provides commentary and study notes when asked and hosts three special reflection activities called "Gabby Talker." Gabby Talker appears in Creation, Adam & Eve, and Jacob & Esau. Each Gabby Talker has its own special set of key words taken from the story which the students can select in any order or combination to express the essence of the story, an idea in the story, or create new dialog, or a poem about the story – which Gabby can speak aloud.



## Parable of the Talents - Matthew 25:14-30

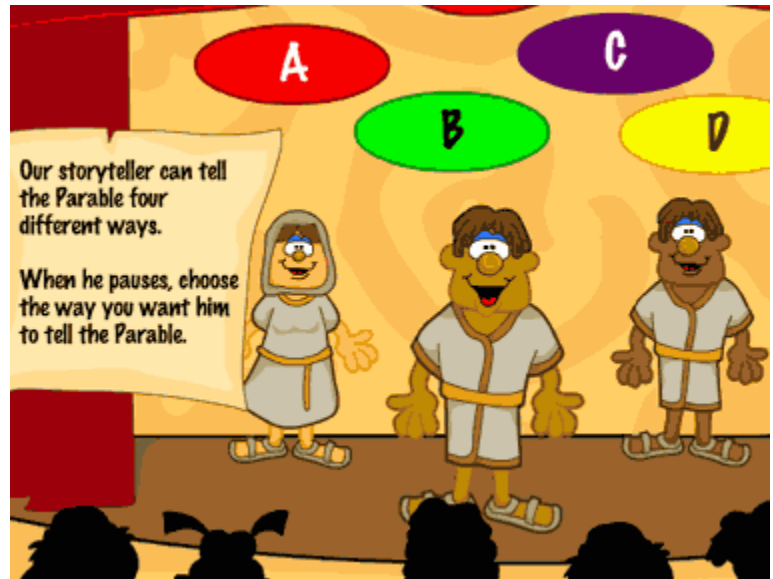
### Menu Choices:

Play the Story  
Talents-Stewardship Game

This parable has some vocabulary and concepts that will be new to many students. That's why the program's interactive story presents four different "translation" options for students to select throughout the story. The idea here is that you'll have the time to hear the story several different ways. For example, students can select "you wicked slacker" instead of "you wicked servant."

The translation options appear as onscreen buttons: **A, B, C, or D. Option A always plays the original scripture version.** Options B, C, and D are fun translations based on synonyms today's kids will understand.

There are **study notes/questions to pause and consider during the story.** Additional concepts are narrated in a set of **study notes at the end of the story.**



The **Talents Board Game** is for two players or group. It presents modern day ways we bury or can invest "talents." The game uses the same 25 concepts each time, but the good/bad results and # of spaces you move are randomly generated. Each "bury" or "invest" comment is fodder for discussion!

**Theological Comment:** Some students may feel that the parable is unfair because it punishes the one servant for merely saving the money. Clearly Jesus is teaching that he expects us to do more than keep God's gifts to ourselves. This is not a parable about ultimate destinations; it is about God's Kingdom here on earth (what Matthew calls the Kingdom of Heaven, but Luke and Mark call the Kingdom of God). Jesus is not talking about heaven and hell. "Outer darkness" should not be equated with a permanent condition. "People who walk in darkness" still have the opportunity to see a "great light."

**For further discussion with older students:** The other servants don't say why or how they invested their talents, but we do know the wicked servant hid the talent because he feared losing it. He believed his master was harsh and punishing, and that caused him to misuse the talents he was given. What we believe about God affects how we act as Christians. Discuss what may have motivated the other servants to invest the gifts they were given. How do we recognize what God has gifted to YOU with and how could YOU "invest" it (use it for God's Kingdom).

## Zaccheus - Luke 19:1-10

### Menu Choices:

Play the Story  
Zapping Zaccheus Quiz  
How do you Measure Up

Teachers have long-noted that Zaccheus is short just like most of their students, but makes the effort to put himself in a place where he can see Jesus. In fact, Zaccheus is something of a parable about looking for and recognizing Jesus and your need for salvation (which is acceptance by God. And because God accepts us, we should accept one another.



### **The Zaccheus story will pause at certain key points and a butterfly will fly around the screen.**

Click on it to open a narrated study note. It may take you a number of tries to click the butterfly just so. It's not supposed to be too easy, it's supposed to be fun.

At the END of the Zaccheus story you'll see several colored butterflies, each one of which reveals a study note to ponder. These are more "reflection oriented" and would be good to do as a class together.

**After working through the story, take Zapping Zaccheus** is a fun quiz challenge. Zap the "wrong answers" to score.

**How Do You Measure Up** is a reflection activity which computes a score on how well you practicing those things which define being a faithful Christian. Here on the right is a graphic showing all the test measures >> Did we leave any out? How DO you measure your faith? Recall that Jesus said we had "little faith." Is faith a list of traits you have? Or is it recognizing what you NEED to do to follow Jesus?



**Additional Thoughts:** The story of Zaccheus begins with the story of Jesus and the rich young man who was blinded by his wealth from following Jesus. Then Jesus demonstrates his power to heal blindness by healing the blind man. Then Zaccheus tries to overcome his inability to see Jesus by climbing a tree. The fourth character in this story is the crowd. Some bring babies, some simply observe, others try to keep Zaccheus away from Jesus. They are blinded by their wrong way of thinking. They don't think a man like Jesus should be talking to a tax collector. With older students, a good question to ask is this: **"what are the things today which 'blind' (stop) some people from accepting Jesus and obeying his teachings.**

**Zaccheus is a story about ACCEPTANCE (salvation).** Jesus says that "salvation has come to this man's house" because of what? How does salvation come to us? When we welcome the Christ. Jesus = Salvation. Jesus' acceptance is based on his love for us and not anything we can or have accomplished.

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Rotation.org is a terrific website for Sunday School teachers looking for free and premium CREATIVE lessons, ideas, and methods for teaching Bible stories to kids.

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