

God's Story: Shorthand



Creation, Fall, Rescue, Restoration, Response

1. Creation:

The first circle represents Creation and wholeness.

Possible conversation questions:

- a. What do you see in nature that takes your breath away?*
- b. What evidence in nature might support the idea that the world was designed for life/beauty?*
- c. What does it mean to be made in "the image of God"?*

The first sentence of the Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" God made the world and everything in it, so it all belongs to him—including us. He made humanity in his image so that we could be in relationship with him. He made us to know him and love him, to walk with him and worship him. In the beginning there was perfect harmony in all creation, and God said it was "very good." (Genesis 1:1)

2. Fall:

The X stands for the Fall, because it shows how everything went wrong.

A few pages in, the Bible describes how the first humans weren't content with all that God gave them. They wanted to decide for themselves what was right and what was wrong. So they rebelled against God, and brokenness entered the world and humanity. This same brokenness has affected every generation since then. The Bible says we've all sinned and fallen short of God's perfect intention for our lives. The result of sin is death—not only physical death but also spiritual death. All of us are on a path headed away from God for all eternity, and there is nothing we can do to fix it. That's the bad news. (Romans 3:23; 6:23a)

- a. What evidence can you see that our world is no longer a perfect place?*
- b. What are some ways people might suggest to fix that brokenness?*
How is that working?
- c. When the Bible says all have sinned, who does that include? Me! You?*

3. Rescue:

The cross symbolizes Jesus, who is at the heart of God's rescue mission.

There is good news! Because of his great love for us, God promised to send a deliverer who would rescue people from their sin. The first half of the Bible, the Old Testament, records how God set that rescue mission in motion through the descendants of a man named Abraham.



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The second half of the Bible, the New Testament, describes how God fulfilled his promise by sending his own Son, Jesus Christ. Fully God and fully man, Jesus lived the sinless life that we could not live. His miracles and teaching demonstrate both that he is God and give a glimpse into what his kingdom will be like. The cross reminds us that Jesus became flesh in order to pay for our sins. As our substitute, Jesus died the death that we deserved. Jesus then rose from the dead, victorious over evil. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)

a. Tell me what you've heard about Jesus...

b. What does the magnitude of Jesus's sacrifice say about God's love for you?

4. Restoration:

The last circle represents the new creation and wholeness of the Restoration.

For all who turn from sin, put their trust in Jesus, and follow him as Lord, God begins a new work of restoration in their lives. The last pages of the Bible describe how one day Jesus will return and make all things new. At that time he will condemn and cast away all that is evil, and he will reign as King over a new heaven and earth forever. (Romans 6:23b; Revelation 21:1-4)

a. What are some examples of brokenness that you long most to see put right or restored?

b. Why do you think God will not allow sin into his perfect kingdom?

5. Response:

The question mark reminds us that hearing God's Story calls for a response.

- God calls for everyone to turn from sin, trust in Jesus, and follow him as "Lord" or King. (Mark 1:15; Romans 10:9, 10)
- All who do so receive forgiveness and everlasting life. God's Spirit makes his home in believers, and he promises to never leave us (1 John 1:9; 5:11-13; John 14:16-17). All who reject God's amazing rescue essentially get what they've demanded—an eternity separated from God.

a. Does this Story make sense to you? Do you have any questions?

b. Where are you in this Story?

b. Would you agree that you are a part of this broken world, on a path away from God?

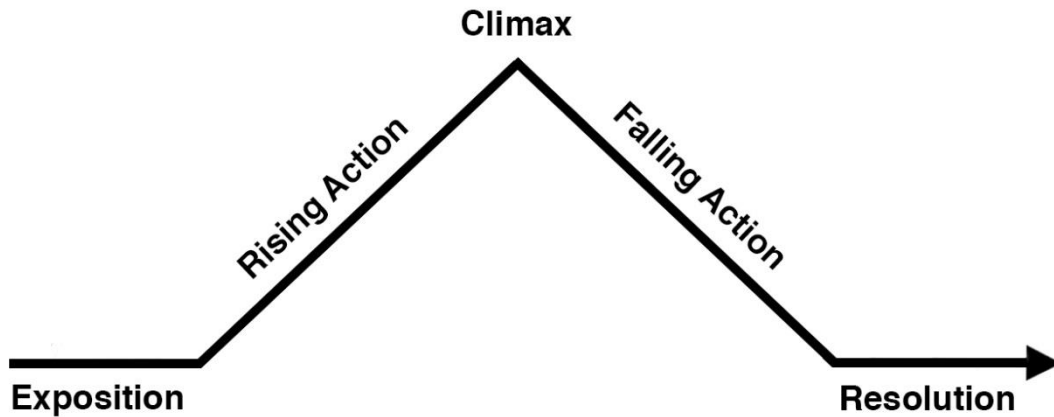
c. Are you ready to make this turn away from your sin and put your trust in Jesus?

- **Prayer:** Tell God in your own words...
I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay for my sin and that he rose again from the dead. I want to follow Jesus as my King. I receive your gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Thank you that you will never leave me!
- **Next Steps:** Read the Bible and pray. Become a part of a church community. Tell others!



Alternate way to show God's Story

A. The Shape of Most Stories:



B. The Shape of the Story of the Bible: 4 Arrows

