PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Components of the TruWonder Sunday School Program

SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect</td>
<td>5–10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gather</td>
<td>20–25 minutes</td>
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<td>Engage</td>
<td>15–20 minutes</td>
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<td>Respond</td>
<td>15–20 minutes</td>
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<td>Bless</td>
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ENVIRONMENT LESSON STATEMENT: Each week you will find a simple statement showing how the ENVIRONMENT is represented in that particular lesson.
The 10 Environments (Overview)

It is the Holy Spirit who is God’s chosen leader. He’s the One who makes spiritual growth and formation happen—when and as He chooses. Our role, as ministry leaders, volunteers, and parents, is to create space for the Holy Spirit to meet with our children.

So, how do we do that? Dr. Michelle Anthony spent time praying and combing through God’s Word to see the various ways He’s interacted with His people throughout history. What emerged were 10 distinct ways or, “Environments,” that God clearly uses to form His followers.

Simply, the Environments are ways God uses to meet with us. What does that look like in a church service? Each lesson has been written with a certain environment in mind. Each Inspire, Equip, and Support section comes out of an experience with the lesson’s environment. Each activity and Bible story has been written through the lens of the same environment. Because the environments are biblical and overarching, it’s easy to look at a story through many different environment lenses without becoming deductive in the study—or trying to make the Scripture say what we want it to.

Storytelling, Identity, Faith Community, Serving, Out of the Comfort Zone, Responsibility, Course Correction, Love and Respect, Knowing, and Modeling are the 10 environments represented within the Tru philosophy. For a more in-depth look at each environment, check out Spiritual Parenting by Michelle Anthony and the resources that are available on the website.

The Environments are also a great way to help the church and home truly partner together as they seek to place children in the path of the Divine. Creating environments in the home is what Spiritual Parenting is all about. If you haven’t had a Tru Spiritual Parenting class at your church, be sure to check out the website to learn more about it.

“We love how the promise of the Savior keeps coming through, and the message of salvation is always mentioned in some way … even in the blessing!”
—1st Baptist Church of Hemet

“I feel that this curriculum not only gives foundational stories, but it allows us to go deeper in God. The storylines are not just surface, but they are surrounded by a deeper truth; a truth that is very foundational and really connects the hearts of our kids to the heart of God. I can see the Holy Spirit is moving each week and doing great things!”
—Mt. Paran North Church of God

NOTES:
Inspire
The Inspire section of the lesson is where the Tru Team shares some of our own personal stories of how God has worked in our lives. The Inspire for that week will help illustrate the Ponder Point, or truth statement about God and our relationship with Him. We hope you find these to be inspiring and encouraging as you begin to prepare for each week’s lesson.

Equip
Flowing out of Inspire, the Equip section is designed to give you more insight into the segment of The Big God Story you will be exploring with the children that week. In addition it offers fresh perspective and shares context on the Bible passage. The philosophy behind this is to equip you with the biblical framework of the lesson and enhance the learning experience.

Support
The Support section is intended to provide personal reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and personal spiritual transformation in God’s Word. The role of the Spirit is primary here as we look to Him for wisdom, comfort, and guidance to prepare your heart to present each week’s lesson, and seek the spiritual formation of both you and the children.

“Always appreciate the Inspire, Equip, Support time … wonderful preparation for me before leading the little ones.”
—The Beacon

“Inspire/Equip/Support is wonderful for teachers to read ahead of Sunday morning. Such a help!”
—Maple Valley Presbyterian Church

NOTES:
Sample Service Timing Outline

This sample outline is based on a 65-minute service (the short end of each window) allowing an additional 10 minutes for parents to pick up their children. If your service is longer or shorter, you can add or remove a couple of minutes from the Connect and Engage sections as needed. You may also find it helpful to open the Connect activities before the start of the hour (as an early check-in option). This will allow children to get the full experience if you need to shave a couple of minutes from the stations to balance your service schedule.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Service Timing</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Experience/Lesson Section</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00–9:05</td>
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<td>Connect::</td>
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<td>Gather::</td>
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<td>• Wonder Questions</td>
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<td>• Prayers &amp; Praises</td>
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<td>9:25–9:40</td>
<td>15–20</td>
<td>Engage::</td>
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<td>• Engage activities</td>
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<td>9:40–9:55</td>
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<td>Respond::</td>
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<td>• fine motor and industrial activities</td>
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<td>9:55–10:05</td>
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<td>• HomeFront: A Spiritual Parenting Resource</td>
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Navigating This Lesson
These are descriptions of the terms found throughout the lesson.

Tip, Note, Suggestion, and Helpful Hint: Suggestions for programming and classroom management.

Optional: Suggestions of ways you can adapt the activities and games to best fit your own church and group of kids.

Classroom Teacher or Leader: After active involvement with the Scriptures and the lesson, the teacher recounts the Bible passage for the kids in an engaging way. He leads out of an overflow of his own life, telling personal stories as prompted. The classroom leader shepherds the children through questions about The Big God Story and biblical truth, engages them in community-building activities, helps them create a remembrance of their experience, and blesses them before they leave. Ideally classroom teachers/leaders work week after week with the same group of kids, giving them the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with each child.

NOTES:
Throughout each lesson you'll find open fields in the margins labeled NOTES. These are places for you as the ministry leader to leave instructions or ideas for the ministry partners who will be using the lesson in the upcoming week. Offer suggestions or even just notes of encouragement in these areas.
Connect:: 5–15 min.

Connect activities allow kids to develop relationships with their leaders and one another within a free-flowing setting.

Using simple supplies and conversation starters, this section is all about getting to know one another better.

The Vision for Connect
As children come into the classroom, they’re invited into activities that will help them to build relationships within their faith community. Oftentimes spiritual formation and growth happens through relationship with one another. This is what CONNECT for preschool/kindergarten is designed to do. The activities offered during this time will not necessarily be overtly connected to the Bible narrative because we want to engage the children in “getting to know you” activities that will allow them to build relationships with their leaders and one another.

Have fun with this time and be sure to engage in CONNECT and the children. Remember to model the activities for the kids so they know what to do, but then let them venture out on their own. Ask open-ended questions as you go. This time is a great opportunity to welcome kids into a safe atmosphere where people care, where there are interesting things to do, and where there is space for them to be intrigued by God and His people.

Activities in this section can include:
• getting-to-know-you games, songs, and finger plays
• games/activities requiring children to work together with others

Open-ended Questions: Asking open-ended questions about their activity encourages children to describe what they are doing, thinking, or processing through. There are no right or wrong answers. Asking questions in this format allows us to be a part of the process and helps us to see the internal journey through the thoughts and feelings expressed by the children.

Examples of open-ended questions:
• Can you tell me about the colors you are using?
• What else can you do with the water, a straw, and wind?
• What do you think would happen to the pepper if we blew lots of bubbles in the water?
• How could we do this differently?

Transition Tool
“The Cleanup Song” from TruBlessings Worship may be a helpful tool to cue children that it is time to transition into another activity/portion of the service.
Children will gather together to experience and learn more about God through lively Remember Verse games, interactive storytelling of the day’s portion of The Big God Story, Wonder Questions, and communal and personal prayer.

The Vision for Gather
GATHER is a time for the children to meet together as a community to participate in traditions as they learn from God’s Word, engage in Wonder Questions, and develop their life of prayer.

In preschool/kindergarten, the children will meet Gizmo, a friendly blue character who welcomes the kids and participates with them in the Welcome Song, Remember Verse activities, and The Big God Story. To purchase your very own Gizmo go to: www.wayfair.com/Silly-Puppets-14-Blue-Monster-Glove-Puppet-SP3005A-SLP1106.html

When children have finished the Remember Verse games, they transition into The Big God Story. This is the time when the classroom Teacher or Storyteller retells a passage of Scripture—always keeping the smaller story in the chronological context of God’s grand narrative.

The Treasure Trunk
The Bible, storytelling props/teaching aids, Wonder Questions, and Prayers & Praises book for each day should be placed inside the Treasure Trunk. You may choose to purchase your Treasure Trunk or create your own. For purchasing ideas, check out the children's toy trunk from IKEA: www.ikea.com/us/en/catalog/products/90225298/. This trunk is made of a sturdy fabric that will allow you to collapse and store your Treasure Trunk when it's not in use.

Story Spots
Story Spots are any items used to mark the place where each child sits. Consider using carpet squares, small circle-shaped rugs, large sturdy placemats, or large round dot stickers. When children hear “The Cleanup Song” or when you’ve finished with the CONNECT activities, cue them to choose a Story Spot, place it in the GATHER time area, and sit down. At the close of your time together in GATHER, encourage children to return their Story Spots to their original location.

The lesson begins with and is centered around a Ponder Point about God. Although the Bible passage may be familiar, the Tru approach is unique. How does this part of The Big God Story show how God relates to me, and further show how He is going to fulfill His promise to redeem mankind?
Introducing Gizmo

Introduce Gizmo to the children the first time he appears in your classroom GATHER time. Encourage the teacher to interact directly with the children on Gizmo’s behalf. You may choose to customize time with Gizmo for your classroom experience (e.g., having him reappear throughout GATHER in times of transitions between segments or during the final transition into the ENGAGE activities).

The Welcome Song

Each week children will begin their time together in GATHER with a Welcome Song. Children begin to develop relationships when they are known. Invite the children in your class into relationship through simple introductions.

Use the templates provided in the Resource Folder to create a heart, small cross, and people. Attach the cross to the center of the heart. If you’re making the heart and people out of paper, consider laminating the finished product to make them durable. Use a permanent marker to write the name of each child on a person. Be sure to make extra people as a way to include new or visiting friends.

Gather the children together in a circle. Place the heart in the center of the circle. Scatter the people around the perimeter of the heart. Be sure the children’s names are face up. Begin by placing your person on the heart as a model for the children. Encourage the children to join you in the Welcome Song.

For example: Hello, friends. It’s so good to see you today. What do you see in the center of our circle? Children will respond. That’s right, there are shapes like people, and a great big heart. When you see the shape of the heart, what does it help you remember? Children will answer. Good thinking. The shape of a heart reminds us of love. What do you see in the center of the heart? Allow children to answer. There’s a cross in the center of the heart. Now, when we see a cross, who do we remember? Children will answer. Jesus, that’s right. This heart can help us remember Gods’ love for us. Each week when we gather together, we get to sing a song to say hello to one another and meet new friends. When we place our name in the heart, we can remember that we get to celebrate God’s love for us each week.

Lead the children through the Welcome Song. When a child’s name is called, they’ll look for their name in the circle. Once they find their name, the child can place it on the heart and return to their seat. Then, begin the song again with the name of a new friend. Repeat until each child has found her name and placed it with her friends’ on the heart in the center of the circle. After each child has participated, end the song with Gizmo. For example: “Who has come to worship today, worship today, worship today. Who has come to worship today? Gizmo did.” Welcome Gizmo to the circle, help him find his name, and place it on the heart. This song is sung to the tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush.”
The Remember Verse
With Tru, we view Scripture memorization as a spiritual discipline and have carefully selected verses we feel disciples of Christ, even children, should understand and memorize because of their contribution to our spiritual maturity. So, year after year, kids, parents, and leaders will be building a core of Scripture that will help to define their faith, memorizing one verse per month in order to allow kids to effectually know 10 core verses per year. In addition, the Remember Verses have been carefully selected to reflect the unifying theme of the 10 environments. These are primarily taught at home through Spiritual Parenting and HomeFront: A Spiritual Parenting Resource, providing even more connection between what is being taught at home and what is being heard at church.

There are many ways to create excitement around memorizing the verses. We provide hand motions that can be taught along with the words. These are just a guide; feel free to adapt the motions to your program and simplify or emphasize other words as you feel led. Be sure your children understand the words in the verse. Age-appropriate definitions are provided for any unfamiliar words. Don’t feel like you need to present them all in one week, but rather take time to go over unfamiliar words with the children in a meaningful way. Have fun by playing the memorization games that are within each lesson. It’s important to help plant this biblical truth, in the form of the Remember Verses, in the lives of the children. The verses are promises from God that the children can draw upon as they build a relationship with God they will carry with them throughout their lives.

Remember Verse cards will be available in the Resource Folder for you to print and send home with parents along with the HomeFront weekly.

The Big God Story
This portion of GATHER is the perfect time to create an atmosphere for children to really engage with The Big God Story. The Teacher/Storyteller vividly relates a passage of Scripture—always keeping the smaller story in the chronological context of God’s grand narrative. Teachers/Storytellers should make the story their own and be intentional about preparing and teaching from an overflow of what God is doing in their own lives. Every person is uniquely gifted to storytell—what a great opportunity to impact the next generation with God’s transforming words!

The Big God Story is the core of the children’s time together, showing them God loves them and wants to know them. It is in this time that the Ponder Point is further explained through a portion of the Bible. Teach from a Bible so the children understand what they’re hearing is from God’s Word and is true. Using the chronological Scope and Sequence, preschoolers and kindergartners will begin with the creation story, and continue on through time in a clearly linked, sequential way. Kids will be able to see that God has been working throughout all of history—and He is still working today! Each of the lessons is written in an interactive and engaging manner to explain concepts on the children’s level.
As you first dive into TruWonder lessons, you may be uncertain how your children will handle the occasionally longer storyline, or the framing of Biblical content in a unique way. Give your children a chance to interact with the storylines and resist the urge to rework the lessons. A longer lesson about David the shepherd includes his anointing prior to defeating the giant and lends a new perspective—David defeated the giant with the power of the Holy Spirit in him. Give your kids the opportunity to hear and grasp this wonderful truth from Scripture!

When storytelling from Tru, take the time to familiarize yourself with the lesson so you’ll be able to share it with confidence. The text provided is meant as a guide for what to share with your children and will be much more engaging for them if the Teacher/Storyteller is freed from reading it to them. Invest in preparation so you can share naturally and with enthusiasm. Feel free to adapt your storytelling to the needs of your classroom. Use the storytelling techniques and tips provided to keep children engaged with your sharing. If you have multiple leaders in a classroom, encourage your leaders to model an interest in what is being shared; the kids will pick up on an atmosphere of excitement. After all, this is God’s big story!

Wonder Questions
Discuss the provided questions with the children. They’re meant to prompt further conversation about what they just experienced in The Big God Story, as well as invite them to ponder the truth and dwell with the wonder of God. Be sure to pause long enough after each question to allow the children time to wonder. Encourage them to share their unique perspectives. Although the questions may seem challenging on the surface, given time and space to ponder them you may be surprised at the depth at which the children are processing (even at a young age!).

When talking with and listening to young children:
• Connect at eye level; kneel or sit at a table to join them.
• Ask open-ended questions with no particular answer in mind. Respond to what they have said. If you don’t understand what they mean, ask a follow-up question to clarify. Try to restate what you think the child means. Allow her to expand on her thought or to simply let it go. Oftentimes a child will revisit a conversation or question a few moments later once she has time to process on her own.
• Engage in activities with the child, encouraging and affirming his participation in all aspects—the colors he is using, a story he told, how well he is sharing. Be specific in your affirmation rather than making value judgements. “I like the green you used there;” rather than, “That’s a great picture.”
• Allow children to answer questions first; avoid answering for them. (Watch for verbal cues and suggestions.)
• Allow children time to process before moving on.
Prayers & Praises

Each week after children have pondered and discussed the Wonder Questions, they will be invited into a time of prayer and praise to God. Children are encouraged to further process all that the Holy Spirit is teaching them as they connect with Him in prayer. Open the time up for children to praise God for who He is. The teacher can begin in order to frame and model this posture for the children.

For example: **When you think about God and the world He created, what do you want to tell Him?** Allow children to share their thoughts. **Is there anything else you would like to tell God?** We’re going to take some time to stop and remember God and give Him praise for who He is and what He’s done. If you’d like, you can lift up your hands while we pray (lift hands with palms facing away from body). **Our hands are lifted up like we’re giving something to someone.** When we share praises to God, we’re giving Him praise. This is a time for you to tell God the things you know are true about Him, the things you like about Him, and to thank Him for what He has done.

**I’ll start our time of praise. “Dear God, I praise You because** (insert the character or aspect of God you’re praising, and/or a praise of thanksgiving) ...” Allow children time to participate. Close this time as the Holy Spirit directs you.

Next, move into the portion of Prayers & Praises where children will share their prayer requests, and give updates on how they see God answering prayers. Children may need help seeing the connection between their prayers and the ways God has answered—or the child may need encouragement as they wait on the Lord. The teacher can facilitate this time by asking follow up questions of the children as they give updates. As children share their prayers and updates, the teacher can record these in the Prayers & Praises book that is kept in the Treasure Trunk. To create your own book, simply use a recipe book with clear plastic sleeves and index cards.
Engage::  15–20 min.

This time is designed to allow kids the opportunity to engage with one another through various forms of play.

NOTES:

The Vision for ENGAGE

Children love to laugh, play, and explore! This section is meant to allow them to do just that. Through interactive games and activities, projects, experiments, and more, kids will get to play together while also continuing to engage with the day’s part of The Big God Story.

ENGAGE may include:
• gross/large motor games
• circle time games
• hands-on experiments in science, music, or art
• cooperative large-group games
Respond::
15–20 min.

**The Vision for Respond**
Children will have the opportunity to process what the Holy Spirit has been teaching them and demonstrate their response to God in a time of hands-on worship. Collaborative and individual worship will allow kids to grow an appreciation for their greater faith community.

Elements of RESPOND can include the following:
- discovery stations/sensory activities
- worship through songs
- musical instruments
- dancing
- artistic response
- fine motor activities

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**NOTES:**
A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words of encouragement and guidance. It can be offered in order to ask God’s Spirit to overflow from the child’s life in such a way that blesses others, while it can also be prayed over a child for the purpose of declaring God’s protection, joy, or wisdom.

The Vision for Bless

Every lesson ends with a blessing. This is a time for parents and leaders to speak truth over children’s lives. The children have just had the beautiful experience of encountering God and His Word; the idea of the blessing is to transition the child from being blessed to being a blessing. This is the time to remind children they can freely give away the joy, love, truth, and grace they have received from God.

The blessing can be done in many ways, but the more intentional you are about it, the more powerful it will be. Encourage the children to hold out their hands, palms up, as a symbolic posture of receiving—expecting to hear and receive from God. If parents are able to join in at this time, suggest they put their hands on their child’s head … or kneel and look him in the eye as they bless him. Leaders, be sure to model how you envision the blessing working in your church so your volunteers and parents feel comfortable with it. Parents should be encouraged to continue to bless their children throughout the week. This time of blessing provides another great opportunity to integrate your use of the Bible into the worship experience, reinforcing to the children that these words come straight from the Word, God’s Word.
HOMEFRONT

The Vision for HomeFront Weekly and HomeFront: A Spiritual Parenting Resource

HomeFront Weekly is a pre-teach resource for parents. Divided into multiple sections, it allows parents the opportunity to choose different sections to share with their children throughout the week, before coming to church. Just For Fun invites parents to create a setting or environment to read God's Word together. Did You Know contains interesting facts about this portion of The Big God Story. Each Weekly has a developmental piece for parents as well as question prompts in the Teachable Moments section after reading the passage together. The Remember Verse for the environment is included. Each age level will be learning one verse over four weeks to help them truly hide God's Word in their hearts. Mirroring the lesson, it ends by providing parents with a blessing to pray over their children.

HomeFront: A Spiritual Parenting Resource is a magazine you will receive for parents every month. This publication contains great ideas for fostering spiritually-forming times in the home. Articles and activities cover everything from marriage and family to food time and blessing. This resource seeks to equip parents with practical ideas for creating space for the Holy Spirit to spiritually form their kids. Remember, this isn’t about doing more; it’s about framing the things parents naturally do with space for God to work.

For your on-the-go parents who are iPhone or Android users, they can download the free HF: A Spiritual Parenting Resource app by searching for Tru HomeFront. The ease of accessibility ensures a greater number of parents will be able to use this resource in their homes. This HomeFront resource ties to the lessons and HomeFront Weekly through the common thread of the Environment. Therefore, there is only one HomeFront Monthly for both TruWonder (preschool to kindergarten) and TruStory (elementary), with ideas for engaging both age levels. This is also where you will find the children's Remember Verses. We hope you will find both of these HomeFront resources to be life-changing for your parents as they intentionally create space for God to meet with their families in new ways.
Remember and Celebrate Together:

An opportunity to pause and take a look back to remember all that God has done and who He has been in the past few weeks leading up to this time of celebration.

The Vision for Remember and Celebrate

How often do we really take time to contemplate the things God has done, and praise Him for it? How often do we make prayer requests, but not follow up on how God answered them? So many of us live our lives full-speed ahead with little time for looking back. But looking back is actually very biblical—and Tru hopes to build that kind of rhythm into the lives of children.

The goal of a REMEMBER & CELEBRATE weekend is to remember God’s faithfulness as we take a look back at what He has showed us about Himself from The Big God Story. Every 6th and 13th week in the curriculum we remember together, and we’ll pause to celebrate. Children will have the opportunity to share together and tell stories about what God has done in—and through—their lives. In this spirit of celebrating, children will participate in traditions of the feasts and festivals as they connect with one another and God through food, conversation, storytelling, music, dance, and games as they worship together.

Each REMEMBER & CELEBRATE weekend, parents are invited to join the feast/festival. Families are given recipe cards from which they can create festival foods to bring with them to share at the feast. The parents are not invited as observers, but as participants. Family members will have the opportunity to join their children as they engage in a traditional Jewish feast or festival. They leave this time understanding why God’s people celebrated, and why we are called to do the same. This provides a biblical context for the importance of remembering and celebrating God’s goodness to us as His people.
Remember and Celebrate: Feasts and Festivals

Old Testament Significance
Several times a year the Israelites gathered together for a festival. In Leviticus 23, the Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are my appointed feasts … which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.’” These seven festivals are Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Festival of First Fruits, Feast of Harvest, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths). In addition, the Israelites would gather weekly to celebrate the Sabbath. These were times to remember what God had done for His people and to celebrate His goodness. They were times for the entire faith community to gather together without the burden of work to simply worship and celebrate. During the feasts, the Israelites ate, danced, sang, played instruments, prayed, and offered sacrifices to God.

New Testament Significance
The Feast of Passover was fulfilled by the death of the Messiah, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was fulfilled by His sinless sacrifice, and the Festival of First Fruits was fulfilled by the resurrection of the Messiah. The Feast of Harvest began with a great harvest of three thousand souls by the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, who continues to harvest souls today. The Feast of Trumpets will announce Christ’s return, the Day of Atonement will usher in His judgment of the nations, and finally, the Feast of Tabernacles begins the journey to our new home in a new heaven and new earth.

The Seven Annual Feasts and Festivals

• **Passover:** During Passover, the Israelites celebrated their deliverance from the Egyptians, as well as God as their deliverer. The Passover meal is symbolic in form and also in the food choices, for each represents a part of telling the story of their escape from Egypt. The meal includes lamb to symbolize the slain lamb whose blood marked the Hebrews’ doorposts on the night of the 10th plague so death “passed over” those homes. In the New Testament, Jesus became the sacrificial lamb of Passover to offer deliverance from sin for all people, for all time, for those who receive it.

• **Feast of Unleavened Bread:** Beginning the day after Passover, the Israelites were commanded to take seven days to eat bread without yeast and to cease working on the first and seventh days. The unleavened bread represents their quick departure from Egypt, not having time for their yeast to rise. In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of yeast (or leaven) symbolically, as sin. Jesus broke unleavened bread with His disciples and said, “This is my body.” Jesus was without sin while His body was “broken” during His crucifixion.

Further Resources

Equip
Read about Jewish Festivals at:
http://www.maranathalife.com/teaching/jew-hol.htm

NOTES:
• **Festival of First Fruits:** This festival celebrated God as the provider and offered thanksgiving. First Fruits represents the celebration of the first grain harvest of the spring. One sheath offering of grain was taken to the temple. These offerings were made the day following the Sabbath, which means it would be on Sunday, and it marked the beginning of the two-month spring harvest. In the New Testament, Jesus resurrected as the first fruit offering on Sunday, the day after Passover Sabbath.

• **Feast of Harvest:** This feast, also known as the Feast of Pentecost or Weeks, corresponded with the nation's harvest season. This feast is preceded by the Festival of First Fruits, during which the barley was harvested, and ushered in the time when wheat was harvested. During this festival, the Israelites thanked God again for His provision for their physical needs. In addition, they also thanked Him for providing a way into relationship with Him. Pentecost was set in motion as a remembrance of when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. Pentecost means “50 days.” These 50 days leading up to Pentecost (after Passover) were a season of gladness, abundance, and thanksgiving for God's provision.

• **Feast of Trumpets:** This feast is the first of the fall feasts. The Jewish people call this feast Rosh Hashanah, which literally means “Head of the Year,” as it is observed as the start of the civil year on the Jewish calendar (in contrast with the religious year which starts with Passover). This celebration consisted of a time of rest, an offering made by fire, and the blowing of the trumpets. The Feast of Trumpets would occur at the new moon when only the slightest crescent would be visible. Watchfulness was a critical ingredient of this feast. This need for watchfulness and preparedness with the Feast of Trumpets is echoed throughout the New Testament in connection with the Lord’s second coming.

• **Day of Atonement:** Atonement was a reflective and often solemn festival each year which involved fasting, prayer, and repentance. During this festival, which lasted 25 hours and is known today as Yom Kippur, the Israelites rededicated the temple to the Lord and repented of their sins. On this annual day, the high priest passed through the veil and entered the Holy of Holies with sacrificial blood to make atonement for the sins of the people. The New Testament significance is found in Christ, who is our High Priest, when He shed His blood once and for all to make atonement for our sins before God.
• **Feast of Tabernacles:** This feast was celebrated in thanksgiving to remember God's provision in the wilderness, as well as His continued provision in their lives. For seven days they lived in tents or temporary shelters that they decorated with colorful ornaments. The New Testament significance of this reminds us that this life is temporary, and all our lifelong dreams, hopes, and aspirations will one day be fulfilled in our future home and inheritance with Jesus.

**Other Feasts and Festivals**

• **Weekly Sabbath:** The Sabbath was a weekly feast—the day of rest, reflection, study, celebration, and joy. On the Sabbath, the Israelites rested and spent time with their families and faith community. Every seventh year, the people would stop and take a reprieve from harvesting and working the land. This was observed for a full year. The observance of the Lord’s Sabbath was to be a sign between the Lord and His people for generations to come. Through the celebration of the Sabbath they would know the Lord and remember that it is He who makes His people holy.

• **Seventh Year Sabbath:** When the people entered into the land of Israel from their time of exile in the desert, the Lord directed the people (through Moses) to tend the fields, vineyards, and all of the crops on the land He had given them, for six years. On the seventh year, the land was then to have a Sabbath for an entire year; the land was to rest. Whatever the land produced on its own during this year was to be food for the people and their livestock. On the year preceding the Sabbath year, the sixth year, God said He would bless the harvest and yield a large crop to provide enough food for three years.

• **The Year of Jubilee:** The year of Jubilee occurred every 50 years, after seven Sabbatical years. It was a consecrated year set aside to proclaim liberty and restoration for all of the inhabitants of the land. Debts were forgiven and those who had sold themselves to settle a debt were set free. God reminds His people that He is their provider and He, in fact, holds the deeds to all of their possessions. Therefore, He commands His people to provide for the redemption of land and housing that was lost due to poverty or other circumstances such as these.